

THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE EDUCATION IN CYPRUS: EXPLORING THE  
POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE UNIFIED EDUCATION THROUGH THE EXAMINATION  
OF A BI-COMMUNAL SCHOOL

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## ABSTRACT

Marios Antoniou: The Prospects for Peace Education in Cyprus: Exploring the Potential for Future Unified Education through the Examination of a Bi-Communal School.  
(Under the direction of Dr. Lynda Stone)

This dissertation is the product of the investigation of an educational institution in Cyprus, where supposed enemies share a classroom and a unifying school identity. In 2003, following the opening of a few checkpoints along the dividing line of the island that keeps apart Greek Cypriots in the south and Turkish Cypriots in the north since 1974, “The English School”, a prestigious public-private school in the south welcomed the enrollment of Turkish Cypriot students, thus becoming the island’s first and only bi-communal public-private secondary school. Schooling has historically been utilized as a tool for constructing unifying national identities. The British colonial exit strategy left Cyprus in confusion between the ethnos and the nation. Cypriots are trapped in an intractable conflict that is rooted in nationalism and education systems contribute to the perpetuation of the conflict. The data collection process was based on a case study that employed the use of an ethnographic research approach within the school, both in and out of the classroom. The research methodology was designed in a manner that placed emphasis on the relationships between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students and the interactions between them in their everyday student life. Furthermore, research attention was placed on the curriculum, the school’s leadership, instructional practices and the school building itself. This dissertation ultimately seeks to analyze this school as an educational institution in its effort to find its

path towards change and adaptation to an integrated bi-communal character while being at the intersection of pedagogy, standardized testing, identity, elitism, politics, and legacy. Despite the school's mission to promote respect for all ethno-religious groups, it has failed to accommodate Muslim students' religious needs while it continues to hold commemorations of Greek national holidays. The research findings suggest that a forced integration agenda has resulted to negative effects, while a laissez-faire approach towards integration does not yield increased communication, understanding and social relationships between the students of the two communities. Therefore, the conclusion calls for an approach based on a carefully planned integration engineering process that would naturally embed the practices of peace education in the existing curriculum.

To my family; the immediate, and the extended.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. We are now beginning our descent at Larnaca International Airport in Cyprus. Cyprus is still divided as a result of a 1974 Turkish invasion. Turkey continues to illegally hold 38 % of the island...” As the captain continued informing passengers about the political condition of Cyprus, both in Greek and in English, I was quickly reminded that I was returning home to conduct research about the peaceful future, while everything from daily news-reports to airline captains are intractably stalled in the past... “I and the rest of the crew would like to wish you a pleasant stay on the island”.

- Cyprus Airways Captain, March 2014

The opening statement of the preamble to the constitution of the United Nations’ Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declares that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed” (UNESCO, 1945). Scholars share the idea that one of the necessary preconditions for war is the process of dehumanizing the out-group who becomes the enemy. Nick Haslam writes that the animalistic form of dehumanization occurs when uniquely human characteristics like refinement and moral sensibility are denied to an out-group (Haslam, 2006). This moral exclusion occurs when out-groups are subject to a different set of moral values, rules, and fairness than the ones that are used in social relations with in-group members (Opatow, 1990). Actors of genocide, mass killings, racism and other atrocious deeds, report that they believed in the correctness of their act at the time of committing it, as it was justified by their group’s collective narrative of righteousness and the inferiority of the other, who was precisely viewed as a non-human, or a human of lesser value. Tragically, the training for this de-humanization process often takes part within an educational institution.

In many of the countries and regions in the world that faced such devastating historic events, and especially in those that continue to be trapped in an intractable conflict, the groups of people who grew to become adversaries were brought up in the same geographical space, but through different educational systems. Formal education in these contexts is often found in the epicenter of the creation or the regeneration of conflict, as it is perhaps the most effective institutional mechanism through which modern nation-states or group leaders in general, can control the teaching of identity, the creation of the sense of belonging and the manipulation of the public opinion among a population. At the same time, this allows the hypothesis that the educational systems in such places hold the power to serve as the institutions that can build the defenses of peace in the minds of people.

This dissertation has its foundations in the belief that peace education can be the strategy for achieving this goal. Beyond the implementation of a curriculum that stems from the principles of peace education, carefully planned integrated education systems can prove to be most effective in constructing societal peace. Such integrated schools now exist in places like Northern Ireland, Israel and Bosnia and Herzegovina and research has been conducted in assessing their work as well as their effectiveness (Danesh, 2008). This question has guided this dissertation research towards the investigation of an integrated school in the divided island country of Cyprus. Research within a school cannot be expected to possess the characteristics of a controlled environment that is unaffected from external factors and events happening outside the school's gates. Schools are complex microcosms and fragmental reflections of societies. Integrated education efforts for peacebuilding can only happen under appropriate circumstances and require careful planning and skillful

implementation. Even though this education model alone is not a panacea for resolving conflicts, it is certainly one of the most necessary steps towards achieving this endeavor.

### **Cyprus**

The conflict and the division on the island of Cyprus between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is ongoing and in a long lasting stalemate since 1974. The total population of the island is slightly over 1.100.000 people of whom roughly 840.000 are Greek Cypriots or others residing in the South and 260.000 are Turkish Cypriots, or others, residing in the North. Since 2003, Cyprus is a European Union (EU) member state country with a unique political problem for the European Community. The internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus which currently has control of the southern part of the island is a European Union member state country under its 1960 constitution. Under this constitution, the EU recognizes that the northern part of the island is also EU land and the Turkish Cypriots who reside there are considered to be EU citizens, as de jure they are constitutionally still considered to be citizens of the Republic of Cyprus. De facto though, the Turkish Cypriots live in the north in their self-proclaimed state with economic and military support from Turkey. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is not internationally recognized and its proclamation has been condemned by a number of United Nations' resolutions (Tofallis, 2002). Ultimately, the Turkish Cypriots today are eligible to hold EU citizenship under the Republic of Cyprus, which is a state that not only they are not actively a part of, but a state that some even consider to be an enemy-state. Politically, the major problematic that resulted from Cyprus' induction into the European Union, is that the community accepted in its group a country whose 38 percent of land is being militarily occupied by another country, namely Turkey,

which is also for many EU countries an ally NATO member and which also has aspirations for joining the European Union.

The Republic of Cyprus as well as the international community wish for a settlement in the Cyprus matter, and this is obvious through the decade long negotiations and the support of the UN general secretaries through the years. It is only reasonable to argue, that a future political solution on the island could only be successful and viable if Cypriots become ready to coexist in peace. It is therefore an essential necessity for the foundations for societal peace to be in place for this political peace to stand and grow.

Reunification prospects are influenced by nationalistic sentiments of Cypriot people on both sides, which could also influence stability and security in the case of a future solution. The Cyprus' conflict is deeply grounded in the rise of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot conflicting nationalisms. Nevertheless, the deconstruction of these opposing nationalisms reveals a conflict that is rooted in the island's more recent history which encompasses colonialism, claims of self-determination, minority issues, McCarthyism, inter-communal conflict, ethnic conflict, and interstate war and an ongoing division (Bryant, 2010; O'Malley & Craig, 1999).

### **Education Responsible for Conflict Regeneration**

Education systems on both sides of the island are greatly responsible for creating and strengthening these adversarial nationalistic sentiments primarily through the instruction of history, but also with the use of other hidden curriculum elements of everyday school life (Bryant, 2004; Hadjipavlou, 2002; Lange, 2012). This is not a post division phenomenon but as Bryant (2004) writes, it has been reportedly existed from as early as 1911, when the national sentiment for Greeks Cypriots was aligned with the Greek nation-state and the

enemy was the British colonial power. The education systems on the island were initiated and ran by the religious authorities of each ethno-religious community. Therefore, the segregated religious based education regenerated and strengthened the opposing nationalistic sentiments and the religious differences, passing them on from generation to generation (Bryant, 2004; Lange, 2012). Moreover, as the education systems were always kept divided, the people of the island never came together to believe in a common Cypriot identity, but always viewed themselves as two different groups. First it was Christians and Muslims and later the rise of nationalism transformed them into Greeks and Turks (Bryant, 2004).

Following the division, the younger post-conflict generations in Cyprus have been inheriting the conflict through their formal education, as well as through informal everyday conversations based on their side's collective narrative and other informal practices which are also based on the sharing of the negatively charged collective memory that presents the good "us" versus the bad "them". The formal channel through which the conflict is regenerated is schooling. Formal education is supported by an equally negatively charged curriculum, which manages to eternalize the conflict primarily through the instruction of history (Lange, 2012; Papadakis, 2008; Spyrou, 2002). The outcome of such practices is the continuation of an intractable stalemate conflict, where the tension remains regardless of the absence of armed violence.

### **The English School in a Pioneering Role amidst Reactions**

In 2003, a few checkpoints opened across the, until then, impenetrable ceasefire line, allowing people to cross to the other side for the first time, 29 years after the 1974 division. At that time, "The English School", a prestigious public-private school in the South welcomed the enrollment of Turkish Cypriot students, thus becoming the first and only bi-



communal public-private secondary school on the island. A few other private schools accepted Turkish Cypriot students, but the case of the English School is rather different due to the nature of the school and its public-private charter. Therefore, accepting Turkish Cypriot students in this case was not the outcome of a simple decision of the school's owner, president or a board of directors. On the contrary, it was a highly political decision taken by the then Minister of Interior Affairs. Since then, a decade has passed and the school continues to steadily admit Turkish Cypriot students on an annual basis.

The English School's decision to admit Turkish Cypriot students in the school was not well received by everyone. There was a great controversy around this issue and many reactions from Greek Cypriot parents whose ethnic feelings were awakened by the thought that their children would be asked to share a classroom with Turkish Cypriot students and also by the fact that national and religious holidays, flag ceremonies and other non-curricular elements of the so far standard schooling practices would have been altered. These individuals presented various reasons in an effort to explain their rational but perhaps the truth pertains mainly to the existing predominant ethnic racism against this collective other. The Turkish Cypriot parents who chose to send their children to be educated in the supposed "enemy's" side saw a better educational opportunity for their children and decided to pursue it. Nevertheless, there were no guarantees that the checkpoints would be indefinitely open and thus they were risking that their children may suddenly not be able to cross to go to school. However, twelve years have already passed since 2003 and cohorts of students from the now bi-communal, and also international, school have graduated the seven year school cycle that incorporates a middle school and a high school.

## **Research Rationale**

Little systematic and academic research has been done to this date to examine the outcome of this unique bi-communal school and the potential shift in the social relationships between the students, their perception of national identity and the prospects for future co-education in Cyprus. There is some limited literature on peace education programs in Cyprus but certainly it has been very recent as such a topic was considered unthinkable or taboo even until the late 90s, and whoever spoke about it would be characterized as a ‘traitor of the nation’. Most of the existing research has been reporting on the outcomes of non-formal education programs as opposed to formal education. As social relationships between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are shifting in the years following the opening of the checkpoints, this research is pioneering in its context. Peace education is a necessity for this troubled island. Valuable lessons derive through the outcomes of this investigation and the analysis of peace education practices within the school offer a unique perspective about the future of this society, and may be useful in informing the design process for a future peace education reform in Cyprus.

## **Research Methodology**

This dissertation research is based on fieldwork conducted at the English School, in Nicosia, Cyprus. The research methodology was structured following a qualitative methods approach with the fieldwork investigation having primarily the character and design of a school classroom ethnography. The study cannot be characterized as an ethnography due to the limited duration of the fieldwork. However, it can be described as a case study which is based on fieldwork observations that employed an ethnographic method approach. The investigation was based on participatory observation and non-participatory observation, and

further supported by a social network research analysis and interviews of individual stakeholders of the school community.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions guided this research:

1) How do the curriculum, instructional practices and everyday student life at the English School contribute to the establishment of an educational institution that meets the academic needs and personal development of its entire student body?

2) How has the English School's bi-communal educational setting contributed to the establishment and strengthening of interpersonal relationships between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students?

The initial research included an analysis of documents and audio-visual materials from the English School's archives which provide a holistic understanding of the school's institutional memory and school culture. Prior to the 1974 division, the English School used to have a student body that was representative of the island's entire population. Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, as well as students from the minority communities of Armenians, Maronites and Latins comprised the school's population. The same was true for the school's staff. Gaining a good understanding of the school's institutional memory was essential in understanding its history and the decision to return to its pre-division bi-communal state. For this purpose nine people who were students at the school during the 1950s and 1960s were also interviewed. More specifically, the people interviewed were four Greek Cypriots, two Turkish Cypriots, two Armenians and one American who had attended the school in the afore-mentioned period.

## **Social Network Questionnaire**

Prior to the beginning of the formal classroom observations, a social network questionnaire was administered to students of years one, two, and three. These year levels are the equivalent to the three typical middle school grades in the United States of America and the ages of the students range from 12 to 15 years of age. This questionnaire was presented to the students as a social network questionnaire. It asked students to identify who they are by stating their name, their age, school level and name of school. The questionnaires were administered by the principal investigator of this study who explained the content of the questionnaires and clarified the task to be completed. The directions asked students to record who their friends from school are, and list them in numerical order based on the closeness of their friendship. Therefore, one's best friend should have been recorded in the first line, close friends should have been listed in the first few lines and friends in the extended network of friends should have been listed further towards the end. In addition, the questionnaire asked for the age of these listed friends and requested information on how the respondent communicates with each of these listed friends. The answer options provided were: 1) mobile phone, 2) Facebook, 3) Twitter, 4) email, 5) telephone landline, and 6) other - accompanied with a probing sentence requesting for an indication of what this other was. Essentially, the scope of this research has no interest in the communication means the students use to contact their friends. The purpose of this questionnaire was solely to extract the information related to who does each person list as a friend within the school. Students were not asked to specify their nationality or ethnicity on the questionnaire. However, this information is obvious through the name itself as Greek names and Turkish names are distinctively different.

The collected data were analyzed in order to explore the commonality of intercommunal friendships. The reason why these younger students were selected was to check the social network relationships during the first years of the students' presence in the school, where the foundations of friendships are built. The introduction of the questionnaire to the students did not disclose that the scope of the research was to explore the relationships between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students in order not to prime the students into providing such answers that would harm or perhaps even 'please' the research findings.

### **Classroom Observations**

The classroom observation based investigation focused on two self-contained groups at the school. Classes of year three (students at 14-15 years of age) and classes of year five (students at 16-17 years of age) were selected as the groups where the vast majority of the observations were conducted. The rationale behind this decision was that the year three students, who are in their senior middle school year, are exiting childhood and entering teenage-hood, which is a time period that is often significant in shaping one's personality. By the time when students are entering year three, they have spent two years as classmates with students from the other community. The students in year five are in the middle grade of their high school year and further into their teenage life. This point is where many teenagers form their personal beliefs and also strong friendships which in many cases last for a lifetime.

In addition to these age groups, a few other classes of year one, two and four were unofficially observed for the purposes of informing the general research. The observations were conducted in three main phases over a one year period, commencing in May of 2013 and concluding in June of 2014. Initial unofficial observations and archival research were conducted in May, September and December of 2013. Subsequently, formal observations and

interviews were conducted over two periods for a total of six weeks, from March 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 to March 21<sup>st</sup> 2014, and from May 12<sup>th</sup> 2014 through June 13<sup>th</sup> 2014. During these six weeks fieldnotes were collected on a continuous basis and fifty five classroom observations were conducted. The majority of these observations had the duration of a single fifty minute period but few of these observations were based on a two consecutive period bloc.

### **Fieldnotes**

Van Maanen (1995) defines ethnography as a written representation of culture and Sahlins (1976) considers culture to be the production and consumption of everyday life. Therefore, ethnographic fieldnotes are a written linguistic representation of verbal exchanges, nonverbal performances and an array of practices in everyday life (Goodall, 2000). Fieldnotes are thus merely a written record of what is observed, which in itself is not free of interpretation, as the researcher interprets the observation the moment it is seen and recorded (Goodall, 2000). This is where the role of the researcher's subjectivity becomes a crucial element of the research process. The observation guide used for this study was designed to record interactions between students, between teachers and students, observations of space, printed material in classrooms, visual media etc. In addition to the information on the grade level and the number of students in each classroom, the location, date, school building and room where each observation took place were recorded. Observation data were collected through the method of fieldnote recording, accompanied by a record of the date and time when the observation had taken place. During each observation, the classroom's seating chart was designed, with a recorded indication of where Greek Cypriot and where Turkish Cypriot students were sitting.

Beside the classroom lessons, two day-long geography fieldtrips, one day-long inter-school athletic and sports competition, three assemblies and one event for the commemoration of a Greek national holiday were observed. Furthermore, observation based fieldnotes were taken during recess time on a daily basis. On a daily basis, observations around the school's grounds were made in search of graffiti and other written messages on walls and other indoor and outdoor areas, ranging from the canteen to the bathrooms and from the exterior walls to notice boards.

### **Interviews and Verbal Exchanges**

Verbal exchanges like interviews, exchange of information and gossip, conversations, debates, arguments, negotiations and dialogues are the substance of the primary principles about what matters in the social construction of cultural realities (Goodall, 2000). As this is a research based on a case study, it was necessary for this investigation to be extended through the use of formal interviews, informal conversations with various stakeholders and observations of public behaviors and dialogues within the school community for reasons of research methods triangulation. The interviewees were selected based on both random selection and snowball sampling and the interviews were based on a semi structured questionnaire. These interviews, conversations and observations were directed towards the school's teaching and administrative staff, members of the Board of Directors, secretarial staff and custodians. Even though the initial intent of the research design was to limit the interviews among the school's internal and immediate stakeholders, the course of the research revealed the necessity for additional interviews of other secondary stakeholders to be sought. Thus, two Greek Cypriot recent alumni who entered the English School after it had become bi-communal were interviewed. Alumni who have graduated between 2010 and

2014 had a seven year educational experience in a bi-communal school environment and thus they were considered to be suitable candidates to speak about the effects that the bi-communal environment of their education had on them. Furthermore, it was interesting to explore how this environment contributed to the shaping of their national identity and formed their beliefs about the prospects of a peaceful coexistence with the other community. One of the two alumni interviewed was the student body president during his senior year and was thus able to present a more holistic perspective than that of the other alumnus, as he had experienced interactions with staff members and the board of directors during organizational meetings. In addition, two Greek Cypriot parents whose children attend the English School, one Greek Cypriot parent whose children attend another private bi-communal/international school and two Turkish Cypriots whose children in one case, and grandchildren in the other, attend that same other school were interviewed. Furthermore, an external contractor who organizes and implements a weekend long team-building program for young English School students was interviewed. This program takes place in a mountain resort at the beginning of the school year and it should be noted that participation in this program is voluntary and the participation cost is covered by each student individually.

The overall dataset was comprised by six school weeks of fieldnotes, observation notes from fifty five classroom observations, 171 social network questionnaires and 29 interviews. The interviews were analyzed after they were transcribed and coded along with the fieldnote observations in search of common themes that would provide answers to the research questions. No student names appear on the analysis and results. Even though the University of North Carolina's Institutional Review Board of Human Research Ethics has determined that this is a minimal to no risk research with a classification of an exempt status,



no real names of interview respondents who are employed at the school are presented, solely for reasons of additional participant protection. As a result, pseudonyms will appear in the findings and no information will be provided that could connect a person's expressed opinions with their identity neither by name nor by their unique position at the school.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One important limitation of this study derives from the complexity of acquiring the approval of the University of North Carolina's Institutional Review Board of Human Research Ethics to interview minors. In addition, such a request would have had to be approved by the School's Board of Directors, and possibly even by the Cypriot Ministry of Education. Such efforts could have ensued to implications of a political nature that could have potentially posed a risk to the successful completion of the study. Furthermore, in order to interview students at the school, it was necessary for a formal consent form to be signed by each student's parents or legal guardians. The parental consent form would have been required to provide details pertaining to the reasoning and the scope of the study, which could have resulted in the collection of biased data as parents and students could have decided to participate in the study or not, aiming to carry forward a biased belief, a political agenda or a nationalist ideology. As a result, students were not directly interviewed and data related to students' opinions were collected through observation fieldnotes and informal discussions where the principal investigator acted as a participant observer. One additional limitation comes from the principal investigator's inability to speak and understand the Turkish language. Therefore, no data were possible to be collected from the observation of conversations that took place in the Turkish language.

## **Research Quality Control**

For the purposes of ensuring the quality of a qualitative research, Guba and Lincoln (1981) list four criteria for assessing trustworthiness of general naturalistic inquiries. These criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility relates to the researcher's ability to take into account all of the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained. Transferability speaks to the goal of the research to develop descriptive, context-relevant statements as opposed to produce truth statements that can be generalized to other situations. Dependability is simply related to the stability of the data and finally confirmability is linked with the objectivity or neutrality of the data (Guba, 1981).

Credibility for this research is achieved through a sufficient amount of observations that take place during a number of phases in the duration of one calendar year. In addition, peer debriefing of the ongoing findings and a triangulation of methods including interviews, observations and the social network analysis is employed in an effort to verify the accuracy of the collected data. Transferability is achieved through the collection of detailed descriptions of the data and explanation of the broader context of the case study in a manner that allows comparisons to other contexts. Dependability is ensured by overlapping between the data collection methods. Finally, confirmability is achieved by the triangulation of sources and methods, and the sincere reporting of assumptions or biases that may have affected initial questions or interpretations of the data and findings.

The preliminary visits to the school proved to be very useful in the process of forming and finalizing the research design. In the initial phase of conducting formal observations, an approach that would reduce the risk of priming students and staff to demonstrate, or act in

ways that were out of the ordinary, untrue or perhaps a staged performance of an attitude was followed. Essentially, in the primary stage of the observations, the method of shadowing was employed, allowing the principal investigator to intermingle as best as possible, and act not as an external researcher, but rather as a person who is, perhaps, a new substitute teacher. The administration and the staff were aware of the investigator's presence and research interest as they had received notification from the Headmaster, which included a brief statement about the research. Nevertheless, the teachers were not informed in advance about whether or not their classroom would be observed on any given day and at any given period. The principal investigator was allowed the freedom to visit and observe any class he wished based on his research design and needs. Each teacher's consent was requested at the beginning of the observation period and no teacher ever denied the principal investigator's request to enter the classroom for an observation.

### **Dissertation Structure**

The second chapter of the dissertation provides the reader with both the historical context of the island of Cyprus and the history of the school. In addition to the historical introduction of the school, the current organizational structure is presented along with the school's mission statement. Following the contextual overview, chapter three provides the theoretical underpinnings of this research. The theoretical framework is structured around theories of nationalism and invented traditions that support its creation through the use of education systems. The role of shifting identities of figured worlds is discussed as a factor that contributes to the regeneration of conflict in such intractable cases like Cyprus. Finally, the role of integrated education systems and the theory of peace education are introduced and analyzed. In chapter four, a personal narrative describing my "my esoteric deposition"

presents the researcher as a research tool and deliberates about the advantages and possible challenges that a researcher who is an insider to the culture may face. The chapter presents the research findings related to the school's institutional memory and past with a focus on the periods when the school was functioning as an educational institution for all the communities of the island. As such, research findings related to the decades of the 1950s and 1960s are discussed, before continuing to the presentation of findings that are related to the early years following the return of the Turkish Cypriots to the school. Chapter four concludes with a narrative presenting the first day of fieldwork at the research site, which serves as an introduction to the findings chapter that follows.

Chapter five continues to present the findings that resulted from the fieldwork observations, the interviews and the social network analysis. The major themes that emerged from the research are presented in three different categories of integration obstacles, curriculum and instruction and finally conflicts of prioritization of needs. Chapter six proceeds to analyze the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and finally, chapter seven offers a discussion that connects the findings with the theories and principles of peace education and ultimately calls for a renewed approach towards the implementation of peace education within the curriculum.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE STORY OF THE ISLAND – THE STORY OF THE SCHOOL**

“If somehow you were magically found in the middle of the old town of Nicosia, without knowing where you are, it would be very difficult to guess where in the world you are standing.”

- Garyfalia, Student from Greece

### **A Brief History of Cyprus**

The island of Cyprus is truly a place with a complex culture which morphed over millennia of civilizational amalgamation. The island and its people were faced with adapting to new identities through the passing of time and the institutions that existed at each time were forced to do the same. As such an institution, ‘The English School’ was affected by the historical and political changes that took place on the island.

Tourists today walk around the old town of the capital of Lefkosia (Greek), or Lefkoşa (Turkish), or Nicosia (English/Latin), passing by ancient Roman ruins, Venetian fortifying walls, centuries old churches and mosques, Turkish baths and British colonial administration buildings. It is hard not to be fascinated by the plethora of culturally significant structures that stand as evidence of all the several identities that the island once held individually and all together. Conquerors came and left, but traces of their existence were left behind in history, monuments, language, culture, traditions and most importantly, their descendants.

The stroll within the old Venetian walls of Nicosia comes to an end at a military guarded barricade. Different flags all around serve as elements conveying their strong

symbolic capital on people's sense of ethnic identity. On one side there is a Greek flag aside the flag of the Cyprus Republic. On the other side of the barricade stand side by side a Turkish flag and the flag of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In between them inside the buffer zone a UN flag stands in an effort to maintain tranquility between armed soldiers and gun-posts. This is not a single barricade. It is only a part of the line that divides the entire island in two since 1974. The line was impenetrable for 29 years before a few checkpoints opened for controlled crossing in 2003, a situation that continues to this day.

Cyprus is geographically characterized as a Eurasian island. Its terrain totals 3,571 square miles and it is located fifty miles south of the coast of Turkey and 270 miles west of the Greek island of Rhodes. Due to its strategic geographic location in the eastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea and at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe, Cyprus had always been an island that the strong of each era wished to possess and control. As a result, a total of fifteen different conquerors came and ruled through the times of history, until they fell by the sword of the next conqueror that would arrive. In the meantime, the inhabitants of the island often remained as the subjects of the new ruler.

The island has been populated since the Proto-Neolithic era (10000 BC). Mycenaean settlers came about the Bronze Age. The earliest historical accounts of the island begin in the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C. when Thothmes III of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of Egypt conquered Cyprus. The Phoenicians followed the Egyptians, and then the Assyrians conquered the island in 709 B.C. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., King of Egypt Amasis took the island until Cambyses of Persia conquered both Egypt and Cyprus in 525 B.C. Cyprus aligned with Greece in their struggle against Persia and after the battle of Issus in 333 B.C., Cyprus became part of Alexander the

Great's empire. After the death of Alexander, his General Antigone and his successors ruled Cyprus until Ptolemy conquered the island in 294 B.C. The Romans followed in 58 B.C. Under the Roman Empire, the island underwent a dramatic religious conversion and Christianity replaced the many different religious cults that existed on the island until that time. When the Roman Empire was partitioned in 395 A.D., Cyprus became a part of the Eastern Roman – Byzantine Empire under the emperor of Constantinople and Greek became the official language. In 1184 Isaac Comnenos decided to set himself up as the emperor of the island after he had been sent to the island on an official mission by the emperor of Constantinople. Only 7 years later, in 1191 Richard the Lion Heart fought Comnenos and seized Cyprus during the Crusades. King Richard immediately sold the island to the Knights Templars who then sold it to Guy de Lusignan who turned it into a feudal state in 1192. After the middle ages, the Venetians took Cyprus from the Lusignans in 1489 and ruled it until 1571 when the Ottomans took over the island. The next and last conqueror of Cyprus came to be the British Empire, as Cyprus came under British control in 1878. England first occupied the island after signing a Defensive Alliance with the Sultan of the crumbling Ottoman Empire. The agreement stated that if Russia tried to invade and conquer lands of the Ottoman Empire, England would stand by His Majesty the Sultan and defend those lands by the force of Arms (Weir, 1952). Under this agreement, England was given the right to govern the island. When in 1914 Turkey and England found themselves on opposite sides in World War I, the latter officially annexed Cyprus. In 1925 Cyprus was declared a Crown Colony of the British Empire and a Governor came to replace its High Commissioner.

Throughout the centuries the inhabitants of the island were forced to make new allegiances with each new conqueror and many were killed throughout the battles of each

conquest. Evidently, conquerors did not only aspire to take over the land and its resources, but also the people, who would work the land and pay taxes. Through long occupation periods that would last for centuries, minorities of people of different ethnic or religious identities were created on the island. Until today the Greek Cypriot majority shares the island with the minorities of Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians, Latins, Roma gypsies and a few more minorities who are smaller in size. When Cyprus became a British Crown Colony, four fifths of the inhabitants were Greek Orthodox, one fifth were Muslim and the minority groups of Armenian, Maronites, Latins, Jews and others were relatively very small (Weir, 1952).

The conquerors that essentially held a more influential role on the island's identity, modern politics and current condition were those of Hellenic roots, the Ottoman Empire and the United Kingdom. The Greek settlement of the island from ancient times and the continuation of the Hellenic presence through different historic eras with most notable the years of ancient Greek Kingdoms, the Macedonian rule and later the reign of the Byzantine Empire, were fundamentally important for the induction of the island into the Greek cultural world. Undoubtedly, the more than three hundred year Ottoman rule that preceded the British colonial era, is also of great importance for the island's current status, as the presence of the Turkish Cypriot minority on the island is a result of that conquest and its long presence on the island.

The Greek Orthodox inhabitants of Cyprus viewed the Ottoman rule more favorably than that of the Venetians. This was because the Ottomans had ruled Cyprus using the *millet* system, which allowed the existing religious structures to remain in place and the inhabitants were not persecuted for their religious beliefs. Furthermore, the *millet* system granted the



religious minorities the right to organize and maintain control over their affairs. The Greek Orthodox and other religious leaders were granted political powers and were used as intermediaries between the people and the Ottoman officials (Lange, 2012). In essence, the *millet* system was a ruling method which ensured that the population under control would remain to be docile tax paying subjects of the empire. Thus, the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus not only managed to maintain its power through the Ottoman rule, but it was also able to strengthen its wealth and its sphere of influence. These privileges remained in place into the years of British rule and thus the clergy held a role of leadership throughout it. Most importantly, the Church controlled the education system of the Greek Orthodox population and used this power to nurture the rise of their Greek national sentiment.

Ultimately though, the period of the British colonial rule was the one that has most particularly influenced the island's current history and placed the foundations for its ongoing conflict. Throughout the years of British rule, Cypriots encountered modernity through British colonialism, while at the same time, a dual transformation of people's nationalist imagination created two opposing desires (Bryant, 2004). These desires were the Cypriots' pursue for self-determination and unification of the island with their respective motherlands. Greek Cypriot nationalists demanded 'enosis' (Greek word for unification) with 'motherland' Greece, while Turkish Cypriot nationalists made their claim for either return of the island to its previous owner, that being Turkey, or 'taksim' (Turkish word for partition), and subsequent unification of their part of the island, with their motherland.

In 1955, after decades of lobbying and failed political attempts to unite Cyprus with Greece, the Greek Cypriots organized an armed movement named EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) and took arms in a guerilla fight against the British. The

Church held a leading role in creating and financing the armed movement. In addition, the student body was mobilized into another movement that took action through continuous civil protests demanding the end of the colonial ruling and the right for self-determination that would lead Cyprus to its union with Greece.

The armed movement targeted British soldiers and colonial officers as well as Greek Cypriots who worked for the British, especially if they were also supporting the communist party and partook in the ideology of the left (Anastasiou, 2008). The British subsequently hired Turkish Cypriots to act as the police, a fact that essentially fractured relationships between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Soon after, EOKA members started threatening Greek Cypriots who engaged in commerce with Turkish Cypriots, a fact that divided the market and especially placed Turkish Cypriots under further constraint (Papadakis, 2005). Britain granted the island its independence in 1960 but strong nationalisms on both sides had already taken their place. Identities of action based in figured worlds ranging from religious based coalitions to paramilitary organizations, had already been in place more than a decade before independence.

### **Modern History and the Cyprus Conflict**

The island of Cyprus was officially declared an independent state for the first time on August 16, 1960. Through the process of de-colonization, the British offered Cyprus its independence and its constitution, which granted Britain three percent of the land as sovereign British area which is still used today for military purposes. The population of the newly formed country was comprised by a roughly 80% majority of people of Greek ethnicity, an 18% minority of people of Turkish ethnic origin and a 2% of other minority groups (Cyprus PIO, 1965). Archbishop Makarios III, who was the religious leader of the

Cypriot Greek Orthodox Church, was elected as the country's first president at the young nation-state's first presidential election. From one aspect, this fact is indicative of the power and public approval the Greek Orthodox religious leader possessed. From a different perspective, this can suggest that Cypriots lacked the experience of living within an established political system which resulted to the vast majority of the islanders voting the only leader they had ever known to the position of their democratically elected president and political leader.

The constitution held the provision that the president would have been a Greek Cypriot and the vice president to be a Turkish Cypriot who would possess the power and the right of veto on all decisions. The two of them had to decide on the country's new national anthem, which came to be music from Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> symphony. The president and vice president had to also choose the new county's flag, which based on the British provided guidelines had to exclude crosses, crescents and stars, blue and red, which are all symbols of the Greek and Turkish flags. Consequently, the chosen flag represents the shape of the island in copper color centered over a white background with two green olive branches placed below it, signifying the peaceful co-existence between the two largest communities of the island, those of the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. Essentially, none of these symbols spoke to the hearts of Cypriots who viewed them as foreign.

The provisions of the British-made Cyprus' constitution, brought Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom into a treaty to guarantee the basic provisions of the constitution and protect the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Nevertheless, the newly established fragile state was still troubled by the actions of extremist groups from both sides which undermined its existence through their continuing efforts to achieve unification with their

respective motherland. The lack of the proper infrastructures and the absence of control over the implementation and interpretation of the constitution led to a series of disputes that resulted to violent conflicts between the island's two major communities, those of the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots.

Three years after the island's independence, President Makarios brought forward to the parliament 13 proposed amendments to the constitution which he justified as steps to overcome constitutional deadlocks. The Turkish Cypriots opposed the amendments, as they saw that they were aiming to annul safeguards that granted power to their minority. Regardless of the fact that the judiciary power deemed the amendments as unconstitutional, President Makarios proceeded to place them in effect, a fact which caused the destruction of the state. Tension had already been brewing among the nationalists of both sides and by late 1963 the breakout of intercommunal clashes over this matter led the Turkish Cypriot ministers and parliament members to leave the government, while the majority of Turkish Cypriots abandoned their homes and found refuge in enclaves that were either safer Turkish Cypriot villages or the predominantly Turkish Cypriot inhabited parts of the towns. Essentially, these enclaves operated like cantons in which Turkish Cypriots lived in fear and isolation for more than a decade. More serious outbreaks occurred in August of 1964, after the Greek Cypriot National Guard was mobilized against the large armed Turkish Cypriot enclave of Kokkina. In that case, Turkey intervened with the use of its air force which bombed the west coast of Cyprus in what is referred to as 'the battles of Tylliria'. This became the modus vivendi for another decade, with the Turkish Cypriots continuing to live in their enclaves but some exiting for work and commerce. Many of them would never return

home again, as a paramilitary group of Greek Cypriot nationalists was still at arms, kidnapping and executing Turkish Cypriots.

In 1974, a coup d'état sponsored by the Greek military junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974 was executed against the Cyprus' government and President Makarios. This prompted an immediate military intervention by Turkey, which used its right to intervene as a guarantor of the constitution. Instead of reinstating the constitution, which had essentially been abandoned since 1963, Turkey proceeded to divide the island. By the end of the short war a ceasefire line was created. This line stretches across the island from east to west, thus dividing it into a northern and a southern part with Turkey occupying about 38% of the land in the north. An exchange of prisoners and population was shortly agreed and forced, which brought almost all the Greek Cypriot citizens to the southern part, and almost all the Turkish Cypriot citizens to the northern part, thus physically dividing the island in two parts which were segregated on the basis of ethnicity. A few thousand Greek Cypriots remained in Rizokarpaso at the Karpasia peninsula and chose to live under Turkish Cypriot governance. In the Greek Cypriot narrative, these people are known as the 'enclaved persons'. The division line, theoretically a ceasefire line, is still guarded on the northern side by the Turkish army, on the southern side by the Cyprus National Guard and in the middle, still stands the UN Peacekeeping force of Cyprus, which is the longest lasting peacekeeping operation in the UN history (map 1). In 1983 the Turkish Cypriots declared their own state, the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' which has only been recognized by Turkey and has been condemned by a number of United Nations' resolutions (Tofallis, 2002).



Map 1

Attempts to reach a political agreement have not been successful. Cyprus joined the European Union (EU) in May 2004 as a divided island, without reaching a solution to its political problem. The land in the North is considered to be EU territory and the Turkish Cypriots are eligible to enjoy the rights and benefits of every EU citizen, and of course the same rights as the Greek Cypriots through the Republic of Cyprus. However, this status is secured under the Republic of Cyprus' constitution and thus in theory, this land in the North and the Turkish Cypriots are considered as being occupied by Turkey. This has raised severe controversy both on political and societal levels among Greek Cypriots who claim that this is untrue and not an accurate representation of the political and military reality.

Up to this day, the island country of Cyprus is still engaged in this intractable conflict which keeps the land and its people divided. Still, over 165,000 Greek-Cypriots and over 45,000 Turkish-Cypriots, which is almost one third of the total population of Cypriots living

in Cyprus, are considered to be Internally Displaced People (IDP) according to the definitions set by the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Despite of this definition, the people consider themselves to be refugees (Loizos, 2008). Furthermore, the children of Greek Cypriot refugees who were born after 1974 have developed a refugee consciousness as part of their identity, even though they had not been refuged themselves (Hadjiyanni, 2002).

Reaching a comprehensive solution agreement to the Cyprus matter has been a political priority for every government of the Cyprus Republic, the European Union, the United Nations and governments of many other countries. Despite the various negotiation efforts, the conflict stands in a stalemate. Politicians have been negotiating towards finding a solution for more than three decades (Anastasiou, 2008). Throughout this period of time and contrary to the political efforts for reaching a peaceful settlement, it has been realized that while the politicians are deliberating for a peaceful agreement, their governments' educational systems have been supporting educational curriculums that are greatly responsible for regenerating the conflict. Education systems on both sides are greatly responsible for creating and strengthening adversarial nationalistic sentiments primarily through the instruction of history, but also with the use of other hidden curriculum elements of everyday school life, including informal instruction and conversations, celebration of national and religious holidays, participation in student parades and also participating in political demonstrations (Bryant, 2004; Hadjipavlou, 2002; Lange, 2012).

### **The English School in Nicosia, Cyprus**

Perhaps the English School in Nicosia, Cyprus, was influenced more than any other school on the island throughout Cyprus' modern history. The English School was founded in

1900 by Canon Frank Darvall Newham, a young Anglican priest and educator who arrived in Cyprus at age 36 to serve as the Director of Education of the island under the colonial administration, a position which he held until 1930. Soon after his arrival, he founded the English School and served as the Headmaster until his retirement in 1936. In managing the transition of the island into modernity and towards a bureaucratic government system, the colonial government needed to have skilled clerks who would also be proficient in the English language (Weir, 1952). Therefore, the need for such schools was imperative, and the colonial government was ready to provide financial aid to schools that offered instruction of the English language. Such schools were characterized as aided private schools and they received grants from the government based on a formula that took into consideration four parameters (Weir, 1952). The first parameter was the salaries paid to teachers of English, with Englishmen receiving a higher proportion. The second parameter was the number of students learning English and the total of hours taught, including the hours of teaching other subjects in the English language. The third parameter was the students' results in Government English Examinations, and finally, the fourth parameter was related to the general efficiency of teaching, as it was determined by the British officers of the Education Department (Weir, 1952). In its first year of operation, the English School enrolled thirteen students. Nevertheless, it soon grew to become the most prominent English medium school in Cyprus, attracting students from all of the island's cultural communities as well as students from abroad.

When Canon Newham decided to retire in 1936, the school changed its status, as he gave it in trust to the colonial Governor. However, the school continued to be an English-medium and an inter-communal school of Christian character with facilities for all pupils to



practice their own form of religion as defined in the English School Management and Control Law of 1935 and its amendments (The English School, 2015). The School was based at various locations around the town of Nicosia. In 1938 the school moved into the facilities in Strovolos - Nicosia, where it is housed to this day, on grounds purchased personally by Canon Newham. The land purchased neighbors the then governor's house, which is today the presidential house, and is located at a very central part of the island's capital.

The school served all the communities of Cyprus, with two, on campus boarding houses which enabled students from all over the island to attend. The 'Lloyds' building and the 'Alks' building were constructed as boarding houses in 1940 and 1947 respectively. During World War II the school was evacuated to the Dome Hotel in Kyrenia for a short period of time, as the areas near the school were then being used by the British army and air force, and because the school was neighboring the Governor's house, which would have been a possible target for an attack. The school returned to its facilities by 1946. Canon Newham passed away in 1946, but he is to this day celebrated as the founder of the school. His life examples are shared with the students and his portrait picture is found at various locations around the school. The English School for Girls was founded in 1957, but only five years later, in 1962, it was incorporated with the general facilities. This was a pioneering decision and the English School became the first co-educational school in Cyprus.

In 1960 Cyprus gained its independence and a special law was enacted which passed control of The English School to the Republic of Cyprus, which oversees the operations of the School through a Board of Management appointed by the Council of Ministers. The Board of Management is comprised by nine members and a Chairperson who are appointed

by the Council of Ministers. In addition, the Director of the British Council in Cyprus is an eleventh ex officio member.

The School numbered over one thousand students shortly before the events of 1974. Nevertheless, those tragic events and the division changed the School in many ways. Turkish Cypriot pupils and teachers were forced to withdraw. The great influx of refugees coming from the northern parts of the island resulted to an increase in the number of students that now had to be accommodated at the existing educational units that were limited within the part of the island that remained within Greek Cypriot control. As a result of this, the ‘Alks’ boarding house was loaned to the Government’s ministry of education, initially for one year, to set up a refugee school. This accommodation never ceased and the building continues to house the Acropolis Gymnasium to this day. In the 1980s the school terminated its boarding program and ‘Lloyds’ boarding house was converted into classrooms that to this day host the year 1 and year 2 students. As it would obviously be expected, the island’s absolute division altered the student body which immediately came to be comprised almost in its entirety by Greek Cypriot students. Nevertheless, the school retained its commitment to the education of all the communities of Cyprus. This was validated when after the opening of a few checkpoints across the dividing line in 2003, the English School readmitted Turkish Cypriot students for the first time in 29 years and their numbers have grown steadily since then.

### **Mission Statement**

The Turkish Cypriots’ return to the school created the need for re-evaluation of many of the school’s practices and ideologies, reaching deep into the core of the school’s foundations and its mission statement and values. The renewed mission statement and values state that “The English School exists to promote academic excellence through high quality

processes of teaching and learning. The school seeks to maximize individual potential by providing rich and engaging educational experiences and challenges, supported by talented and trained staff, in a safe and caring environment and using modern pedagogical techniques and new technologies.” (The English School, 2015).

The school goes forward to describe the English School student as “an articulate, autonomous, life-long learner who is developing the cognitive skills to think critically and creatively, to evaluate information and to collaborate with staff and other students in order to assess his/her own attainment and progress” (The English School, 2015). Importantly enough for the scope of this research, the mission statement reports that “[t]he school is committed to the principle of equal opportunities for all and seeks to uphold the rights of every individual within the school community. It celebrates diversity and its ethos is one of trust, mutual respect and understanding of each other’s culture, ethnicity, religion, gender and individual needs” (The English School, 2015). Also important is the recognition that “The English School’s main goal is to prepare students to access the highest quality tertiary education and to become global and democratic citizens, empowered to adopt key leadership roles in their adult lives” (The English School, 2015). Finally, it is stated that “[t]he school motto is ‘*Non sibi sed scholae*’ which means that students should be proud to be a member of the school and put the school community and other people before their own needs” (The English School, 2015).

### **Academic Structure**

In the academic year of 2014-2015, the student population reaches 1043 and there are 106 teachers and more than 20 persons working as support staff. The academic program lies at the core of the School's activities and is based on the model of British independent

secondary schools. For the first three years all students follow a broad curriculum designed to lay the foundations for public examinations and to provide students with a general education. At the end of year 3 students choose their program of International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) subjects with a compulsory core of English Language and Literature, Mathematics and Modern Greek or Turkish. In year 6, students compose an individual academic program, comprised by five Advanced Supplementary (AS) level courses that they follow during this year, in addition to a supporting curriculum of general studies. Finally, in their senior 7<sup>th</sup> year, the students choose to continue with four of their Advanced Supplementary subjects and pursue an Advanced Level (AL) curriculum, with the supporting general studies program continuing (The English School, 2015).

Extra-curricular activities and engagement with the many school clubs and societies is highly encouraged as a way of cultivating students' skills and personal development. Furthermore, the school's sports program and choir have been integral parts of the school since its beginning. Gaining acceptance at a top University is the ultimate ambition of every student and the School's Career and University Entry Department is an important feature of the school that provides students with advice throughout their years at the school and supports them during their application process (The English School, 2015).

### **Reflecting on Histories**

Since its establishment, The English School remains closely connected with the history of Cyprus, as it has been affected by all the incidents of political unrest that took place in the island's recent history and as it has also always been indirectly directed by the government itself. As an academic institution that was created to educate the men who would hold positions of authority in a colonial government, it became a breeding house for the new

elite class of the educated businessmen, lawyers and future politicians in a traditional society that was transitioning into modernity amidst the rising of two opposing nationalism aspirations. The role of education in nation building and the particular case of education in Cyprus is discussed in the following chapter, which lays the theoretical foundation for this study.

### **CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The aim of the subject of history is to help students become familiar and appreciate the historical life and cultural heritage of Cyprus and Greece and construct a national consciousness as members of the Greek nation and as citizens of a semi-occupied Cyprus.

- Ministry of Education and Culture (1996:133)

#### **Whoever Controls Education, Controls the Nation-State**

In most examples of nation-states from the developed and developing world that partake in the process of market globalism, it is the case that education is controlled and funded through a state's political and governmental authority. It is most often in the interest of governments to ensure that they maintain tranquility and growth via national unity between their law abiding citizens who are also trained to be the docile and skilled workforce. In times of danger, these same citizens will be called at arms to defend their country and be ready to give their life for it. All of these goals can be achieved through education and more specifically, in societal construction units that we have come to call schools.

The claim that whoever controls education controls the nation-state is often made in debates regarding the control over education systems. Prior to the use of schooling as a method to create the docile citizen, control was maintained through the means of state governance and the use of force. Max Weber defines the state as the entity that possesses a delegatable monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force (Weber, 1946). Millennia earlier and within Greek mythology, the State (Kratos, Greek: Κράτος) and Violence (Via,

Greek: Βία), are personified and are presented as siblings, therefore, presented as acting complementary to each other. In his play “Prometheus Desmotis”, the ancient Greek poet Aeschylus writes that only the almighty power that results from the combination of these two siblings was able to shackle Prometheus on mount Caucasus for his crime of defying the power of the deific hierarchy and stealing fire from the Gods to give to humans. This mythological act names Prometheus as mankind’s first philanthropist, at the same time when the Gods named him a thief and sent Kratos and Via to punish him.

The twofold of state and violence has been utilized in the course of human history as a tool used to perpetuate the dominant control system in each culture at every point in time. In theocratic systems the religious leaders made the rules of the Gods known to people. By achieving homogeneity among the fearful people who followed the rules out of respect or fear, the religious authorities managed to maintain hierarchy and power for centuries. Kings similarly enforced their own rules by making them known to their subjects, or by simply arbitrarily enforcing what they wished through the use of force. The subjects knew that they had to follow the rules in order to avoid consequences.

Castoriades (1998) theorized about the ‘imaginary foundation of societies’. He writes that imaginaries are directly responsible for all aspects of culture. For example, the ancient Greeks had an imaginary by which the world stems from ‘Chaos’. The ancient Jews shared an imaginary by which the world stems from the will of God, who is believed to be a pre-existing entity. Therefore, the former developed a system of immediate democracy where the laws were ever changing according to the people's will, while the latter had formed a theocratic system according to which man is in an eternal quest to understand and enforce the will of God (Castoriades, 1998).

The creation of the modern nation-state and the transition to modernity brought a change in the relationships between power structures. State and Violence still exist as the nation-state legitimizes the use of force on its behalf and keeps it as a privilege of its own government. However, the concept of a nation was created and it has become perhaps the most significant construct of the last centuries. Several scholars of modernity view the nation as a concept of a recent civic creation, constructed in order to cultivate political loyalty to the modern state. Despite their different approaches to modernization, some modernists argue that the nation is a mechanical elite-construct rooted in modernity rather than a natural phenomenon.

Anderson (1991) argues that the nation is an ‘imagined community’ where members envisage a mental image of affinity with each other. Since there is no direct contact between co-nationals, this sentiment can only be imaginary and inherently limited. In other words, it cannot be real in the way that primordial communities connected amongst themselves. He believes that the nation is a socially constructed phenomenon as “the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in this basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation” (Anderson, 1991:46).

Ernest Gellner (1983) writes that the public system of education holds the power and responsibility to promote belief and loyalty to the nation which is essential in maintaining the unity of the political entity. He also suggests that in modern nation-states, education became the most powerful instrument of state power and that “the professor and the classroom replaced the executioner and the guillotine as the enforcing mechanism of national sovereignty” (Gellner, 1983:34). Essentially, Gellner (1983) concludes that the monopoly on



legitimate education that created a common national identity became more important than the monopoly on legitimate violence in a state's effort to attain its people's loyalty.

The role of modern schooling thus emerged as a necessity for the creation of the belief in nationhood. Hobsbawm and Ranger argue that many seemingly old or ancient traditions were actually recent inventions that were created in an effort to provide cohesion between people in pursue of the creation of the nation (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Structures of education were without doubt the most effective means to disseminate this information and create the national imaginary that connected all people within the nation-state. Nevertheless, we should not assume that education systems are a phenomenon uniquely related to the emergence of the nation state. Many states in history organized and implemented educational systems based on their needs and beliefs systems. In ancient Sparta, for example, boys were taken away from their homes at the age of seven, and placed in the *Agoge* system. 'Agoge', (in Greek *Αγωγή*), a word which is still used today in modern Greek, means 'to be brought up' in the sense of, 'to be educated'. The word 'pedagogy', used by educators across the world, derives from the Greek words, 'pedi' (Greek: *παιδί*) which means child, and 'agoge' (Greek: *αγωγή*), meaning to be brought up. Therefore, at the age of seven the Spartan boys would enter their pedagogical system. The *Agoge*, can be simply seen as the Spartan education system, which was designed to encourage discipline and physical toughness, and was structured upon the priorities set by the Spartan state.

From the ancient Spartan state until today's modern nation states, the foundations of the purpose of education remain the same. The educational authority designs a schooling system, offers the means for education and often even demands that its youth, who will be its future citizens, enroll and receive the education that the state has determined to be

appropriate and necessary for the function of the state. This education corresponds with the state's societal ideology, politics and economic structure. Above all, educational systems aim to teach their future citizens the set of that society's commonly accepted ideals and values which are to be respected and that they are asked to abide by.

### **Education as a Method for Constructing the Nation-State**

The struggle for social cohesion and the creation of a unified national identity for many infant nation-states has heavily relied upon the power of public education. In multi-national settings the school system took on the role of the 'melting pot' where the young people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds came to receive an education and be introduced into the collective narrative of the nation-state. This is a continuing process based on an ever-changing model and a never-changing principle. Many nation-states around the world face great difficulties in their effort to create 'oneness' and solidify their existence because of struggles for power and control between groups of different identities within the same nation state boundaries. These conflicts may be waged in the name of ethnicity, religion, ideology, race, wealth, power or a combination of these causes. Vamik Volkan (2006), who was born in Cyprus to Turkish parents and is a founder of the International Society of Political Psychology writes that ultimately, history shows that violent internal conflicts occur in countries that fail to establish a strong social cohesion of 'oneness' among their citizens. Ultimately, countries that fail to have all their citizens attesting to a common belief in a shared national imaginary, have historically witnessed internal conflicts and secessions that led to bloodshed and destruction. Furthermore, such conflicts and the inability to teach respect for diversity have led to further conflicts outside of the nation-state borders.

## **From the Intrastate to the Interstate**

Beyond the limits of intrastate conflicts, the lack in the perspective of global peace education led humanity to a series of interstate and world wars which prompted many scholars to theorize about ways through which humanity could avoid the repetition of such atrocious events. “During the years between the two world wars, John Dewey energetically examined ways in which peace education could become an effective instrument in promoting global understanding as opposed to the more traditional patriotic indoctrination that was currently doled out in schools and textbooks” (Howlett, 2008: 27). Despite Dewey’s work and the work of others who made equal claims, nationalism remained on the rise and World War II came to epitomize the failure of education to serve as a force for creating world peace. On the contrary, in countries like Germany, it had served as a key tool for creating a prevailing nationalism and hatred against other ethnic groups.

The years of the Cold War did not provide any improvement towards ending conflicts and constructing truly peaceful countries. On the contrary, the presence and influence of the two opposing Great Powers served as a factor that increased intrastate conflicts during the Cold War era. Essentially, the United States of America and their close allies were found struggling against the Soviet Union for ideological and world economic dominance. The Cold War may had been ‘cold’ between the two protagonists, but it was an ‘inferno’ for many countries around the world, ranging from Indonesia to Cyprus, where communists and non-communists were clashing for power and control that would enable them to establish a system based on their own ideology. Despite Cyprus’ induction in the Non-Aligned Movement, the country was not able to eventually escape the war of world dominance, as its

strategic location in conjunction with its small size and limited power never allowed its people the right of self-determination (O'Malley & Craig, 1999).

Following the end of the Cold War, the world once again witnessed an increase of intrastate and intergroup conflicts around the globe (Gurr & Haarf, 1994). New or old deeply rooted societal inequalities, minority issues and struggles for self-determination brought the creation and resurrection of conflicts in several newly independent countries of the post-Cold War and post-colonial era (Tauli-Corpuz, 2004). In addition, in even seemingly democratic countries that hold free and fair elections, corruption and disregard of constitutional liberalism have led to what Fareed Zakaria (1997) has called the rise of illiberal democracy. It is perhaps self-evident to claim that wherever violent conflicts emerged, the foundation for peace was not a preexisting condition. Even after the silencing of the guns and the end of bloodshed the scars of the conflict remain, serving as insignia that stigmatize the people and add elements to a collective memory that serves as a monument to never forget nor forgive 'the other'; the one who harmed them.

The end of an armed conflict does not mean the establishment of peace. In many post conflict areas, the generation who suffered from the conflict ensures that the post-conflict generations are taught about the conflict and learn to hate and not trust this collective 'other;' who is considered to be the collective enemy (Freedman et al., 2008). The island country of Cyprus is an example of an intractable conflict with roots in a history that encompasses colonialism, nationalism, claims for self-determination, minority issues, McCarthyism, Cold War politics, inter-communal ethnic-based conflict, a civil war, an inter-state war and an ongoing division that continues to this day. (Bryant, 2010; O'Malley & Craig, 1999; Polyviou, 1980).

## **A Conflict Grounded in Nationalism**

The Cyprus conflict is almost at its entirety an identity based conflict which is deeply grounded in nationalism. As a phenomenon, nationalism is more recent than the historical rivalry between the Greek and the Turkish ethnic groups. Some scholars chronologically and historically place the invention of nationalism and the creation of nation states at the treaty of Westphalia in 1648 while some others set the French Revolution in 1789 as the starting point. Therefore, it is valid to say that the tension between the two ethnic groups pre-existed these events and this validates the claim made by Volkan and Itzkowitz (1994) who believe that the Cyprus conflict's roots can be traced in the millennium old rivalry between the Greek and Ottoman-Turkish ethnies. The Greek Nation was created after the success of the 1821 Hellenic revolution against the Ottomans that resulted to the Hellenic independence and the Greek nation-state. The ideology of Greek nationalism reached Cyprus through the actions of the intelligentsia, the press and religious networks, and through these channels it infiltrated schools as well as every other aspect of life. Essentially, the public opinion that demanded for Enosis with Greece was created through this process. At the same time, the British colonial government initiated an effort to promote the belief in the Cypriot identity. One of the measures taken towards this cause was the centralization of the educational structure and the control of the curriculum. Added to another series of events, this was one of the causes that led to the October 1931 civil demonstration and the burning of the governor's house. Two years later, in 1933, Sir Herbert Richmond Palmer came to replace Sir Ronald Henry Amherst Storrs as the Governor of Cyprus. Palmer is still remembered in Cyprus as a strict, almost dictatorial, Governor and the period of his presence on the island is thus still referred to as 'Palmerocracy'. Beginning in this period, the presence of the Greek flag was banned,

the singing of the Greek national anthem was disallowed, the existence of portraits of the heroes of the Greek revolution in schools was prohibited and the instruction of history was majorly controlled and limited. Essentially, in their effort of damage control after the Greek Cypriot uprisings and demands for Enosis, the British tried to use education as a method that would place a larger emphasis on the invention of a Cypriot national feeling. This practice continued throughout the following decades.

### **The Cypriot Ethnogenesis**

The question of the Cypriot ethnogenesis continues to be an ongoing debate and the plurality of ethnic identification statements is still apparent in today's Cypriot society. It is not uncommon at all to meet people on both sides of the island who view themselves not as Cypriots but as Greeks or Turks and who consider Cypriotness to be a bastard identity and a British invention that can be attributed to colonialism and the colonists' pursue for control, both during the colonial and post-colonial eras. Individual sentiments about self-identification vary among people. Some believe to be Greek and not at all Cypriot, some feel that they are more Greek than Cypriot, others say they are more Cypriot than Greek and some that they are Cypriot and not at all Greek. This similarly applies to the Turkish Cypriots. These different sentiments and variations in Cypriots' self-expression of their intimate national identity are affected by their levels of belief and affiliation with ethnic, religious and political entities, which often come in a bundle. For example, a sticker on the fridge of my car mechanic's garage reads in Greek language 'I am proud to be a Greek, Christian Orthodox'. This large variety of intimate identities may generate large chasms at the level of ethnic, local and social collective identity, thus making a homogenous consensus a difficult if not impossible state to be reached. Collective identity plays a great role in the

Cyprus' conflict as does the collective narrative of each side. Psycho-social boundaries between the two groups, their opposing collective consciousness and an intractable negotiation of rights and righteousness are central elements of the conflict and are greatly responsible for its continuation. This identity based conflict is certainly the product of conflicting nationalisms, but it is also rooted in historic rivalries and colonial policies.

### **Culture, Ethnos, Nationalism and Conflict**

“Men have always been endowed with culture” (Gellner, 1997:1). Culture is not identical among different groups of people and this diversity is one of the central features of human life (Gellner, 1997). An additional universal feature of human life as Gellner (1997) writes is the existence of social organization. Ethnic and religious beliefs, as well as habits and norms are parts of culture and of social organization. Identities are created within the elements of culture and the norms of social organization. Holland et al. (1998) suggest that cultural production and heuristic development are important procedures for identity analyses as they shift us away from cultural determinism and situational totalitarianism to create the space for the importance of improvisation and innovation, which is described as agency. Gellner (1997) writes that “culture is the perpetuated, and sometimes transformed and manipulated, bank of acquired traits” which results to a great diversity and is open to continuous and rapid change (p. 3). It could thus be seen that as identities are forming in process or activity, they are constantly morphing the culture they partake in.

Holland et al. (1998) introduced the term “figured world”, which is described as “a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation, in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (p. 52). According to Holland et al., figured worlds are cultural

phenomena to which people are recruited, or into which people enter, and that develop through the work of their participants. They serve as contexts of meaning within which social encounters have significance and people's beliefs are of importance. Activities take place in particular times and locales and they acquire meaning from the figured world itself. Furthermore, figured worlds are socially organized and reproduced and finally they distribute people by relating them to landscapes of action (Holland et al. 1998).

“Culture and social organization are universal and perennial. States and nationalisms are not.” (Gellner, 1997:5). Nationalism as an ideological construct is a recent phenomenon as opposed to the older ethnic cultural ideology. In the Greek language, there is a linguistic limitation in regards to the translation and furthermore, the understanding between the words nation and ethnos. Ethnos is obviously the Greek word for ethnos, and the word nation is also translated in Greek as ethnos. Therefore, the semantic understanding of distinct ideologies is essentially lost in translation. The word nationalism is translated to ‘ethnicism’ (Greek Εθνικισμός), which carries a negatively charged etymology of an exaggerated passion in the ethnos that leads to hate for other ethnic groups which are to be considered as inferior. Patriotism in Greek carries the positive connotation of love for one's country.

This is aligned with the idea that nationalism can be observed as an expression of ethnic conflict (Forbes, 1997). The term could essentially be synonymous to what LeVine and Campbell (1972) call ethnocentrism. Therefore, like ethnocentrism, nationalism “can be understood as a force tending to isolate culturally distinct groups and to reinforce their distinctiveness” (Forbes, 1997: 213). Ethnicity is yet another key term that enters the conversation and in order to set the foundation for its understanding it is important to clearly recognize that ethnic differences are not the same as cultural differences as ethnicity can be



defined as “the enduring reproduction of categorical differences between groups whose groupness is defined both from within and from outside” (Eriksen, 2000: 185).

In the context of Cyprus, Cypriots shared a similar culture of everyday life and common traditions in an integrated social organization. Their ethnic identities were different, as were their languages and religions. Nevertheless, these ethnic identities coexisted within the same culture, and they did not transcend into conflict until a synergistic formation of figured worlds gave rise to national identities which resulted to the clashes of opposing nationalisms. Forbes (1997) concludes that nationalism “is intricately related to social and economic modernization, the development of democracy, the principles of modern political thought, and the problems of militarism, imperialism, colonialism, and war” (p. 213). Ultimately, the roots of the Cypriot conflict can be found in these same elements.

### **Figured Worlds of Conflict Creation in Cyprus**

The Cyprus conflict was not initiated overnight but rather, it was the product of a long lasting period of adversity, mistrust and terrorism promoted through a number of different conflicting figured worlds. As previously explained, figured worlds take shape within, and grant shape to the co-production of activities, discourses, performances and artifacts. A figured world is peopled by its figures, characters, and types who carry out its tasks and who also have styles of interacting within distinguishable perspectives on and orientations toward it (Holland et al., 1998:51).

The unrest that created the Cyprus’ conflict was not limited within the actions of figured worlds peopled by male adults engaged in politics, armed clashes and terrorizing activities, but it also monopolized every theme in the social life of those times, finding expression in every space from coffee shops to churches and from schools to the

neighborhoods and even within children's play. Loizos (2008) reports how Greek and Turkish children (as he refers to Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot children) bawled hostile chants against each other in street encounters. The context of these chants can be described as negatively charged and hostile as each side would shout at the other that they should leave once and for all, that only the people of their group would remain at that place and that their spaces of worship would decay and fall (Loizos, 2008). It is important to note once again that at that time, it was not uncommon for people to possess the same linguistic capital as many Turkish Cypriots would also speak the Greek Cypriot dialect, especially in mixed villages.

This could certainly be a diachronic and transcultural phenomenon to be met in various conflicts and tension ridden situations. For example, this report by Loizos resembles an incident that Bettie (2003) observed during her ethnographic research at a California school. In the instance that she describes, Mexican American students brought Mexican flags to school while white students brought confederate flags to school in an orchestrated action to provoke the other side. This episode of contentious and even hostile practice not only resembles what the young children were doing in Cyprus back in the 1960s before the division had occurred, but it is also similar to today's actions across the cease fire line and beyond. For example, soldiers standing guard across the ceasefire line curse at each other with an even more hostile content and also proceed to throw rocks at each other.

### **Symbols**

Flags are everywhere around Cyprus to an overwhelming degree. The symbolic capital of the flags across the line is a means of promoting and projecting ethnic identity. Moreover though, in a case like Cyprus where an ongoing occupation and a stalemate conflict is happening, it is also a reminder of the other's presence. The case that epitomizes

the flag's fracticness is the case of the large Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus flag on Pentadaktilos mountain range. The Turkish Cypriots created the outline of their flag using rocks on the Pentadaktilos mountain range's southern inclined side. The flag is large enough that it is visible to the Greek Cypriots on the other side of the ceasefire line. In addition to repainting the rocks every few years, the Turkish Cypriot authorities have recently added lights around the perimeter of the flag and its symbols, so that it can also be visible during the night. The goal is of course for the Greek Cypriots to see it from miles away, and it serves as a carrier of symbolic capital aiming to magnify the level of the Greek Cypriot's humiliation from losing the short war of 1974, which resulted to the loss of almost half of their country. The Greek Cypriots view the flag with anger and disgust. To their defense, they also make fun of it believing that its symbolic capital is different than what the Turkish Cypriots think it is. Greek Cypriots usually say that this so called largest flag in the world is only a product of the Turkish Cypriots' mania to try and convince their selves that they have an internationally recognized state, which they do not.

### **Omadogenesis and the Refugee as an Intimate Identity**

Following the tragic events of 1974, one out of every three Cypriots became an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) according to the definition of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). People in Cyprus though do not identify with, nor do they attest to this title and its etymology. They view themselves as refugees and this is the term that they use and that they have taken up as a part of their intimate identity. It is also the term that the official state uses to describe the status of these people. Following the division of 1974, Greek Cypriots as well as Turkish Cypriot refugees came across the challenge of dealing with what Volkan refers to as a large group trauma (2006). While the Greek Cypriots

had to suffer the humiliation of their loss and deal with their large group chosen trauma of 1974, the Turkish Cypriots enjoyed their large group's chosen victory, even though a large number of Turkish Cypriots had also become refugees in what they also consider to be their homeland.

This sudden forced migration resulted to the omadogenesis of the Cypriot refugees and to their establishment within their own figured world. I have created the term omadogenesis to refer to the creation (genesis), of a group (omada). People come to form groups based on their points of similarity and common pursuits. Many people reportedly chose 'o pfofigas' ('the refugee') as their nickname and go by it to this day (Loizos, 2008). The fact that many refugees hold on to their house key, waiting for the day when they will be able to return to their home on the occupied side, has entered into the Greek Cypriot collective narrative. Thus, these people went on living with the hope and the assumption, or tragically the illusion, that they will one day return and find their house the way they left it. The key itself holds the symbolic capital of the refugee's belief in returning to what is theirs, and this has become a recurring theme in literature taught in schools, as it is also an integral part of the Greek Cypriots' collective narrative.

Hadjiyianni (2002) describes how people born after 1974 to refugee parents grow up to possess a refugee consciousness, even though they were born in a house which in reality has always been their home. Nevertheless, through her research she describes how many of these children grew up listening to countless narrations about their beautiful village that the Turks took away from them. Their parents describe and show them pictures of their beautiful house that the Turks stole. They also describe how beautiful the life in their place was, before the Turkish invasion left them with nothing (Hadjiyianni, 2002). All these practices certainly

pertain to the creation of a negative prejudice against Turkish Cypriots. In addition, pictures, maps and other memorabilia from their occupied village, town or home are decorating their new house which many still consider to be ‘not their own’ and for years viewed it solely as temporary transitional housing.

Hadjiyianni (2002) reports that in her research, she identified a group of children for whom refugee identity and refugee consciousness was a way of life, manifesting itself in wishing to visit the places their families were forced to abandon, feeling sad about living in a divided country under Turkish occupation and giving symbolic dimensions to what was lost. This young generation of children of refugee families has formed their intimate identities through their interaction with their society. More importantly, this new generation has received strong influences that shaped their refugee identity and consciousness from their parents and grandparents. Hadjiyianni (2002) suggests these children not only learn to practice but also to perform their adopted refugee identity through their interactions with other people and especially with people who are not familiar with the Cyprus context and their problem. Students of refugee background are certainly found in every classroom across the island and of course, the research site of this study is certainly not an exception.

### **From Religious Groups to a Renewed Ethnogenesis and a New Nationalism**

The ethnic allegiance was not always in the epicenter of the people’s identity. During the Ottoman rule and later in the beginning of the British colonial era, this central role of intimate identities was held by religion. Religion played an important role in culture and social organization, and as an element of identity, it possessed a form of cultural capital which also strongly connected with linguistic capital. This is equally true for the members of each minority. However as previously mentioned, the Greek Cypriot dialect was the majority

language and the language of commerce and therefore, Turkish Cypriot men, more likely than women, would usually learn to speak it. Inter-marriage between religions was extremely rare. Beyond their religious identity, throughout history, Cypriots adopted one other main identity. This was none other than the identity of the subjects of a greater empire. Any revolutions for freedom would end in bloodshed.

Eventually, during the time under the British colonial rule, major shifts in the people's sense of self identity contributed to creating the conflict that escalated to the island's division. Bryant (2004) argues that two conflicting styles of nationalist imagination led to the tragic situation that the island is still in. The rise of Turkish nationalism came as a response to the rise of Greek nationalism that preceded it. Essentially, the conflict emerged through Cypriots' encounters with modernity under British colonialism and through the imagining of a new political state like the other modern states in the European periphery (Bryant, 2004). The emergence and availability of print press in Cyprus around the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, in conjunction with the actions of intellectuals who disseminated and interpreted the information found in the print press at village coffee-shops and other congregation places, prompted the rise of the Greek national imagination among the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of Cyprus (Bryant, 2004). Their belief of righteousness over the island nurtured their aspiration to achieve *Enosis* with 'motherland' Greece.

A simultaneous and opposing dual nationalism transformed Muslims and Christians in Cyprus into Turks and Greeks, through political processes that made language and history important to claiming rights over power and dominance on an island that they previously used to share. When I once asked my late grandfather about the relationships between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots when he was growing up in the 1940s, he replied "What is a

Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot? We were all Cypriots”. Then my grandfather continued to tell me this story: “One day someone knocked the door of our house. Your grandmother went to the door and called me. It was a young Turkish boy who worked as an apprentice at the workshop where I worked. He seemed distressed and I asked him what was wrong. He told me he was getting married that day and that his parents were not able to make the two day donkey-trip from the west coast of the island in order to attend the wedding. And what can I do? - my grandfather asked -. I came to ask if you can take me to the mosque, stand by me and give me away as my father.” My grandfather accepted the honor, wore his suit and they rode their bicycles for a few miles until they reached the village where the bride was from. The family of the bride enthusiastically welcomed the Muslim groom and his Christian “father”.

People who previously coexisted as Muslims and Christians under the control of a ruler became adversaries on the island that they shared for centuries before they ever thought of the possibility of becoming compatriots in one unified country. Nationalism took over suppressing every other type of identity and the militant actions of nationalists left people who were trying to settle in the new republic powerless victims at their will. Nationalism became the theme of the decades with a dual strengthened ethnogenesis based on the pillar identities of ethnos – religion – history – language leading the way to the escalation of the conflict and eventually brought the people into war which resulted to the continuing division.

### **If Many Control the Education System, then Who Controls the Nation-State?**

During the centuries of the Ottoman rule of Cyprus, state aid and recognition of education were limited to the Muslim population and funds were administered to those schools via the Muslim religious leaders (Weir, 1952). Nevertheless, based on the *millet* ruling system, Christian schools were allowed to operate but were solely sponsored through

voluntary contributions (Weir, 1952). As the administrator of the Christian community, the Church of Cyprus organized and largely financed the education system of the Christian population (Persianis, 1978). The Archbishop of Cyprus was subsequently the supreme authority of the Greek Orthodox education (Weir, 1952). Other religious minority groups organized and administered their own educational systems. Therefore, the inhabitants of Cyprus were brought up through different educational systems that constructed separate ethnic identities and allegiances with different motherlands that led to two different nationalisms.

In mapping the rise of nationalism, scholars of this area highlight the praxis of the intelligentsia (Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983). Within the Greek Orthodox community doctors, lawyers, journalists and the clergy among others, were acting as a peer group that operated towards creating the public opinion of the Greek nation and the idea of *Enosis* with motherland Greece. Sir G. Wolseley arrived in Cyprus in July 1878 to take on his appointment as the first High Commissioner of Cyprus. The Bishop of Kition Kyprianos, delivered a speech addressing him on behalf of the Greek population of the island. In his address he stated that the people he represented accepted the change of Government as they trusted that Great Britain would help Cyprus, as it had earlier done with the Ionian Islands in their pursuit of unification with motherland Greece (Persianis, 1978).

Many nationalists who are members of past great empires uphold the imaginary that their nation will one day rise to its former glory. For the Greek nationalists this belief is embodied in the *Megali Idea*, the Great Idea of the recreation of the Great Byzantine Empire (Volkan, 1994). Such was the rhetoric used by Nikolaos Katalanos in his frequent articles published in the Greek press in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which were read and



discussed in coffee shops and churches (Bryant, 2004). This was an ongoing process that continued for decades. My grandfather narrated to me his first encounter with Makarios. “We went with our friends to the orchards of the Kykkos monastery in Strovolos for the celebration of Green Monday that signifies the beginning of the lent period. Makarios was walking around the groups of people that had gathered there and was engaging in conversations with everyone. He was still a young monk at the time. He came to our group as well and spoke to us. He told us that as Greek Christian Orthodox people we must revolt against the British and demand *Enosis* with motherland Greece”. My grandfather replied by saying “with all of this that you all are trying to do, you will destroy Cyprus”.

### **The Dissemination of the Nationalist Rhetoric in Schools**

This nationalistic rhetoric was certainly not confined to circulating in the press, coffee-shops, churches and orchards, but it was also heavily disseminated in schools. The British allowed the continuation of the educational structure on the island at the beginning of their administration and the respective religious institutions maintained their control over their pedagogical system for the education of their youth. The British took further action to expand the educational system of the island and made education more accessible to the public (Lange, 2012; Weir, 1952). They achieved this by providing grants-in-aid to primary schools and encouraged local communities to create more schools (Lange, 2012). The Greek Orthodox Church led schools of three types. The higher institutions were the Greek Schools in the cities of Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol, which were the leading schools for higher education, and the most notable means of keeping alive the religious and national feeling. These schools produced the teachers who served around the island (Weir, 1952). The community elementary schools as well as private schools were found in cities and villages

and they were sponsored by the local communities. In the community elementary schools, the villages' priests or laymen taught the children what they had learned at the monastery or by another priest or layman. Essentially, these teachers had not attended the Greek school (Weir, 1952). Teachers were essentially the most important cultural gatekeepers of the perpetuation of the Greek Orthodox community and supported the idea of Greek nationalism and union with Greece (Bryant, 2004). In 1911, the British inspector of schools reported that there was little or no anti-Turkish or anti-British content in elementary school textbooks, but that the students who attended secondary education were instructed such ideologies, not through the content found in the textbooks, but through the sharing of sentiments that a teacher would express in thousands of occasions, which no one at the colonial government was able to control (Bryant, 2004). As previously mentioned, these freedoms of ethnic expression in education were altered through the years of Palmerocracy.

### **Nation Building in Education**

Education in Cyprus was essentially always segregated between the religious and linguistic lines of the islands' various communities. Nation building did take place in these educational systems, but it was for nations other than the one that people eventually had to affiliate themselves with. The two communities went to different schools, looked up to different national heroes, pledged allegiance to different flags, sang different national anthems and prayed to different Gods. Even though after the events of 1931 such ethnic symbols were disallowed from schools and an effort for the creation of a Cypriot ethnic identity was promoted, the people continued to believe in those Greek ethnic symbols and rejected the British effort to impose Cypriotness. Even after the 1960 independence, people of both communities did not consider the new flag as their own, nor did they feel any

patriotic sentiment when they heard Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> symphony, which was set as their national anthem. After the Turkish Cypriots left the government and barricaded themselves in enclaves following the events of 1963, the Greek Cypriot Council of Ministers with its decision number 6133 on November 16, 1966, adopted the music and verses of the Greek National Anthem as the National Anthem of Cyprus (Presidency of Cyprus, 2015).

Soon after the island's independence, a Greek Cypriot paramilitary group was formed. The group was led by General Grivas who had led EOKA as Makarios' trusted collaborator in the struggle against the British. The new group took the name EOKA B' and its members were former EOKA members who felt betrayed by Archbishop Makarios' leadership and primarily by the fact that he had agreed to settle for independence when the cause had called for *Enosis*. This group acted as thugs, spreading terror, forcing people to stop commerce or communication with members of the other community and committing murders. As a response, the Turkish Cypriot TMT (Turkish Defense Organization) was created and used Turkish Cypriot schools as training grounds for their young boys (Bryant, 2004). Soon, Greek Cypriots were divided between Makarios supporters and Grivas supporters while the political affiliation lines between right wing and left wing followers further polarized the islanders (Anastasiou, 2008).

During the first years of the new democracy, the tension continued to linger and spread over the island. Many people, in the vast majority Turkish Cypriots, are still missing from that era and their bodies are only now being exhumed from mass graves and old wells. Despite the existence of an internal conflict, the island started investing in the tourism industry, allowing it to quickly become a lavish holiday destination. While the Greek Cypriots enjoyed growth, the Turkish Cypriots remained enclosed in enclaves around the

island. In times of tranquility, some Turkish Cypriots would take the decision to return to their villages, only to find that their homes and farms were raided and looted (Papadakis, 2005). On the political scene, leaders from the two sides held negotiations in an effort to re-establish tranquility and find a solution to the Cyprus problem. Foreign diplomacy was also present and solution plans were suggested from both the British and the American governments. The United Nations had placed a peacekeeping force on the island shortly after the intercommunal clashes of 1963 and therefore, the organization was also taking the initiative to organize and facilitate the negotiation processes.

Through the grand scheme of Cold War politics, Cyprus remained important for both Britain and the United States of America. Both wanted to maintain military bases on the island and wanted to keep it off the Soviet Bloc. Its location provided an ideal control point for the Middle East and a strategic location for protecting the Suez Canal and the oil routes that provided oil to the West, and most specifically, the United Kingdom. The large presence of a left wing party in Cyprus and President Makarios' affiliation with communist leaders incited fear that Cyprus could potentially become a 'Mediterranean Cuba' (O'Malley & Craig, 1999). Greece and Turkey were both countries that had received Marshall Plan aid and other assistance from the United States of America after the end of World War II. Furthermore, they were both NATO member countries, so a war between them over Cyprus would have been catastrophic for the alliance.

In 1967, a coup d'état took place in Greece and three colonels, Ioannides, Papadopoulos and Pattakos ruled Greece under a military junta. EOKA B' collaborated with this junta and the two parties executed a coup d'état against President Makarios on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1974. They failed to assassinate him as he reportedly escaped. The Greek Cypriots were

at that point drawn into a civil war which only five days later was struck by the Turkish invasion. The Turkish Cypriots refer to the Turkish invasion as ‘Happy Peace Day Operation’ and according to their rhetoric; the Turkish army helped the Greek Cypriots by ending the escalation of their civil war, while also restoring the dignity and freedom in the lives of Turkish Cypriots. A second phase of the invasion on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1974 resulted in more bloodshed and ended with the island’s division, after the Turkish army had taken over 38% of the land in the North. The exchange of populations served as the epitome of the division and inaugurated the beginning of a whole new era of the Cyprus conflict that overwhelmingly affected and altered every facet of life. Turkish Cypriots felt freed and safe, but just like many Greek Cypriots, many of them became internally displaced people. They also became internationally isolated as the state they self-proclaimed in 1983 was not recognized by the international community and every possible embargo was casted upon them. This signified the beginning of their absolute dependency on Turkey for everything ranging from financial currency, to trade and from military safety to fresh water supply in times of droughts.

For Greek Cypriots, the events of 1974 signaled the beginning of their own tragedy. Mother Greece had betrayed them, as she did not engage in further military actions against Turkey and diplomatically agreed on the ceasefire that divided the island. One third of the population lost everything and they were found sleeping under trees and makeshift tents, having only the few belongings they managed to grab before they fled from their homes. Greek Cypriots had just experienced their national disaster, one that nevertheless created a new rhetoric and strengthened the construct of the Cypriot nation. However, the Turkish Cypriots were once again not considered as a part of it. Until the tragedy of 1974, as my

father remembers, people had not invested in their Cypriot identity nor had they believed in the Cyprus flag as their national symbol. Nevertheless, the new political condition that they fell into forced the rhetoric of the victimized country that had been violently invaded and divided.

The Greek Cypriot education system quickly adapted to the new conditions that resulted from the division. The number of students in schools grew exponentially as refugees settled in new areas. In refugee camps, tents were set up with the purpose of functioning as classrooms, and teachers even simply delivered lessons in open air spaces. The shortage in infrastructure and teaching materials was enormous. In this new era, education in Cyprus acquired the new goal of educating the students of future generations about the occupied lands, the dead and the missing people and the ongoing injustice that the Greek Cypriots are witnessing and suffering from. The goal was, and continues to be, for students to become citizens who actively partake in the struggle for the restoration of justice, the return of all refugees to their homes and their place of origin and the liberation of all occupied churches.

### **Chosen Victories and Chosen Traumas**

Volkan (1994) describes large groups of people that share a collective identity with the symbolism of people found concentrated under a large tent, an element which denotes the unifying identity. Groups, Volkan (1994) also suggests, select their chosen traumas and chosen victories, both elements that scholars of nationalism suggest serve as the collective identity's stabilizing mechanisms. The events of 1974 thus became the chosen trauma of the Greek Cypriots and the chosen victory of the Turkish Cypriots. The years in the enclaves became the chosen trauma of the Turkish Cypriot community, while the Greek Cypriot community blocked those events from their collective memory and subsequently from their

collective narrative. Some things were essentially left to be forgotten, while others were taught never to be forgotten. In the Greek Cypriot narrative, the 1963 events are referred to as ‘the Turkish Cypriot mutiny’ and the actions of EOKA B’ are still avoided, as many of its members are still alive and even hold leading political positions.

For Greek Cypriots, the educational and curricular outcome came through the creation and adoption of a curriculum that focused on “*Δεν Ξεχνώ*” which literally translates to ‘I Do Not Forget’. Following the events of 1974, children were born and raised in mono-communal environments which excluded any knowledge about the island’s other community. Therefore, these people have never had the opportunity to form a personal opinion of the other community through a face to face quotidian social interaction. The educational systems had previously been separated, but never before had they presented the other as an actual enemy ‘other’. Under the new circumstances though, the new educational narrative on both sides morphed into a process that significantly contributed in the further development of the rival imaginaries.

### **A Conflict Perpetuated Through Schooling**

The formal channel through which the conflict is regenerated is schooling. From 1974 onwards, the post-conflict generations on both sides of the dividing line inherit the conflict through curriculum elements and through informal everyday conversations and other types of hidden curriculum instructional practices. “The hidden curriculum refers to those practices and outcomes of schooling which, while not explicit in curriculum guides or school policy, nevertheless seem to be a regular and effective part of the school experience” (Valance, 1991: 40). The information received is of course based on each side’s collective narrative. Such informal practices are also based on the sharing of the negatively charged collective

memory. Formal education is supported by an equally negatively charged curriculum, which manages to eternalize the conflict primarily through the instruction of history (Lange, 2012; Papadakis, 2008; Spyrou, 2002). Evidently, the outcome of these systems is the continuation of an intractable stalemate conflict, in which the tension remains regardless of the absence of armed violence. The “reduced trust and respect relating to the other” that originates from schooling extends to become one of the most important reasons for the continuing political stalemate (Makriyianni, 2006: 10).

Education in regions of intractable conflicts is not limited to teaching language, math and other standard subjects, as it happens in most countries through their formal education curriculum. Schooling should be viewed as a specific kind of socialization where various aspects can affect a child’s national sentiments (Bryant, 2004). Several non-curricular elements in schools such as the selection of patriotic songs for music education, performance of national anthems, student ‘military style’ parades, celebration of national and religious holidays, the use of posters of past atrocities as classroom decoration, ‘I Do Not Forget’ drawing topic themes in art education and essay composition and more everyday school functions can play an important role in creating a national identity of victimhood while at the same time cultivating the sense of the collective other, who is portrayed as the enemy. Moreover, similarly to what the British inspector of schools had noted decades before in 1911, informal references by teachers to historical events or personal experiences are also common and can be influential to a child’s identity creation process and their understanding of the conflict (Papadakis, 2008). For example, I still remember a teacher I had in fourth grade who believed that the sole purpose of education was to learn our “I Do Not Forget” curriculum. Consequently, she made every student memorize and recite by heart the names



of the 202 villages and towns as well as the names of all the churches that were under Turkish occupation.

The education of nationalism in ethnically divided societies like Cyprus carries an important role in defining the political sense of ‘self’ versus that of the ‘other’ (Spyrou, 2002). The use of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ frame of reference in nationalism creation, crafts the ideological construct of an “eternal and primordial enemy” (Spyrou, 2002: 255). Qualitative research, based on interviews of children has shown a significant degree of self-reported patriotism towards Greece or Turkey, as these two countries continue to respectively be considered by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot education systems as the ‘motherland’. At the same time the interviews revealed that from a very young age, the children had developed xenophobia towards the other community (Spyrou, 2002; 2006). The boundary that separates the two ethnic groups is thus not only physical, but also psychological (Spyrou, 2002).

### **Teaching History in Regions of Intractable Conflicts**

In regions trapped in intractable conflicts, the conflict is programmed to perpetuate itself through the instruction of history within the education systems (Danesh, 2008; Papadakis, 2008; Spyrou, 2002). As a starting point, the fact that most school textbooks in Cyprus originate from Greece and Turkey continues to make it impossible for the students of the two communities to develop a common Cypriot ethnic identity as they are not taught a common, unified history of the island (Lange, 2012; Papadakis, 2008). Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have in fact never been taught the same historical narrative in schools. Studies of the current history textbooks on both sides provide evidence for the presence of bias and the existence of inaccurate information that is presented as being based on factual

historical accounts (Papadakis, 2008). History in these contexts is like a puzzle picture. The problem is that the two opposing groups each hold half of the stack of the puzzle pieces, and are not willing to show them to the other group, nor are they receptive to looking at the other group's pieces. Therefore, it is impossible for the two groups to combine their pieces and look at the whole picture. The way in which each group holds on tightly and intractably to its own collective narratives is well described through this metaphor. Moreover, the groups are not open to accept any other historical facts as true facts. They hold on to the historical facts that they have learned and that they believe to be the absolute historic truth.

Papadakis (2008) argues that discussing the history of Cyprus “is akin to stepping into a political and academic minefield” (p. 2). Through a project funded by the International Peace Research Institute-Oslo (PRIO), he analyzed the context of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot history textbooks in Cyprus and published the findings in a report (Papadakis, 2008). His findings reveal that the history textbooks in both cases are characterized by a constant underlying ideology that promotes ethnic nationalism. At the same time, and in both cases of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot history textbooks, Papadakis (2008) reports a large number of negative references and offensive language for the people of the other community. The instruction of history is therefore creating a rival ideology about the identity of the island and its people (Papadakis, 2008). This provides justification to liberal educators' criticism of the educational system as being ethnocentric and culturally monolithic.

In addition, Papadakis (2008) analyzed the new Turkish Cypriot history textbooks that had very recently replaced the old nationalist-charged ones. A new political leader in the Turkish Cypriot community stemming from the political left, brought forward the need to

revise and change, the history textbooks that the Turkish Cypriots used, which essentially placed the beginning of Cyprus' history in the year of the Ottomans' arrival. Therefore, in his conclusions, Papadakis (2008) notes that this may be a paradigm shift that could open the way to progress towards societal peace. Eventually, rewriting the history textbooks is an essential step that the Greek Cypriot community needs to take in order to move forward. This will allow for more peace education practices to take place as a consequence.

### **Peace Education**

Compared to other disciplines and fields of study, the academic and scientific field of peace education is only in its infant steps, even still lacking of a single unifying and universally accepted definition. Haavelsrud (2008) proposes that this is not surprising as both the terms of 'peace' and 'education' are abstractions, and therefore reaching a consensus on the definition of 'peace education' is a rather difficult task. Several scholars and peace education activists have provided their suggested definitions of this field of study and practice.

Reardon (1988) provides that peace education is generally defined as educational policy, planning, pedagogy, and practice that can provide learners –in any setting- with the skills and values to work towards comprehensive peace. Comprehensive peace includes both domains of 'negative' and 'positive' peace, which respectively comprise the abolition of direct or physical violence and structural violence, constituted by systematic inequalities that deprive individuals of their basic human rights (Galtung, 1969). As the principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, Joseph Galtung defines structural violence as the systematic ways in which a regime prevents individuals from achieving their full potential (1996). Examples of structural violence are institutionalized racism, sexism and unequal

treatment based on socio-economic status. Galtung (1969) also introduced and coined the terms of 'negative peace' and 'positive peace'. This concept proposes that peace may be more than just the absence of overt violent conflict (negative peace), and will likely include a range of relationships leading to a point where nations (or any groups in conflict) might have collaborative and supportive relationships (positive peace). Ian Harris and John Synott (2002) defined peace education as "teaching encounters that draw out from people their desire for peace, nonviolent alternatives for managing conflict and skills for critical analysis of the structural arrangements that produce and legitimate injustice and inequality" (p.4). More definitions have been suggested through academic and non-academic channels, indicating not that there is a conflict among peace education scholars and activists over which definition best describes the field, but rather that the field has become very broad as different areas of education which previously stood as a category of their own have now affiliated their action with the field of peace education. This does not necessarily mean that peace education has become an umbrella term that encompasses intercultural education, human rights education, inclusive education, anti-bullying education and so forth, but without doubt, peace education theory and practices can be used for the achievement of the objectives and goals of all these other areas of education. In addition, the different unique contexts and the needs of every country or region that calls for peace education, contribute to the broadening of the field.

"Peace education has many divergent meanings for different individuals in different places" (Salomon, 2002, p. 4). For example, while in many developing countries peace education is mainly considered as a tool for promoting human rights, in developed societies peace education is mainly seen as an approach for cultivating a set of skills used for violence-prevention programs, peer mediation and conflict resolution (Salomon, 2002). In countries

that are troubled with internal conflicts between different groups, peace education aims to promote the reconciliation of the parties in conflict by focusing on practices that pertain to the understanding, trust and respect of the previously unknown, but yet, fearful ‘other’ (Salomon, 2002; Spyrou, 2002). For the latter category, peace education is mainly a matter of changing people’s mindsets, with the general purpose of promoting understanding, respect and tolerance toward yesterday’s enemies (Raviv, Oppenheimer & Bar-Tal, 1999).

### **Shifting away from Conflict through Peace Education**

Conflict should not be seen solely as a bad or unwanted situation. On the contrary, a distinction can be made between positive and negative conflict. When viewed as a solution building opportunity, conflict can lead to positive change. For example, if two students get in a fight, fueled by insults based on their opposing ethnicity, this can be used as an opportunity for the class or the school to engage in a series of deliberation sessions based on conflict resolution theory. Through these facilitated sessions, students will be given the opportunity to learn about the opposite side’s feelings, beliefs, needs and interests and will eventually try to find a common ground where peace can be established based on mutual understanding and respect. Negative conflict can simply be seen as the absence of positive conflict where no opportunity for resolution is provided (Bodine, 1998; Sommers, 2001).

Peace education is a remedy for the phenomenon of conflict regeneration. Wherever negative conflict exists, without an opportunity of transformation into a positive conflict, the conflict would only continue to exist through trans-generational transfer. Under these circumstances, without the use of a peace education approach, conflict regeneration will irreversibly perpetuate conflicts that can be characterized as intractable (Salomon, 2002). The wish for peace and development has increased the need for scholarly research and

intervention through the design and implementation of peace education programs. Conflict resolution theory, is applied through educational practices and through formal and non-formal curriculums. Research in the area of peace education is not solely confined within the academic sphere. A proliferation of international organizations, agencies and international non-governmental organizations heavily draw on such research while they also fund and conduct their own peace education research and programs (Bar-Tal, 2002; Sommers, 2001).

Peace education programs are not only addressing the challenges created by armed conflicts. They are content specific and designed to address problems that threaten or that could become a threat to peaceful coexistence (Bar-Tal, 2002). For example, in Australia, peace education has focused on challenging ethnocentrism, cultural chauvinism, and violence, on one hand, and promoting cultural diversity, nuclear disarmament, and conflict resolution on the other (Lawson & Hutchinson, 1992). In South America, peace education has been used to address issues of structural violence, human rights and socio-economic inequality (Garcia, 1984). In each society, there can be a different need for peace education, and the approaches differ depending on ideology, objectives, emphasis, curricula, content and practices. Nevertheless, all peace education programs seem to have a common general goal, which is to bring the changes that will make the world a better, more humane place (Bar-Tal, 2002).

International bodies, like the United Nations, the Council of Europe and others, have worked and continue to work towards supporting human rights and peace across the world. Supported by its written product, the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 is one of the main international conventions expressing the mandate for the protection of children and their rights to education, among others (1989). Ultimately though, it is the educational system

of every country that has the mandate to fulfill the mission of its society through its schools, which carry the authority, legitimacy, means and conditions to undertake the mission (Bartal, 2002). Teaching to hate is certainly opposed to any idea expressed in this international legal document.

Peace education practices are designed to be included in the curriculum of an educational system and implemented throughout it. The level of the need for peace education varies depending on the unique situations that an educational system is facing. In some cases, the need may be great enough that a total educational reform and a re-design of the curriculum would be essential. The final decision for the implementation of a peace education curriculum remains in the judgment of the local education authorities, who will have to make the choice to incorporate these practices depending on their endeavors for peace, stability and development. As Freedman et al. (2008) report, the implementation of peace education is also largely dependent on the political scene of the time and the aspirations of the political leaders, a fact that makes such implementations a very difficult task, especially in post-conflict countries and countries with low levels of democracy. The need for adaptation of peace education and the type of approach varies depending on the unique specificities of each country.

### **Three Categories of Peace Education**

Gavriel Salomon (2002) proposes that peace education should be classified into three distinctive categories based on the context of the region where they are met. The categories that he suggests are those of peace education in regions of intractable conflicts, peace education in regions of interethnic tension and peace education in regions of experienced

tranquility. The case of Cyprus is certainly primarily categorized as a region of intractable conflict.

### **Peace Education in Regions of Intractable Conflict**

When talking about intractable regions, Salomon (2002) refers to those regions where people are engaged in “ongoing violent conflicts over tangible resources which are often fueled and sustained by opposing national, ethnic, religious, tribal or other type of collective narratives that describe the good ‘us’ versus the bad ‘them’ (p. 6). These narratives contain a host of collectively held memories of past atrocities and present day victimhood, and one’s own moral superiority over the other”. Peace education in intractable regions aims towards changing the mindsets that pertain to the collective other, including the other’s narrative and one’s own group responsibility for the other’s suffering. Examples of cases in point are Northern Ireland, Israel – Palestine, Cyprus and Rwanda.

In regions of intractable conflicts, each opposing side has its own collective memory about the historical facts of the conflict. This collective memory is always elaborate in detailing the atrocious acts that ‘the others’ -presented as the perpetrators-, have committed against ‘us’, -presented as the victim-. Nevertheless, Papadakis suggests that in these conflicts a collective amnesia can be distinguished, as each side prefers to forget its own faults and committed atrocities (2005). Through formal schooling, this collective narrative is mostly transferred to students through the instruction of history. Across the world, and more importantly in regions of intractable conflicts, the instruction of history focuses on national wars as a means for promoting patriotism without however taking into much consideration that this practice praises war more than it praises peace (Noddings, 2012). In other words, the teaching of history is more focused on teaching the historical events of wars as opposed



to promoting the teaching of cultural and technological advancements that resulted in periods of peace. Most importantly, in places where active or underlying conflict exists, this has the effect of promoting nationalism and hatred for opposing groups. In addressing these conflicts, peace education practice calls for the rewriting of history textbooks and the reviewing of other educational material that may include hatred charged non-historical facts and negative representations about the collective 'other' (Lange, 2012).

### **Peace Education in Regions of Experienced Tranquility**

Peace education in regions of experienced tranquility takes place in contexts in which there is “no specifically identified adversary with whom peace, reconciliation or co-existence is desired. In such contexts peace education is ‘about peace’ and not ‘for peace’ as there is no ongoing conflict or tension that needs to be addressed” (Salomon, 2002: 6). Thus, in these regions, peace education mainly pertains to creating a strong bystander concern for peace with the goal to create a strong global society of peace advocates who will voice their opposition in an effort to pressure global leaders to intervene and prevent wars, conflicts and atrocities like the one in Rwanda in 1994 from happening in the future (Salomon, 2002: 6).

### **Peace Education in Regions of Interethnic Tension**

The third category that Salomon (2006) suggests is peace education in regions of interethnic tension, which takes place in “contexts characterized by interethnic, racial or tribal tension between a majority and a minority without necessarily entailing either overt acts of aggression or collective memories of a long history of hostilities, humiliation, conquest or dispossession” (p. 6). Cases in point are Belgium, the USA with its internal tensions between African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and other groups, guest

workers in Germany and generally tensions between locals and political asylum seekers in countries all around the world.

### **Five Types of Peace Education**

Ian Harris (1999) agrees that many interpretations have been given to peace education, influenced by the type of violence that exists in each specific region, but instead of providing categories of peace education based on the region itself, he suggests five types of peace education based on their theme and objectives. Namely, he proposes global peace education, conflict resolution programs, violence prevention programs, development education and non-violence education.

#### **Global Peace Education**

Global peace education programs have a focus on international studies, security studies, holocaust studies and education around issues of nuclear devastation and disarmament. These programs address violence related to interstate rivalries, war, human rights violations, ethnic conflicts, terrorism and other conflicts such as tribal warfare. The goals that they seek to achieve are for the students to understand the international system of state affairs, promote cultural understanding and appreciation of national differences while at the same time creating a multicultural awareness to students and also helping them learn about the negative effects of nationalism. Global peace education programs aim towards preventing hostilities and reducing ethnic tensions, especially in regions where there is an ongoing or an underlying conflict, and helping students understand the necessity of the existence of security systems. In addition these programs aspire to educate students who will, in hope, become advocates of nuclear disarmament through an understanding of the necessity of international treaties, their importance and their effects. On a different level, students are

exposed to the idea of acquiring a sense of a global identity and given the opportunities to explore other cultures, either through travelling or scholarly exchange. In the curriculum, the content materials for global peace education focus on taught lessons and facilitated discussions on international relations, political differences and their relation to historical perspectives of wars, problems of conflicts and the tragedies that emerge for refugees through forced migration. In addition, other units focus on peace movements, multicultural and intercultural education, comparative social structures and principles of collective responsibility (Harris, 1999).

### **Conflict Resolution Programs**

These programs are based on conflict resolution theory and are implemented through the practices of peer mediation, aiming to address personal and interpersonal violence. Their educational goals are to teach students about different conflicts and styles of conflict resolution approaches and provide them with the tools to manage a conflict. This is achieved through practicing mediation and communication skills. It is highly important though for students to become able to understand and empathize with the other party's needs and interests in order for a successful mediation to occur through deliberation. Through this type of peace education programs, students practice their mediation and problem solving skills, while learning about conflict transformation and compromise as tools for creating sustaining relationships. In addition, it is interesting for students to learn how conflict resolution agreements occur in everyday life but also at the international level. As curriculum elements, these types of programs may include units on the anthropology of conflict and on the sociology of conflict and enemy imaging. On a different level, the curriculum may include topics like gender studies and family differences (Harris, 1999).

## **Violence Prevention Programs**

Violence prevention programs have a focus on multicultural education and aim to address violent behavior. The goal of these programs is to create safe school environments. In addition, they aspire to reduce hate crime and street crime while also focusing on the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse. The effect of violence prevention programs is not meant to be limited within the school boundaries, but rather, such programs wish for their outcomes to be visible on the students' personal development and in their out of school life. It is expected that such programs will teach anger management techniques and have an effect in reducing domestic violence and sexual assault incidents. The goals of these programs are to educate about prejudice and stereotypes and to eliminate biases against other groups. Through these programs, students are expected to learn about the causes of violence and understand these problems in depth. It is essential that students understand the cost of violence on themselves and on others by learning and exploring the socio-emotional parameters that are involved with acts of violence. Violence prevention programs follow the strategy of teaching self-control, and work with students either individually or in support groups. Their goal is to provide mediation, counseling, and anger management training through which the students can reach to a personal transformation. Parent education is also a very crucial factor, as the help from the family, or the help to the family via collaboration with a social worker is essential for any violence prevention program to have effects. Through the curriculum, these programs offer alternatives to violence and provide dispute resolution mechanisms. Content units may provide research based evidence and statistics about the causes of domestic violence and crime and may also extend to provide a focus on the legal system as well as the judicial and punitive systems. Consequences of violence are

an important element in the curriculum content of violence prevention programs (Harris, 1999).

### **Development Education**

Development education includes areas such as environmental studies, environmental sustainability, future studies and also has a focus on human rights education. It also addresses issues of structural violence and inequalities of health and wealth as well as issues of environmental destruction. Development education also deals with the pursuit of positive peace and the problems that rise from the lack of fundamental freedoms. The goals of this type of peace education are to promote critical thinking and strategic planning, while also teaching about equitable models of development, ecological security and promoting true democratic models. The goals are approached through the strategies of teaching empowerment and community development. Other strategies include learning about the limitation and elimination of pollution and the sharing of resources as methods for building a more equitable global system of global collaboration, accompanied by the hope of disarmament. In its curriculum content, development education includes units on economic and social development, ecology and environmental issues and the necessity of recycling. In addition, it includes teaching about the negative effects of imperialism, and provides strategies for global change. Finally, it seeks to promote conversation skills directed to helping students shift to a mindset that is oriented towards creating the capacity for thinking globally (Harris, 1999).

### **Nonviolence Education**

Focused on what is referred to as Gandhian studies, nonviolence education aims to address all forms of violence and especially enemy stereotyping. Further on, this type of

peace education seeks to condemn the practices of popular media which sell images of violence and manage to create negatively charged stereotypes against specific groups of people. Finally, this type of education aims to address the despair about the possibilities for peace by showing that peace is indeed possible. The goals of nonviolence education are for the students to learn about the power of peace and appreciate it. Through learning about the power of nonviolence, students are helped to discover their own truth and appreciate the truths of others. The approaches that this type of peace education follows include nonviolence awareness, caring, empathy and forgiveness that lead to an elimination of ego and to the possibility of visualizing a peaceful future and a world of positive peace through the creation and maintenance of a global community based on respect. In its curriculum elements, nonviolence education carries content on ethics, philosophy of humanness and history of peace movements and the work of great peacemakers. It also aims for students to study the human nature and issues of interdependence. Barriers to peace can be overcome through the teachings of nonviolence and love and respect for all other beings (Harris, 1999).

### **Integrated Education in Areas of Intractable Conflicts**

Divided educational systems contribute to the phenomenon of reduced social integration and especially in conflict and post-conflict societies they are structurally perpetuating the mistrust against the members of the other group. An approach to integrating education systems in such societies can prove to be very beneficial in the process of the conflict's recovery. For example, in Northern Ireland, integrated schools between Catholic and Protestant students have been established since 1981, reaching a number of 58 schools by the year 2009 (McGlynn, 2009).

Gordon Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis, which is also referred to as 'Intergroup Contact Theory', was produced in an effort to approach the process of school desegregation in the United States' segregated South and theorized that under appropriate conditions, interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members. This reduction of prejudice through the use of intergroup contact is best explained as the result of the reconceptualization of group categories (Allport, 1954). In this theory, prejudice is described as the direct result of generalizations and oversimplifications made about an entire group of people based on incomplete or mistaken information (Allport, 1954).

In the case of Cyprus, the English School has become the first public-private school to bring Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students into contact within the same classroom and offer them a common education. This dissertation research was designed with the purpose to investigate the school and contribute knowledge on how this unified educational institution has employed and incorporated peace education practices in order to achieve academic excellence, in a peaceful school environment and through an educational approach that drifts away from the practices of trans-generational conflict transmission.

## **CHAPTER 4: THE SCHOOL IN THE PAST**

“I entered the school in the fall of 1957 and completed through the 5<sup>th</sup> Form in July 1960. I was in forms 3-A, 4-A and 5-Science. One aspect of my years at the school that has impressed me and remained in my memory over the years is how well everyone seemed to get along. Several examples are illustrative. I distinctly remember one of the Armenian boys, Seto, who, during recess, would stand out in the yard and carry out several conversations with different classmates, one with me in English, others in Armenian, Turkish, and in Greek. I could never understand how he did it. We were relatively unabashed in asking questions of each other. We were still in puberty, some of us more so than others, and I remember when showering after physical training that several of us wondered why the Turkish students did not have any hair under their arms, until one of us finally asked one of the Turkish boys about it, and learned a lesson about Islam.”

- Jan, English School alumnus, 1957 -1960

### **The English School in the 1950s**

Jan believes he was the first American student to attend the English School in 1957. A Greek Cypriot alumnus of that time who was interviewed remembered him as ‘the American who played baseball’. The truth is that Jan only played softball, as no one played baseball, and none of the two sports were popular or even known sports in Cyprus at the time. Even to this day they continue to be very unpopular and almost non-practiced at all. This was a fact that assisted Jan in being good at it. As an external observer, Jan remembers that the relationships between his fellow students were rather harmonious. As he states, “We played together, socialized together and got in trouble together”. After tracking down Seto, he confirmed that Jan’s memory was correct. “Oh yes, everyone was getting along with each other” he stated. A Greek Cypriot who was a student at the school during the same period also confirmed that “we were friends with everyone and these friendships were occurring



naturally. No one was forcing us to be friends”. A Turkish Cypriot who attended the school during that same period, before the island’s independence, shares the same memories, but adds another dimension to the story. “During the years 1956-1958 I stayed at the Alks boarding house. Mr.Costaras was our House Master”. It must be noted here that the name Costaras is a Greek Cypriot’s name. The interviewee continued to say: “I can remember that during the nights we used to hear voices rhythmically chanting E-O-KA, E-O-KA coming from the Police Station which was just below the building of our boarding house. I have no idea about the police station status or who was shouting the chants but the Turkish Cypriot students in the boarding school were afraid of that. Our fear led us to take turns throughout the night to guard ourselves” referring to the group of the Turkish Cypriot students who lived in the boarding house.

It is reasonable to assume that as the police force at the time before independence was mostly comprised by British and Turkish Cypriots, the voices were coming from EOKA prisoners kept at the police station. The essence of the matter though is that while relationships between students at the school were characterized by friendship, they were not safeguarded from the political atmosphere of the times. The exploding political climate eventually entered into the school for good and altered the intercommunal relationships between the students.

Jan remembers the following event that specifically describes the above statement: “Among the many memories I have is the ‘mis-adventure’ of the date on the blackboard. Towards the end of the academic year, in June of 1958, there were numerous incidents escalating the conflict between Greeks and Turks on the island. It was the practice in one of the classes for the teacher to begin his class by putting the date, in English, on the

blackboard. On the day in question, as soon as the teacher turned his back to the class, one of the boys, I cannot remember whether it was a Turk [Turkish Cypriot] or a Greek [Greek Cypriot], quickly ran to the board, erased the date, and wrote it in his own language. Shortly after, another boy slipped forward and replaced the date in his language. Thinking back on the incident, it almost had a feeling of a joke or prank rather than a political statement. Indeed, I remember participating. When things were quiet, I too slipped up to edit the date, in English. Nevertheless, tensions were running very high at the time, and school was either closed for the rest of the term, or I was not permitted to travel from Kyrenia [the town where Jan lived, 16 miles away from the school]. In any event, there was no school for me until the fall of that year, when all was seemingly back in order.”

During the anti-colonial struggle of EOKA, any British related institution was a possible target for an attack. Jan remembers that the physical training teacher was a former British military veteran, and probably an enlisted officer. “There was the perception that he, and at least the Headmaster [who was also British] as well, carried a pistol at least some of the time even on the school grounds”. Seto confirmed this information during his interview. Jan adds to his report: “For at least part of my early years, we could not enter the classrooms for the first period in the morning until the teacher had inspected the classroom and signed a form to the effect that he had done so. We assumed that the concern was for possible bombs placed in the desks’ storage compartments.”

In addition to the lingering anti-British sentiment, the growing anti-communist and anti-American ideologies came to add tension in the society, but also in the school. Jan stated in his interview: “Interestingly, the only real issues that I can remember being involved in, were with individuals who were identified by other students as ‘communists’. In one

instance, during recess, a student whom I did not know well if at all, started to bully me and push me around. When I tried to ignore him, he either picked up or pulled from his pocket a piece of broken glass with which he cut me on the forehead. I had a scar for many years close to my hairline. I remember the blood coating my glasses, me picking up a brick and trying to hit him with it and some of my classmates pulling us apart and calming me down. He left me alone for the rest of my time there. The other incident occurred probably during the 1958-1959 school year. We were in an art appreciation class and it was very boring to us all. The teacher was Greek [Cypriot] and he had the lights off while he showed slides of old paintings and talked about them. Several of us, including a friend named Erdal [Turkish Cypriot], and probably a Greek [Cypriot] named Coutsoftides, took advantage of the darkness to eat old koulouri [traditional type of bread]. Being dry, it was not a quiet operation. The teacher's response was a bit out of proportion to the offense, and he ended up sending Erdal and me to the Head Master's office. We received a very mild reprimand and that was it. Again, by way of explanation, my classmates informed me that the teacher was a communist. Other than these two incidents, I don't remember any instances of bullying or of anyone being picked on or treated differently because of ethnicity or really any other reason."

Based on these interviews and the conducted archival research, it seems that the student body was well integrated during those times. However, the school as an institution was not shielded from external political turbulence. Throughout the school's yearbooks, student articles and assignments in Turkish, Greek, English as well as Armenian and Maronite are found. Advertisements of Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and Armenian businesses were placed without distinction throughout the pages of the yearbooks of those years. There were no barriers placed neither on commerce nor friendship between the

school's students, but they were not immune to the external political factors and the brewing tension, nationalist uprising and conflict.

### **The English School in the 1960s**

After the island's independence, the school was transferred from the colonial control to the control of the newly established government and its day to day operations continued in the same fashion. Nevertheless, the school's student body continued to suffer from all the events that were happening on the island. Mr. Christakis who is a Greek Cypriot alumnus remembers: "I was at the School from September 1964 to June 1971. The Turkish Cypriot pupils stopped coming to the School from the middle of the previous school year. This was a result of the inter-communal strife that started in December 1963 and climaxed with the bombing of Tylliria in the summer of 1964 by the Turkish Air Force. In September 1969 a few Turkish Cypriots started coming to the School again. At the time I was in the sixth form. We had two pupils in our class. There were also two Turkish Cypriot teachers who came. One, named Voural, was an Old Boy of the School [an alumnus] and he was a physics teacher. He was relatively young. I remember he was very pleasant and respected by all. He never taught us so I cannot say more. The other was older and I think he was a teacher at the school before 1964. I think he was teaching Turkish. I never had a chance to get to know him."

Mr. Christakis had a good recollection of his Turkish Cypriot classmates' academic performance and was very knowledgeable about their life paths. He said: "They were both very good pupils. One went on to study medicine at the University College of London and the other physics and electronics at UMIST in Manchester. One of them was rather aloof and was friendly with a few Greek Cypriot classmates who were more 'scholarly'. This is the one

who went on to become a doctor. The other was much more extrovert and was friendly with most of the Greek Cypriots. He was also a prominent member of the school's football team.” Mr. Christakis explains that “the attitudes of our two classmates back then may be explained by their family backgrounds. The father of the extrovert was a civil servant until 1963 and was harmoniously working with Greek Cypriot colleagues. The father of the rather aloof classmate was a headmaster of a Turkish Cypriot primary school and had little contact with Greek Cypriots. Both these classmates did not return to Cyprus for permanent residence. One of them is permanently resident in the UK and the other, the doctor, is in the USA. In the post 2003 period that movement across the Green Line has become possible, both visited the south and we held mini reunions with quite a few of our classmates attending.” Mr. Christakis seemed to be very fond of his memories from his years at the English School and has been the person organizing these reunions. He also held a leading role in locating and contacting his Turkish Cypriot classmates in order to invite them to attend the reunion. Furthermore, he shared how back in their school years, their friendship and social interaction was not limited within the school grounds and the school-day. The classmates were friends outside of school as well and Mr. Christakis remembers that the Greek Cypriots cared for their Turkish Cypriot friends' safety in those troubled times. “As I remember when we would spend an evening going out to a restaurant or disco for entertainment we would accompany our Turkish Cypriot classmates up to the Ledra Street crossing point, from where they would walk across to the part of the town controlled by the Turkish Cypriot community. This ensured that the crossing was without problems for them. We would never cross over to the other side. It was not considered safe for us.”

Mrs. Anna attended the school during the same period as Mr. Christakis but unlike him she did not interact with the Turkish Cypriot students. She explains this by the fact that she did not have any of them as her classmates. Therefore, this fact perhaps suggests the importance that the education in the same classroom can offer to groups that come from different communities in a conflict. Mr. Christakis concludes by stating that “as expected, the Turkish Cypriots stopped coming to the School again in 1974. By then we had graduated. They only started coming back again in 2003, I think.”

### **The School’s Transformation between 1974 and 2003**

The tragic events of 1974 inevitably brought major changes in the school’s student body, its practices and its culture. The Turkish Cypriots did not return to school in September of that year. Some of the Turkish Cypriot teachers and parents of students who attended The English School reacted quickly and established a transitional school in the Northern part of Nicosia. That was going to be Mr. Sarper’s senior year at the school but instead he graduated from this new make-shift institution. “We thought that things would go back to normal, as it had happened before and that we would return to The English School. For the first year of the new school’s operation, we kept wearing our English School uniform that had the school’s shield and logo on it. We even kept thinking that we were English School students.” Eventually, the division started to seem more and more permanent and so did the new school, which also exists to this day”, Mr. Sarper concludes.

The Greek Cypriots found themselves back into The English School the next school year. Everything was very different though and the school entered into a new period where it had to adapt to the new realities. The government, as the owner of the school’s grounds, took over one of the two boarding houses and transformed it into a public school, in an effort to

deal with the influx of the student population that resulted from the internally displaced people. The English School, like most schools in Cyprus at the time, became at large a monolithic institution with students and staff primarily from the Greek Cypriot community. The headmaster continued to be British, following the school's tradition, which was only broken once in the late 1990s when a Greek Cypriot was placed as the school's acting headmaster for a period that lasted for more than a year.

Through the decades that followed, The English School was culturally assimilated with the general guidelines that the government's Ministry of Education would necessitate. The school was flying a Greek flag next to the flag of the Republic of Cyprus, a Greek Orthodox icon of Mother Mary holding the child Christ was placed in each classroom above the blackboard and commemoration of holidays were limited to the Greek Cypriot and Greek national and religious holidays. The days when the school remained closed for observing holidays was also limited to these categories. This was a major shift from the practices that were accustomed throughout the school's past. Religious accommodation became a thing of the past, but not for everyone, as it seems. Jan remembers that "In the 1950s, The English School was certainly accommodating to the religious needs of the Muslim students. Friday was our favorite day, since classes were dismissed around noon for us all, so that the Turkish students could attend mosque. We had regular school-wide Chapel services. I cannot remember the frequency, but I think on a weekly basis, where we all gathered by class in the large room on the first floor on the opposite wing of the library [this is where the assembly room continues to be, but the old library wing is now transformed into classrooms]. The headmaster would preside of the assembly over prayers and a homily, and we would sing a

hymn. Again, I am not absolutely sure, but I think that the Turkish students participated in these gatherings, since they also included school-wide announcements.”

### **Maintaining an Elitist Character**

The school maintained its elitist character over the years, continuing to educate a large proportion of children of prominent and wealthy families. Acceptance in the school is gained through the process of a written examination that the students take when they are in their senior year of elementary school. The supply of available spots is much more limited than the demand. Therefore, a market of after-school lessons by experts who made a name for themselves in preparing students for these exams was created and it continues to operate to this day. Some of the most renowned teachers that led this after-school preparation culture were such in high demand that they would set up small classroom size groups. This operation was deemed illegal for a number of reasons. The teacher held an additional teaching job in the public sector, which legally disallowed the teacher from having an additional job. As this was the case, the teacher was not reporting the earned income from these entrance-exam preparation lessons. The meeting place for these lessons was changing from one week to another and it was hosted by the family of one of the students in the group. Therefore, the teacher was seemingly not the host of the operation and the exam-preparation operation continued.

Mothers remember that it was at times a stressful process because the police had ‘caught’ the teacher after ‘intruding’ into a couple of these lessons on a few occasions. The teacher was forced to pay fines for various charges but the parents did not have to pay any penalties or face reprimands. Nevertheless, this practice continued for years with everyone knowingly looking over their shoulder, just in case. This can be satirically equated with the



fabricated visage of the ‘secret school’ during the Ottoman period era, where children allegedly secretly visited the priest who under the light of a candle would teach children how to read and write. Within the Greek nation’s imaginary, the ‘secret school’ is seen as one of the brave actions that contributed in the effort to maintain Hellenism alive through the years of the Ottoman rule.

Up to this day, parents who want their children to attend the English School make a significant investment in after school private lessons. After all, what matters for many parents is that their children make it into the school for issues ranging from the perceived quality of education that the school will provide, to the social status that their family will gain by having their child attend the school. At the end of the day, the cost of attending the school is higher than the cost of attending a British University.

Not all students in the school today are offspring of the elite society and this is most likely linked to the creation of a large middle and upper middle class and the improved public elementary education system. However, a general perception reported by recent alumni who socio-economically place themselves in the middle and upper middle class, is that it is commonly observed that the students from the upper elitist class would socialize between them, go for university studies between them, create businesses between them and get married between them. Overall though, with tuition today set at seven thousand euro per academic year, the school is certainly not an option that most middle class families can afford. Therefore, this financial aspect is one that greatly contributes in the perpetuation of the school’s general elitist character, despite the existence of a number of available need-base bursaries.

## **A Shift in Character**

Through the years between 1974 and 2003, the school underwent a great change in character, along with the rest of the Cypriot society. From a school that educated students from all communities of the island, it became a school that de facto excluded the Turkish Cypriots who could no longer attend due to the division. From an Anglican Church colonial school that allowed free religious practice for all, it became a school with a perceived Greek Orthodox character. From a school that championed ethnic diversity, the school became integrated within the Greek – Christian Orthodox twofold. This new structure was nurtured and strengthened until in 2003, the opening of the checkpoints that divide the island and a high level political decision allowed the return of Turkish Cypriot students to the school and supported their incorporation into the student body. The school was to once again become a school for all the communities of Cyprus.

## **The Return of Turkish Cypriot Students**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2003, the then president of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, signed the Treaty of Accession of Cyprus to the European Union. The Republic of Cyprus was now a European Union member country. The young country's 1960 constitution is still its founding document, and as such, the Turkish Cypriots and the land in the North of the island's dividing line were also to be considered as embraced by the European Union identity. Nevertheless, the lands were still occupied by the Turkish military and the Turkish Cypriots were operating through their own governing body, the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. A few days later, and to the surprise of the entire world, the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Rauf Denktash, unexpectedly announced the so called 'easing on moving restrictions' across the dividing line. This was a major political

development that indicated that people would now be able to cross the dividing line. The government of the Republic of Cyprus in a startled mode could not but follow suit in allowing the crossing, as for years it had maintained the rhetoric that it was the Turkish Cypriot leadership that was maintaining stanch positions on the Cyprus problem. As a result, on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003 few checkpoints on the dividing line that kept Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots apart for 29 years opened up, along with a new era for the Cyprus problem.

This historic event brought, or even forced, many changes to the status quo of many institutions, including The English School. After these events, a few Turkish Cypriot parents were mobilized and their actions led to the then Greek Cypriot Minister of Interior presiding over the decision that Turkish Cypriots who lived in the North were to be allowed to enter the school, based on the provisions of the 1960 constitution. Therefore, it must perhaps be seen that it was not from the benevolence of the government or the school's administration that this decision was made, but rather from the consideration of avoiding a constitutional violation in a politically critical time.

In the beginning of the 2003-2004 academic year, six Turkish Cypriot students and one Turkish Cypriot teacher stepped foot at the English School, leading the school into yet another a new era. This new era though came to force many changes that the conservative Greek – Christian Orthodox bloc was passionately opposed to. First and foremost, a large number of the school's several stakeholder groups believed that the government had been very willing to allow the students to enter the school, provided that the conflict still existed and the island was continuing to be divided by the force of the Turkish military. The fact that the government offered to wave the Turkish Cypriot students fees for their first two years at

the school and even provided free transportation from the checkpoint to the school on a daily basis were elements adding to the controversy.

Without a government imposed mandate and solely in its effort to create an intercultural educational setting that would be welcoming to all students, the school independently proceeded to remove any national and religious symbols that were found within the school's premises, both indoors and outdoors. Based on this decision, Greek flags were replaced with the flag of the European Union and the flag of the Republic of Cyprus remained as the only national flag, based on the country's and the school's constitutional provisions. Furthermore, icons and other religious symbols were removed from classrooms and the school premises. This prompted the immediate reaction of a large number of stakeholders which extended to include a large number of the general society members as the decision made the local news. The 'invasion' of these six Turkish Cypriot students was allegedly threatening the Greek- Christian Orthodox character of 'The English School'.

Despite the various tensions, the school year began and the Turkish Cypriot students continued to attend school. A space in the school was named 'room for Turkish studies' and it housed the Turkish language courses for the Turkish Cypriot students and their teacher. Nevertheless, this also gave rise to the concern that the Turkish Cypriot students were not integrating and were congregating in the room, isolated from the rest of the approximately 900 student body.

During the 2004 mobilizations and the campaign for voting yes or no to the United Nations' Secretary General Kofi Annan's plan for the reunification of Cyprus, some Greek Cypriot English School students had taken a more active role in promoting the 'Yes' campaign. The general sentiment that overtook the public opinion during that frantic time,

was that the ‘No’ vote was the patriotic thing to do, whereas the ‘Yes’ vote was akin to an act of treason. This controversial topic infiltrated into the school through the positions and actions of the students with Greek Cypriot ‘No’ supporters physically attacking ‘Yes’ supporting students. In one notable occasion, students went to the school in the morning to find graffiti stating the name of a particular ‘Yes’ supporting student and the message in Greek saying ‘NO WILL BE WRITTEN WITH YOUR BLOOD’. These ‘Yes’ supporters also happened to be members of an active youth peacebuilding group that promoted the idea of rapprochement with the Turkish Cypriot community for the purposes of building the foundations for peaceful co-existence.

### **School Climate Survey of 2006**

Three years following the re-enrollment of Turkish Cypriot students, the school deemed appropriate that a School Climate Survey should be undertaken. Dr. Laurie Johnson, a professor of counseling and mental health professions at Hofstra University in New York, led this initiative in May 2006 while she was in Cyprus on a Fulbright Scholar program, in collaboration with Dr. Athena Michaelidou of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. The survey was completed by students from years 1-4 and 6-7 and it was comprised by 23 questions that asked for a response on a Likert scale that ranged from 1-7 with “4” being the midpoint. Many of the questions were structured in a way that required students to provide an answer not based on their personal belief but on their perceived culture of the school. A statement on the questionnaire for example stated: “many people in this school are biased against people who are from different backgrounds than their own” as opposed to asking for example “are you biased against other people who are from a different background than your own”.

For their study, the two scholars collected a total of 668 cases which they analyzed using the statistical software package SPSS. Among the respondents about 42% were female and about 56% were male while 84% self-identified themselves as Greek Orthodox with the remaining 16% identifying as Turkish Cypriot, Armenian, British, Maronite or “other” (Johnson, 2006). In addition to the Likert scale answers, the students were able to include open-ended comments. A total of 133 students, of which 114 were Greek Cypriots wrote various comments which were analyzed based on thematic content.

In their analysis, the scholars found that the most agreement was generated by the statements “I am comfortable having a teacher who is from a different background than mine”, “The school actively welcomes those from all different cultures”, “The teachers and management of this school promote the importance of accepting the people from all different backgrounds”, “This school has offered me good opportunities to learn about accepting and understanding diversity”, “My own cultural background is respected and included in all aspects of this school” and “I feel that the environment in this school is really helping me be successful as a person” (Johnson, 2006).

Overall, the School Climate Survey indicated that there was a good climate within the school. Nevertheless, I personally find the analysis of the aggregated data as an outcome with little significance, as the vast majority of respondents were Greek Cypriots which were even complemented in numbers by the other minority students such as the Armenians and Maronites who speak Greek and are fully incorporated within the Greek Cypriot society. The researchers did include a note on this fact as a limitation, but continued to present the aggregated data regardless and considered them as reliable (Johnson, 2006). Therefore, I believe that the most interesting outcomes that this study offers are based on disaggregated

data as they result from the various isolated categories. Johnson finds that the students in the higher classes or “longtermers” as she refers to them are less positive than the “newcomers”. These students believe that “some students in this school are not comfortable with people who are from a different background than their own”, that “many people in this school are biased against people who are from different backgrounds than their own”, that “discrimination exists in this school”, and that they “have often heard students say negative things about people from certain religious or cultural backgrounds”(Johnson, 2006). In addition Johnson (2006) reports that Greek Cypriots showed greater recognition that bias, discrimination and inequality exists in the school environment.

Turkish Cypriots expressed agreement with the statements “Some students in this school are not comfortable with people who are from a different background than their own”, “Not everyone from my cultural background is treated fairly in this school”, “Many people in this school are biased against people who are from different backgrounds than their own”, “People of certain religious backgrounds do not mix easily in this school”, “I often have heard students say negative things about people from certain religious or cultural backgrounds” (Johnson, 2006). Johnson (2006) also notes that the Turkish Cypriots disagreed with the statement “My attitudes and behaviors toward those who are different from me are the same in school as they are when at home” indicating that these students feel they are different at home than they are while at The English School.

Within the 19 available written comments provided by the minority students, Johnson (2006) reported that students felt language inequality, as Greek was often used in several school functions, and that discrimination was not stemming from the school, but from the students. One student is reported to have noted that “even though she liked the school she

wished that she hadn't come here at all" (Johnson, 2006). On the other side, the Greek Cypriot comments expressed a different narrative. Out of 114 students who provided open ended comments, 25% stated that they were discontent about the removal of Greek Orthodox icons from the classrooms, and that there should be more Greek Orthodox religious instruction taking place at the school. A group of 18% among this group believed that the Greek Cypriots are actually the ones being discriminated against at the school. Furthermore, 13% of these students made remarks about the Turkish Cypriot fee-waver issue as an item of discrimination, 9% made comments around nationalistic feelings including comments about restoring the Greek flag, that the island's history justifies the discrimination and that "a good Turk is a dead Turk" (Johnson, 2006). The latter is a well-known motto that is being used by extreme nationalistic groups. Finally, some students made remarks about how some teachers are racists, some others said that it is the Turkish Cypriots fault because they do not try to integrate and that they just keep to themselves and finally, about 4% of these students provided comments stating that the school management's focus on discrimination against Turkish Cypriots is making things worse (Johnson, 2006). Dr. Johnson returned to the school in 2007 and provided a consultation based on a two week visit at the school, and again in 2009 and 2012 when she repeated the School Climate Survey with the new student population.

During all her visits, Dr. Johnson made a series of remarks and recommendations for the school to follow in order to improve the situation at the school. The aggregate data that resulted from the 2006 School Climate Survey showed a school in a rather positive culture. However, the categorized data presented a different viewpoint, and even offered reasons for the rising of concerns, as some students had gone as far as to demonstrate hatred against the



other community. Even though the school intensified efforts towards improving the school's climate, soon after the beginning of the next school year a group of masked individuals entered the school and attacked the Turkish Cypriot students near the Turkish Studies' room where the Turkish Cypriots used to frequent during recess time. The culprits were quickly chased out of the school as other Greek Cypriot students intervened to help their Turkish Cypriot classmates. Some reported at the time, that the school identity and the 'external others' ironically acted as a mechanism that finally brought closer the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students.

As expected, this event caused great turbulence not only within the school community, but on the entire island as the event made the news and the press dealt with the event for days. Different political parties were presenting this event from a perspective that more suitably served their agenda. Even though all parties condemned the event, they presented a different rhetoric about what had caused it and who was to blame. The right wing presented this as the outcome of systemic inequalities and frustration at the school, the government and the president presented this as a unique unimportant event without any significance towards a systemic issue and the left presented this as the action of far right nationalist thugs who are hindering the prospects of peaceful coexistence.

Based on the symbols seen on their clothing, the group of culprits was identified as members of the far right group 'ELAM', which is related to the far right group and political party of 'Golden Dawn' in Greece. In addition, they were identified as being 'fans' of 'APOEL' football team, an assumption which was also based on the insignia seen on their clothing. This is the football team associated with the right wing political party of Cyprus. It is widely known that the aforementioned extremist right wing party finds supporters among

the youth of this football team, whose supporters have historically been at their vast majority prone to a Greek, Christian Orthodox, anti-communist and anti-Turkish ideology. It was believed at the time that a student at the school who was associated with an individual who held a position in the team's management was the one who organized the attack.

Symbols of the conflict are very important elements in the island's culture. The following incident comes to demonstrate an example of exactly how much this seems to be the case. In July 2014, André Moritz, a Brazilian soccer player by profession, was proposed by international scouts as being a suitable transfer for the APOEL soccer team. Before the player was even assessed for his performance, he was rejected based on the disapproval of the fans and the club's administration. The reason was that Moritz had spent eight years living in Turkey playing in the Turkish championship but most severely, he had tattooed the Turkish flag's elements, a crescent and a star on his right arm. When the player was informed of this matter and received an explanation of the island's politics, he allegedly offered to have the tattoo removed. Nevertheless, the verdict had been announced and the reasoning for the disapproval and the rejection was that he is a Turkophile, and such a person cannot be playing for a club like APOEL. Knowing the elements of the everyday life within this culture is an important asset for a researcher.

### **The Researcher as a Research Tool**

“One day our school's administrator came to our class and said: There is a scholar from abroad in our school today conducting some research. I need volunteers to be interviewed. Who here speaks English and can tell him that Cyprus is Greek and that all Turks must leave the island?” Konstantina, who is now a Ph.D. and who thus understands and acknowledges the importance of academic research, remembers her high school

administrator voicing the above statement in the 2002 school year. Essentially, the researcher who was linguistically but most importantly culturally limited, followed the formal process for acquiring permission to conduct research in a Cypriot public school, but in this case and unfortunately for him and the validity of his findings, he unknowingly managed to collect tempered data. The mistake that he committed was that he trusted the school administrator for his data collection process while he also neglected or never realized the fact that the role of Cypriot education was officially tied to the creation of a Greek oriented national identity that resonates with the Greek Cypriot collective narrative. The researcher received the information that the administrator wanted him to receive, which most likely reverberated not just the Ministry of Education's official position but also her own perceptions about the conflict.

The identity of the researcher is an important factor in field research, especially when the observations take place in a conflict or post conflict zone (Höglund, 2011). Addressing the insider-outsider debate, Hermann (2001) suggests that there are a number of advantages and challenges in conducting research as a native or an outsider to the identity and culture. The above story demonstrates an example of the challenges that a researcher who is an outsider can face, and which can prove to be detrimental for the quality and validity of the research findings. The researcher who happens to be an insider has the advantages of understanding the identity and culture, but faces the challenge of misinterpreting the data because of personal biases and beliefs that are difficult to block throughout the data collection and interpretation process. Therefore, it is imperative for researchers to explore their own position throughout their investigation and analysis. Subjectivity, as Alan Peshkin (1991) notes, "is like a garment that cannot be removed" (p. 286). Subjectivity is closely

connected with the researcher's position and thus it is important to be understood and consciously acknowledged during all phases of the research production.

### **Self-Identification of Subjectivity and Position**

Locating oneself in respect to a personal position within the research implementation is a complicated task. It may be easy to present what is on the surface of your personality, like seeing the tip of an iceberg. Understanding the greater and most significant parts of its foundation though, necessitates the exploration of what lays below the water surface.

Understanding one's positioning as a researcher and the difficulty of managing subjectivity is tied with understanding oneself in relation to the I, the psyche, the mind, the world, cultures, people, politics, everything.

Naively, one may say "I know exactly who I am and how I look at the world". It may seem as natural and easy to say this, as natural and easy it is to have a cup of coffee somewhere in the Middle East. Nevertheless, although the cup of coffee seems to be exactly the same regardless of where you are having it, different people believe it to be a very different thing. Some may call it Greek coffee while some others call it Turkish coffee, Arabic coffee, Byzantine coffee and more. Some associate it with culture, others with social functions of social congregation and human interaction for deliberating politics and arguing about sports teams. In Cyprus, different brands of coffee are even associated with one's political affiliation. It is surprising to think that one single quotidian commodity as natural and neutral as a cup of coffee has such a variety of identities of significant importance. Essentially, this is a fact because people view this seemingly identical concoction from different perspectives because of their different positions and identities.

The way one sees and conceives the world is undisputedly related with one's identity. Understanding one's personal position requires a deep reflection of all the unit identities that compose a self. This is an important step for a researcher, and especially one who utilizes qualitative methods. Beyond the athlos of understanding oneself, researchers face a second athlos of understanding the other and an even greater athlos of understanding how their work on researching and understanding something about their observations is affected by their affiliation with large group identities. Amid this challenging and chronovorous academic triathlon, researchers have the task not only to be in a constant reflection and re-estimation of their own ever shifting and re-morphed positions, but to also reflect on the potential shifts in the beliefs of their participants and the greater social surrounding during the data collection period.

I do not know if I am even consciously aware of all the elements that affect my position as a researcher. Therefore, I will present the elements of my identity that are mainly responsible for the research lenses through which I observed my work for this dissertation research. First and foremost, as the sole researcher of this study, I acknowledge the fact that I was born and raised in the conflicted island of Cyprus and that I am a member of the post-division generation which is under observation. The conflict is a great factor that shapes every Cypriot's identity but certainly not in a universal way. For example, internally displaced people possess their refugee identity, or their refugee consciousness, and the trauma associated with this identity significantly shapes their beliefs and sets their positions about the conflict, the people on the other side of the ceasefire line, politics and every other aspect of life. My family was neither displaced nor does it have any strong political affiliations. Both of these factors allowed me to have less prejudice and more freedom of

thought in assessing the conflict and its future. I am politically conscious but political party neutral and not very religious. Unlike the majority of my compatriots, I do not consider myself to be a Greek Cypriot nor a Greek of Cyprus. I see myself as a Cypriot who speaks Greek. I was raised without any racial or ethnic constructs bounding my ideology. I believe in equality and equity among all humans and I am opposed to systems that create such ideologies and disparities. I believe that everyone should be free to do as they wish, as long as their freedom does not affect the freedom of their fellow beings. I see respect as one of the most important human values. I believe that teaching national supremacy carries significant dangers for humanity and that teaching respect for other cultures and people is a source of intellectual wealth and social prosperity.

Growing up in a place which is in a stalemate conflict, I learned that there is this other group of people who live on the other side of the dividing line and that those people were my enemies because they hurt my national in-group and committed terrible atrocities. I had never seen them and at that time this was even impossible to do because of the division. Yet, I learned that I had to hate them. I participated in the school choirs singing patriotic songs about the division and acted in school plays that promoted the same narrative. I drew pictures and wrote essays following the prompt of “I Do Not Forget”.

One experience in my life came to stand as a landmark in the re-shaping of my identity and in making its core what it is today. In 1998, at age 16, I received a Fulbright fellowship and traveled to Maine, USA, as part of a group of 20 Greek Cypriot teenagers, in order to meet with a group of 20 Turkish Cypriot teenagers at Seeds of Peace international peace camp. In other words, I travelled half way across the world, in order to meet some other teenagers who lived as close as 5 miles away from my house, but could have never met

on that same island. Still though, these were supposed to be my enemies. Soon after we met and through our facilitated deliberation sessions, it was clear that each side had a completely different perception of the conflict, its roots and the events that led to it. Each side perceived the other as the enemy and there was a high level of mistrust. I remember my troubling thoughts about how could each side have such a different view about the same conflict and how could we have each hated someone that we had never met. At that moment, I realized that our knowledge and our perceptions were the product of our education and our partaking in our conflicting collective narratives. This experience shifted my identity and my positions about the conflict. Furthermore, future interaction with teenagers from other conflicted countries has shown me that many practices that promote ‘othering’ are similar in different conflicted places. Through my academic studies I have made efforts to understand what are the reasons and which are the elements responsible for the creation of feelings of mistrust, prejudice or even animosity against groups of collective others through educational systems and practices. My dissertation research stands as the evidence of my interest in this topic and is the culmination of years of experiences and studies.

As an educator, as a young man who wants to see a different future for his country and for the world, as a pacifist and proponent of social peace, equality and respect for human rights and dignity and as an idealist, I realize that I have a charged subjectivity that may seem difficult to neutralize in such a research setting. Nevertheless, I used the knowledge and training that I have received and I followed the principles of qualitative research methods throughout my data collection. I collected my data with neutrality and analyzed what they conveyed without allowing my subjectivity to interfere with its interpretation in a manner that would hinder the validity of my findings.

Although deconstructing and analyzing the complete synthesis of my identity as a researcher is a complex task, I am certainly aware of the core elements that shape it. As mentioned, these stem from major components of my identity as it was shaped through family, large group identities, nationality, language, experiences, traveling, and interactions with people. As a native of Cyprus and a person who belongs to the post conflict and post division generation, I am well aware of its culture and the history of the conflict as it has manifested itself in the Greek Cypriots' everyday life from since I can remember. I have also had an extended relationship with the school I am observing. Members of my immediate family have graduated from the school, as well as the majority of my close friends. Even though the English Institute is organizationally not related to the school, it operates within the same classrooms, offering afternoon private English lessons, and this is where I learned how to speak English. Furthermore, in 2006 I conducted research related to the school and its student body following the event of the attack against the Turkish Cypriot students. Therefore, a large part of my understanding of the school that I chose to research originates from years of experience with the institution, the building and its people. Essentially my background knowledge regarding this research is the product of the accumulation of many of my lived experiences. My academic and life interests are interwoven with my identity as a researcher and this combination has led to this dissertation research. Ultimately, I hold confidence in my belief that throughout my research I demonstrated the appropriate academic conduct that controlled my subjectivity and used my expertise as an insider of the local culture in a manner that made it an asset to my work.



## **My First Day at The English School, 2014**

I entered the school's grounds on March 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 at 7am and immediately began my observations. People were starting to arrive at the school. I went to the headmaster's office to report my arrival and picked up the weekly schedule for the classes I was interested in observing. I left the headmaster's office and started walking around looking for symbols. Eleven years had passed since 2003 when Turkish Cypriots had first enrolled at the school and seven years had passed since Dr. Johnson's 2006 initial school climate survey. Therefore, no student who had taken part in that study was still at the school. My proposed research methodology was taking a completely different approach from that of the school climate study as I had decided to seek out the answers to my research questions by mainly observing the students and the staff within their school environment. Furthermore, I had the advantage of time, as I would have been able to spend a significant amount of time conducting observations and collecting data on site.

The lime stone building is typical of the colonial architecture design that the British used in Cyprus. This is certainly a historic structure built on the hill right across from the hill where the building formerly known as the Governor's house, and currently the presidential house is located. The old science building that also co-housed the canteen is now demolished. It has been replaced by a new and very modern building that houses the sciences, information technology labs, offices for the staff of these disciplines, the office of the university admissions counsellors, the school's library and an auditorium. I walked around the old building and stood across the main entrance. Directly behind me, facing the entrance was a grove with a statue surrounded by four flag posts. Only three of the poles were carrying a flag. The statue depicted Michalakis Karaolis, "the first person to be hanged for freedom" on

May 10<sup>th</sup> 1956 wrote the dedication in Greek. The dedication also included the information that Karaolis was an English School alumnus of the class of 1953. The first pole on my right hand side carried the flag of the Cyprus Republic. The second pole carried the flag of the European Union. The statue was between the two sets of two flag poles. The third flag was now left of the statue as I was facing it, and held the flag of the English School's emblem which depicts a lion's head in yellow color over a dark blue background. The fourth flag pole carried no flag. I was facing the North. Behind the statue and the flags was the mount range of Pentadaktilos, which is beyond the cease fire line and where the giant flag of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is almost identical to the Turkish flag, only in reverse coloring and two red lines above and below the red crescent and star, projects itself to the Greek Cypriots in the South. I thought to myself: "I walked around looking for symbols and I got them. I was facing a historic colonial education building, with a lion as an emblem and a motto in Latin as its symbols. This is a colonial school where Greek Cypriot Michalakis Karaolis had studied before he joined EOKA to fight against the British. This hero of the new republic was captured and hanged by the British and died for his ideology of joining Cyprus with Greece. His statue is now here at the school's entrance, where a Greek flag used to fly on a flag pole that is now empty, where Turkish Cypriot students who feared the sound of the word EOKA now come to attend a school, where an EOKA fighter is commemorated with a statue, while the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus flag flashes from the background." The entire problem in one view I thought.

I continued my walk through the school and reached the other side of the campus where the main parking lot is found. At 7:35am two big 65-seat buses and a smaller one arrive at the school carrying the about 150 Turkish Cypriot students who exit and head for

their classrooms as the bell is about to ring. They seemed as happy kids going to school, carrying their backpacks, design and technology projects, musical instruments etc. I continued my walk around the school's premises. I was happily surprised to see a poster for a food drive and two different posters from the debate club. The topics were "Should we all have a one child policy?" and "Should we be offering development aid?" I was pleasantly surprised because I conceived these as real topics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, something that is aligned with the school's mission and also with the principles of peace education. I also thought that these topics were indicative of a high level of knowledge about essential economic and cultural aspects of globalization, which are also areas of my own teaching and academic interests. As I continued my inaugural observation walking around the school, my thoughts about the global returned to the local as I saw a note written on one of the picnic tables in the school's yard. The message was written with a marker and a 'white-out' pen. Each letter was about 2 inches big and the message was delivered in three separate lines. It read: "CYPRUS IS GREEK". Next to it, "AU79" was written with the same letters and materials. This stands for APOEL ULTRAS, the APOEL football team's group of "fanatics" which was established in 1979. In her 2012 consultation report, Dr. Johnson reported that she was told that one morning the Turkish Cypriot year one students entered their classroom to find similar hate language on the blackboard and on their desks, a fact that was not, as she reports, appropriately addressed by the staff and management team (Johnson, 2012). In the same area I noticed two Greek flag stickers that were placed in two different locations. One was on a recycling and trash can, and was placed in between the recycle sign. The other one was placed quite high up on the front glass part of a large yard light. I thought it was interesting that the trash and recycling cans were carrying an advertisement of a bank that

originates from mainland Greece. It was interesting because I thought it was probably the case that these were donated from a bank, as opposed to being paid for by the school, or by the government, who after all owns the physical property and is responsible for its maintenance.

In the main yard next by the walls of the old historic main building, a monument stood commemorating The English School's centennial presence on the island. It depicts an 8 feet high open book placed upright with a slight inclination towards the opposite direction of the viewer. It is made out of concrete and on the left hand side of the viewer, the page holds a picture of the school's first class in 1900, which numbered a handful of students and the few teachers. On the right hand side, the page depicts a picture of the English School's student body and staff in the year 2000, when the total school community exceeded one thousand people. The school's logo "Non Sibi Sed Scholae" was carved in the stone along with the school's lion emblem.

My first observation on the grounds was completed with my notes on the ongoing campaign named "The English School Goes Green" that aimed to promote recycling. Despite the signs and the recycling collection containers made by students with recyclable materials, the content of the trash cans and the recycling cans looked exactly the same. As I walked towards the assembly room, I saw a few vending machines, which drew my attention as vending machines do not exist in the Cyprus Republic's public schools. The vending machines only had directions in Greek. I followed the signs towards my first destination. The old signs on the walls were only written in English and Greek.

My first academic observation experience was not in a classroom but in an assembly room. This weekly assembly is a 30 minute period of time during which students of a

different year level come on an alternating basis to listen to a lecture or observe a presentation. That day a teacher spoke about the spring equinox and presented what this event meant physically, but also proceeded to present what this phenomenon meant for the people of several historical civilizations and other cultures around the world. She concluded the presentation with a message for ecology, and that the coming of spring is a good time for the students to set new targets. During subsequent Monday morning assemblies, I observed visitors who came to talk on a variety of issues. A health specialist gave a talk on HIV/AIDS and issues of reproductive health, a person working in a non-profit organization gave a talk on racism and another one talked about the refugees and the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which was where she worked. I thought that this speaker-series was well planned to include age-appropriate messages for the selected audience each time.

I left the assembly room and as I was walking I listened to the students while they were walking away heading to their next class. I heard Greek being spoken and I heard Turkish. The community-linguistic divide immediately became apparent. I walked into my first class, which happened to be a year three Math lesson on calculating the area of the circle. As the teacher was going around checking homework, Greek Cypriot students kept asking her questions in Greek, while she was responding in English. When a student asked a question in Greek while she was addressing the entire classroom, the teacher said “English” which essentially meant that she would not respond unless he posed the question in English. This was a very common phenomenon in almost every class I observed. Interestingly enough, the same happened when a Turkish Cypriot student asked a question in Turkish to a

Turkish Cypriot teacher in the presence of Greek Cypriot classmates. “English” was the prompt regardless of the language used.

Following this class I attended my first staff meeting, where the headmaster updated the teachers on a number of issues related to the school’s administrative agenda. One of the main issues for yet one more time as it seemed, was that parents had called to complain that their children had been bullied in the restroom or were simply afraid to go there because of bullies who also congregated there to smoke. In one of the following weeks a fire was set in that same restroom which eventually remained closed until the end of the school year, leaving students with no other choice than to use one of the restrooms in the other buildings despite the considerably long distance.

My next observation was for a physics class with a different group of year three. The students went to the lab and took their seats. Out of 24 students in that class, five were Turkish Cypriots. The Turkish Cypriots sat together, one next to each other in the front bench row. Two Greek Cypriot students sat at the end of that row and the rest of the Greek Cypriot students occupied the other two rows. They all seemed to like their teacher who started the class by complaining about the students’ tardiness in getting to class. The students essentially were using the excuse that the science lab was far away from their classroom, and this is why they were late. In fact they just took their time in an effort to be out of class for a longer time. The students were at some point asked to work in groups. Groups were formed by the students themselves and the result was a divide that led to the creation of groups either with all Greek Cypriot or all Turkish Cypriot students. The discussions in each group took place in the students’ ethnic language, but that did not seem to concern the teacher who after the class

had ended told me how much he supports the ideology of peacebuilding while congratulating and thanking me for the research that I do.

It was time for physical education with the students of year five. The group I was observing was a group of students that chose to take the IGCSE examination, meaning they had chosen Physical Education as one of their concentration courses. I followed the boys to the futsal pitch. A futsal pitch is a small soccer field, ideally for games of two teams of five players each. After the teacher spoke to the students, they started playing soccer. I noted that the two Turkish Cypriots in the group were playing on the same team. They would primarily try to pass the ball to each other, even when it was not ideally the best decision for the purpose of the game. The Greek Cypriot students were the absolute majority on the pitch and Greek was used during the game, even when Greek Cypriot students asked for a pass from a Turkish Cypriot student. In a rather shocking moment for me, I heard a Greek Cypriot cursing at a Turkish Cypriot student in Greek. The latter seemed to have perfectly understood what was said, but completely ignored it and continued the game. This was the first of two direct bullying incidents that I witnessed during my observations. The bell rang and that was the end of my first day at school.

The selected literature style used for composing the written narrative that reports my observation notes and thoughts from my first day of investigation at my research site, aimed towards providing a description of the lived experience of being at the school. It was certainly not a depiction as complete as a novelist would have been able to provide, but it can perhaps still serve as an introduction to the report of my findings that follows.

## **CHAPTER 5: THE SCHOOL IN THE PRESENT DAY**

“The experience of four years in Cyprus as a teenager finding his place in life taught me several life lessons, the most valuable one being that personal relationships among people are key to understanding, and that understanding is key to friendship, and friendship is key to true peace.”

- Jan, English School alumnus, 1957-1960

The research questions that guide this investigation pertain to the effort of understanding how do the curriculum, instructional practices and everyday student life at the English School contribute to the establishment of an educational institution that meets the academic needs and personal development of its entire student body; and to the understanding of how has the English School’s bi-communal educational setting contributed to the establishment and strengthening of interpersonal relationships between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students. The findings that emerge from the analysis of the data that was collected through fieldwork observations, interviews and a social network questionnaire are presented in this chapter. Despite the school’s efforts to address the new challenges that emerged from the re-admittance of Turkish Cypriot students, the findings suggest that there are still a number of direct and indirect obstacles that hinder the goal of true social integration. The major themes that emerged from the data analysis are presented through the categories of obstacles to integration, curriculum and instruction and finally institutional conflicts over the prioritization of institutional needs.



## **Obstacles to Integration**

During the first week of the fieldwork research, the class of a Greek Cypriot teacher was observed following her invitation. This was a class comprised only by Turkish Cypriot students of year five. The teacher tried to do what the high school administrator had done in the case mentioned in the previous chapter by straightforwardly asking students to tell me how intercultural the school is as opposed to multicultural. The students looked somewhat flabbergasted, as they all very well knew that this was not the case. In order to ensure the quality of the research findings, the principal investigator directed the conversation into different topics related to school life, the curriculum and the instruction. This discussion with students was beneficial in identifying themes of interest and establishing further communication channels. Despite this teacher's belief that the school is an intercultural institution, the divisions within the school were obvious.

“There is no integration here” a teacher reports. This answer was consistently reported through interviews and verified through the observations. There were clear division patterns everywhere, from the classroom seating arrangements to the several locations in the yard where students congregated in ethno-linguistic divided groups during recess to have their sandwich or snack. The lack of meaningful social integration is also supported through the analysis of the administered social network questionnaire. A total of 175 questionnaires were collected and 171 cases were analyzed. Four questionnaires were excluded from the analysis as the respondents did not provide their name, which would be the indicator of their ethnic group affiliation. A total of 92 questionnaires came from students of year one, with 82 Greek Cypriots and 10 Turkish Cypriots responding. From students in year two, 48 questionnaires of 42 Greek Cypriots and 6 Turkish Cypriots were analyzed. Finally,

31 questionnaires from 21 Greek Cypriots, 9 Turkish Cypriots and one international student came from students of year three. Among the total sample of 171 questionnaires analyzed, 13 included at least one name from someone in the other community, which represents 7.6% of the total sample. Four out of 145 Greek Cypriots in the population reported to have a friend from the other community which corresponds to 2.75%, whereas 9 out of 25, or 36% of Turkish Cypriots listed at least one person from the other community as their friend. The relatively small sample size of the Turkish Cypriots may seem to be a limitation, but the 25 out of 171 available cases in the sample correspond to the 14.6% of the total sample which closely correlates to the total percentage of Turkish Cypriot students within the school's total population. Further qualitative research investigation of the names reported in the questionnaires was conducted in an effort to match the friendship responses. This analysis was beneficial in extracting additional information about the integration of the school's social network and revealed facts that the numerical analysis could not have presented.

Within the first year students, one Greek Cypriot boy out of the 82 questionnaires listed a Turkish Cypriot as his friend, in the last position of his friends list. The Turkish Cypriot boy he named did not reciprocate the friendship statement in his own list. Four out of the ten Turkish Cypriot students who answered the questionnaire included Greek Cypriot names in their list, with all cases being either in the last place, or towards the end of their lists. Seven different entries were listed with one name being repeated in three out of the four students' response lists. In two of these cases this was the only name that was reported. This student who has a foreign sounding first name and a Greek last name, most likely comes from an international family background. Even though she seems to be a popular person based on the frequency that her name appeared on other questionnaires and based on the fact

that in her responses she listed twenty one friends, she did not include any names of Turkish Cypriots. This was also the case with two of the other four remaining Greek Cypriot names, who did not reciprocate the friendship statement. The other two remaining Greek Cypriot students who were listed by Turkish Cypriots were not among the students who had completed a questionnaire.

One out of six Turkish Cypriots in the population sample of year two, listed a Greek Cypriot as a friend, but the Greek Cypriot did not reciprocate. Out of the 42 questionnaires of the Greek Cypriot students of year two, one boy listed a Turkish Cypriot boy quite high on his list of friends. The Turkish Cypriot boy however did not reciprocate on his list. A Greek Cypriot girl with an international background listed a Turkish Cypriot girl among her friends but there was no available response from that individual. In one single case, one Greek Cypriot girl listed a Turkish Cypriot girl as her best friend. Unfortunately in this case too, this Turkish Cypriot student was not among the student population that had responded to the questionnaire. Nevertheless, this finding prompted further investigation into this unique case. During the fieldwork observation period, the two girls were identified and observed with specific interest. Furthermore, the case was reported during interviews with the teaching staff and more information was sought about this distinctive example. The teachers reported that even though the two girls were fluent in their native languages, they were both raised abroad, in countries where multiculturalism is respected and interculturalism is promoted. This fact, and perhaps in addition to the fact that they were not brought up through the 'I Do Not Forget' public elementary school curriculum certainly plays a role in their identity and their social circle decisions.

Finally, among the 21 Greek Cypriot students of year three that completed the questionnaire, no one reported a Turkish Cypriot in their list of friends. On the other side, four out of nine Turkish Cypriots listed Greek Cypriots in their list of friends. Two girls listed one of the girls from year two that was previously mentioned as being one of international background. One Turkish Cypriot boy listed two Greek Cypriots as his friends and another one listed three Greek Cypriot boys who were all two years older than him, as he reported.

Even though the division is not absolute, integration is certainly not the norm. This was also evident from the seating chart patterns that were recorded during classroom observations. Unless a seating chart arrangement is designed and enforced by the teacher, students choose to seat next to students of their own ethnic community. Even though this fact reduces the opportunities for interaction between students, it is not seen as something terribly wrong by some teachers. Specifically, a Turkish Cypriot teacher said that “there is nothing wrong for students to seat next to their friends, or where they feel more comfortable”. Some teachers mentioned that at the end of the day, there is no integration, but everyone seems to be happy. This was a fact that was well supported through the collected observations. Even though students across the linguistic divide did not seem to integrate, they seemed to be having a nice time at the school with their friends from their own community. Therefore, there was no significant integration, but there was practical co-existence in the school spaces and in the classrooms.

### **Economics of Integration**

“They even bring their own water from home” a Greek Cypriot teacher reported during her interview, alluding to the common belief that the Turkish Cypriots avoid spending

money in the Greek Cypriot economy. When the checkpoints first opened in 2003, and up this day, Greek Cypriots who travel to the North by car, have to issue a liability insurance cover note for their vehicle. The initial insurance fee was 10 CYP (Cyprus Pounds) and today it is set at 20 euro. The Greek Cypriot public opinion holds that this insurance money goes directly into the accounts of the 'pseudo' government of the 'pseudo' Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In the Greek Cypriot narrative the word 'pseudo' accompanies every mention of any political entity in the Turkish Cypriot community. During those early days of crossing, the rhetoric used by the Greek Cypriot parties that wanted to deter Greek Cypriots from visiting the North, said that 'we' were giving them 'our' money. Estimates of how much money 'we gave them' were reported in cash amounts and translated into the equivalent of how many tanks this money can buy for 'them to kill our children'. There was no narrative of how many schools, roads, hospitals etc. the Turkish Cypriots could build, or how they could use this money for the growth of their deteriorated economy. The only language used by these parties, was the language of fear.

As a result of this rhetoric, a widely believed public opinion was created and it was especially prominent in the early days of the crossings. This public opinion implied that commerce with 'the other' was akin to an act of treason. Therefore, many Greek Cypriots would cross to the North but when they would later narrate their experience to their friends they would feel the need to excuse themselves. This was done by saying "we went" and adding "but we took our own food and did not spend anything there" or "but we ate at a Greek Cypriot 'enclaved' person's restaurant". Things have somewhat changed in these last few years and people now frequently cross to the other side of the line for the purpose of commerce. As perhaps expected, people cross to buy things that are not available on their

side. Therefore, the majority of the Turkish Cypriots who cross for commerce are looking to buy 'original' brands and better quality products, while many Greek Cypriots who cross are looking to buy cheaper products and imitation items of expensive brands.

The teacher's statement about the fact that Turkish Cypriot students "even bring their own water from home", is a statement that places an additional emphasis on the continuing belief in the narrative that Turkish Cypriot students at the English School are not paying fees, and that the government is paying for their fees through Greek Cypriot taxpayer money. In addition, as if this was not enough, they are also even bringing their own water from home, thus avoiding spending any money in the Greek Cypriot economy. "It is a fallacy" a different teacher says and continued to explain that the fees were only covered for the first two years as an indication of good will that came from the then president of the Republic, "and that was it", she concludes. Nevertheless, the belief continues to exist even among some Greek Cypriot students who view themselves, and their families as fee paying victims. During one of my observations of a group of Turkish Cypriot students and staff, this issue was brought up and a Turkish Cypriot student expressed how unease he felt about this fact and how it is often an unjust and false accusation that Turkish Cypriot students receive. He continued to explain that at the end of the day, the cost of attending the school for a Turkish Cypriot is much higher than for a Greek Cypriot, as the Turkish Cypriots also have to pay for the transportation fees for the buses that carry them from, and to, the checkpoint on an everyday basis. As a result, the cost of attending the school becomes about one thousand euros more expensive for the Turkish Cypriots.

## **Quality Schooling in Isolation**

One group of five Turkish Cypriot students of year five greeted me as I walked by them during recess. Some of them were students in the class that I had visited and talked to, so I assume they felt familiar enough to do so. These students were always hanging out at that particular picnic table during recess. It was barely lunch time but they were having chicken and rice that they had brought to school from home stored in food containers. This is a highly uncommon practice as the school day ends shortly after one o'clock and students in the Cypriot school culture have their lunch when they return home. Food that is available at the school's canteen is mostly limited to sandwiches and wrapped food, thus a lunch box of this sort was uncommon and surprising to see. Thinking of the teacher's above mentioned comment, a probing remark about the food was made, while also noting how unlikely this practice was. The students explained that they are passionate about healthy eating and body building, so this was their preferred diet.

During our conversation the students were asked about how they received their parents' decision to send them to this school, on the 'other side'. One student said that his older brother had been there for school before him, so it was rather natural for him that he would go there too. The rest said that their parents told them how this was a great school that would offer them a better quality education than what was available in the North. When asked if this was true after all, the students unanimously and immediately responded 'yes' and that there is no question about it. The quality of education cannot be compared with schools on the other side, they reported. When asked if they regret the fact that they came to this school, they all unanimously and immediately responded 'yes' again and that there was no question about it. When asked why this was the case, the students' response was "Look at

us; this has been our lives for the last five years; the five of us sitting together on this bench”. The statement delivered was clearly conveying the message that despite the opportunity for high quality education, the social isolation they were experiencing was significant to such extent that made their schooling decision a regretful choice.

### **Bullying**

In addition to the offensive language bullying incident that was observed during the physical education lesson on the first day at the school, there was one more event that was witnessed, as previously noted. The second case observed was when a Greek Cypriot student threw a ball of trash aluminum foil at a group of two Turkish Cypriot students as he was walking by them. The two Turkish Cypriot students were sitting at a picnic table in the school yard and they were studying. Their reaction was the same as the reaction of the Turkish Cypriot boy in that first case that was observed. In complete apathy the two students kept looking into their books without even acknowledging the bully who just continued walking his way.

### **Romantic Relationships**

One interesting question to ponder about was whether any romantic relationships exist or existed between students from the two communities. This is information that would be available through school gossip. Teachers reported that this is a very unlike phenomenon and that such relationships are considered to be unthinkable. There is some sort of peer pressure and prejudice that is associated with intercommunal relationships, as they reported. “It is something that is taboo”, a teacher explained. There were a couple of instances when this happened, teachers reported, and these cases were the reasons for all of this to be revealed. In one case the couple broke up shortly after they started dating due to this exact



peer pressure, whereas in the other case the relationship lasted longer. However, in the case of the latter, one of the two students in the couple was half-international and for this reason the relationship managed to “fly under the radar” as a teacher said.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

The curriculum that the school follows is primarily determined by the international examining bodies that accredit the exams that the students take. Throughout all grade levels, the curriculum of Modern Greek has influences and links with the Ministry of Education’s mandated curriculum. The ancient history of Cyprus is taught during year one, when students are still divided into classrooms based on their native language. Therefore, this Cyprus ancient history is taught in Greek and uses resources that are provided by the Ministry of Education. During all other grade levels, the history taught follows the international exams curriculum which is rather Eurocentric, as opposed to the Hellenocentric curriculum found in public schools. The Turkish curriculum and textbooks were designed by the head of the Turkish language department at the school. Therefore, the school is not using any books or other resource materials that originate from Turkey or any entity of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Overall, the curriculum is rather rigorous and especially in the higher classes that were observed, the high level of knowledge content that was taught was rather surprising. A specific example comes from an economics class that was observed, where the content was similar to the content of a 200 level class at the university level.

### **Test Scores Lead Instruction**

Delivery and instruction is certainly characterized by a high level of quality as the school has the capability to employ the best available teachers in the private school teaching faculty market. One apparent factor that was evident throughout the research was the

systematic pressure for high test scores. As in many other contexts that operate under such competitive systems, the school's success seems to be solely measured by the students' success in their internationally assessed exams which raise their prospects of being accepted at a top University, typically somewhere in the United Kingdom. Therefore, this educational mechanism is fuelled by the parents' expectation that the high fees that they pay will buy the school's commitment to prepare their children for these exams and ensure they will receive the high scores that will get them into a top University. Subsequently, as the school wants to perpetuate its legacy, its prestigious name and the top ranking as the best public-private school on the island, it places the stressful demand on the teachers that their students must receive these high scores. This is especially stressful for non-tenured faculty whose job is dependent on the grades that their students will receive. As an absolute outcome of this educational mechanism, instruction comes to be characterized by a model that is centered on test preparation in a school culture where testing becomes the educational norm for all stakeholders. In one particular example, a fifth year level economics class was observed, which was taught by a teacher who had just returned from her maternity leave. The teacher asked the students to open their textbooks only to find out that only a handful had brought the textbook to school. In a flabbergasted reaction she asked the students why this had been the case, to receive a seemingly natural response from the students who said that they had not used the textbook in two months with their substitute teacher and that all they had been using was the booklet of past-papers that the school had provided them with.

This pressure system is not confined within the school's operations but extends into the students' evening activities. Members of the administrative staff reported that there is a growing concern about students attending private after-school lessons for additional exam

preparation on the subjects that they will be examined on. Dr. Johnson (2012) reported this in her latest consultancy report and she attributed it to a practice that she characterized as “keeping up with the Joneses”. The explanation she gave was that students and parents seek private tutoring merely because all the other students are doing the same. Therefore, students and parents are led to the practice by their belief that they are placed in a disadvantaged position, as others will go to the examination having done more preparation. Dr. Johnson (2012) correctly points out that this creates an additional expense for parents who are already paying high fees, but she is wrongly presenting this as being a novel phenomenon. This had been a practice for many years and it even led to some of these ‘popular’ after-school private tutors to be recruited to teach for the school. It is worth noting that the students are not precisely placed in a competition between their classmates from school, but are rather in a global competition between students from all around the world who will compete for these positions in foreign universities. Regarding this matter, one of the school’s senior administrators reported that the school is well aware of this after school private tutoring culture but stated that it is unnecessary as he believed that the school is doing a good job and that students who were not taking additional evening tutoring classes were equally successful in their exams.

This test score driven system has an obvious impact on instruction and the methods that teachers use in structuring their lessons. For example, group work between students was only used in three of the fifty five conducted classroom observations. Moreover, as reported above, teachers would often result to using past papers as opposed to textbooks for instruction and students were asked to complete tests or exam type tasks on a very frequent basis as part of the lesson. The lack of group work during lessons contributes to the

minimizing of the opportunities for intercommunal interactions between students.

Essentially, the high stakes that are placed on the test scores, force an instruction and curriculum delivery method that is individualistic and does not allow for student group work and interactions.

### **Staff and Training**

When Turkish Cypriot students returned to the school in September 2003, a Turkish Cypriot teacher was also hired to join the staff. More than one decade later in 2014, and with a total number of about 150 Turkish Cypriot students attending the school, the number of Turkish Cypriot teachers has only grown to three. Based on the school's 2013-2014 faculty and staff directory, there are 94 Greek Cypriot, three Turkish Cypriot, six Armenian and nine British or other nationality faculty members, 19 Greek Cypriots and one Armenian working as operations supporting staff and 12 Greek Cypriots and one foreign worker as part of the cleaning and premises maintenance staff. Therefore, it is obvious that the diversity in the staff is not representative of the student body, with this having some significant effects in the dynamics of the staff and their relationship with students. Very notably, Turkish Cypriot teachers report that Turkish Cypriot parents consider them to be more than just teaching staff at the school. They report that parents see them as their link to their children's school life and they often call them even during late night hours to voice their concerns.

A British teacher reported that he was employed at the school in the early 2000s, before the Turkish Cypriots had returned to the school. As he stated, he thought that he had accepted a job as a teacher at an international school. He notes that he was astonished to find out that he had come to a school where the student body was 98% Greek Cypriot. He was also taken by surprise by the Cypriot culture and how everything is politicalized. He went on

to talk about how even in the small community where he lives there are members of ELAM and a great Greek ethnic mentality that opposes anything Turkish. But what is most surprising is that “even my colleague here at the school calls Istanbul Constantinople and deems it an occupied city”, the teacher concluded.

Teachers report that not all of their colleagues are in accordance with the school’s decision to accept Turkish Cypriot students. Based on teacher estimates, the number of the staff that opposes this development may be as large as 40%. This is at principle a very problematic situation, not because of the mere fact that the number of opposing teachers could be as large as the reported percentage, but because there is even at least one teacher who is not welcoming to all the students at the school, and in the classroom that this teacher is asked and paid to teach.

### **Staff Divided**

When the school became bi-communal, a group of teachers and administrators came together to form a team that would focus on providing leadership for a smooth and functional transition into the school’s new era. Some of the actions taken included the creation of task force teams with the goals of promoting school community building, promoting respect for diversity and providing pastoral care. This group organized a visiting trip to a unified school in Northern Ireland in order to observe and learn from the practices that are followed in that context. During the first years following the return of the Turkish Cypriot students, these faculty members worked with passion towards promoting a bi-communal environment in the school. However, members of several stakeholder groups, including board members, teachers, parents, and students believed that this faculty member group was working towards this goal with excessive passion, to an extent that it had even become counter-productive

towards achieving its goal. Some of these teachers in the group were targeted by the opposing stakeholders and accused of operating under a political agenda, as the ideology of rapprochement has been typically associated with the political left. Teachers were accused directly and indirectly, through the means of gossip, confrontations and even a blog that some parents set up for other parents to write an array of accusations directed towards these staff members. The constant attack created such pressure and fatigue to the members of this team that resulted to the gradual lessening of the efforts of their committee to promote bi-communal relations among the students from the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities.

During the first years of the Turkish Cypriots' return, a club called 'Under the Same Sky' was established as part of the school's many extra-curricular clubs and societies. This club was led by a teacher who was also a member of the school's senior management team, and who was responsible for staff development and community building. Furthermore, he was also among the staff members who were actively promoting the agenda of rapprochement. The club's goal was to promote understanding and friendships between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students. One of the group's main activities was to organize a weekend trip, where students would join on a voluntary basis and participate in team building exercises and conflict resolution deliberation sessions while also discussing relevant topics of common interests like the issues of the missing people, the ongoing political negotiations and more. The group often hosted experts who would give lecture presentations and discuss with the student participants about such relevant topics. The club would organize two separate weekend retreat seminars, one for the younger students and one for the older students. One year, the group went to the weekend retreat without a clear action

plan and agenda, aiming to have a more laissez faire weekend bonding experience. During that trip, some Greek Cypriot students instigated a fight that resulted to a domino effect of events that led to the teacher abandoning the effort after being criticized for not doing an adequate job that would prevent this tension from occurring. Despite the administration's efforts to convince the teacher to continue the club, he refused to do so and the club became inactive. The teacher essentially believed that it was the official school's responsibility to take action towards this goal, as opposed to this being expected by an extra-curricular group that operated within the school on a voluntary basis. Consequently, and despite the administration's efforts to convince the teacher to continue this project, the group became initially inactive and later dismantled and removed from the school's catalogue of extra-curricular groups and societies. However, shortly after this event, in September of 2007 a student initiative with the support of a different teacher who is a leading member of the staff group that promotes activities for integration, created a new 'Active Citizenship Club'. The goal of this club is to promote ideas of democratic citizenship, civil society action and efforts for environmental protection and sustainability. In its description, this society concludes by stating that "Last but not least, the society aims to combat racism, extreme nationalism, and discriminatory attitudes amongst the school and elsewhere" (The English School, 2015).

### **Global Perspectives with a Local Focus**

The course of global perspectives came to be added as a course in the school following its inauguration as a subject to be available for testing by the international examining body that the school is associated with. During year three, this is a compulsory course for the students and it is designed to cover global issues around the world. One of the topics addressed in this course is conflict and various examples of conflicts are discussed

through it. Towards the end of the school year and after the curriculum has covered several conflicts from around the world, the class proceeds to discuss the Cyprus conflict. This is not included as a section of the international testing organization's curriculum, but it is rather an addition made by The English School's staff members that teach the course. In a coordination meeting, the teachers who teach this course decided to discuss the Cyprus conflict at the end of the school year, in their effort to connect the global perspectives to the local and the students' daily lives. It was also decided that the students would watch a documentary film called 'Sharing an Island' which depicts a group of three Greek Cypriot and three Turkish Cypriot young adults coming together and travelling across the island for a few days, while discussing issues about the conflict that divides them, and the culture that unites them. The goal and course of activities of this unit is for students to be exposed to the other side's collective narrative as it emerges through the documentary, and they are then asked to deliberate about the conflict, its roots and the narratives themselves. By the end of the documentary the young participants gain at least a better understanding of the other side's positions, fears and needs, which are essential steps in the process of conflict resolution. Three of these classes were observed with great interest towards the end of the academic year.

Two of the observations were with the same class and teacher and the third one with a different teacher and a different group of students. The first teacher led a guided discussion with the classroom climate being somewhat uneasy and the students being in avoidance mode, trying not to engage in any conversation about the conflict that would instigate confrontations. The teacher concluded by explaining the conflict as a colonial scheme that eventually divided the Cypriot people. The teacher believed that it was essential for the



students to have these conversations, because as she reported, this would have been the last time the students would be taking a compulsory class that would allow them the time to discuss about the Cyprus conflict. However, the classroom time that was allotted to discussing this issue seemed very brief and did not allow for a constructive conversation to take place.

The observation of the citizenship and global perspectives class that was led by the other teacher was a completely different experience. Either the fact that it was the last lesson of the school year, or the fact that the teacher felt that she was being observed by an external researcher led her to not follow a well-structured lesson plan, but instead tried to somewhat bring the course into a conclusion without however having a succinct plan. As a result she talked about a variety of issues without reaching any debt or providing efficient explanation for many of the topics that ranged from Saddam Hussein's rule to the Crimean crisis between Russia and Ukraine, and from bullying to totalitarian regimes. During that same class, a Turkish Cypriot student was supposed to present his research project on the topic of the Islamist insurgency in Nigeria, but was not given enough time to do so. In fact, as he was reading his assignment, the teacher sidetracked the conversation and never returned back to him to conclude. While the student was reading, a Greek Cypriot student was demonstrating disruptive behavior. The teacher asked him to be respectful with the student answering in Greek that he could not understand the English accent of his Turkish Cypriot classmate. This was not the end of this student's upsetting behavior.

The teacher asked questions like "who goes to church", when not all students are Christians. She then asked, "what does it mean to be a good Christian", and "what does it mean to be a good Muslim" in her effort to make a point that even historically opposing

religions have similar characteristics. A few minutes before the end of the class the same Greek Cypriot student who had been disruptive started making some rather extreme comments against homosexuals. The conversation escalated to extreme levels with the teacher trying to maintain some control and persuade the student about the inaccuracies or racism of the statements he was making. The student expressing these thoughts was not shouting but rather engaged in a dialogue with the teacher. Even after the bell rang and all the students had left the classroom for recess, the student remained and continued to talk with the teacher. Among other things, this middle school third grader mentioned that homosexuals must die, that the Jews were responsible for the Holocaust and that Turkish Cypriots were living in the houses of Greek Cypriots in the North and that they have no place here and must leave the island. When the bell rang, the conversation continued in Greek. However, a Turkish Cypriot student remained in the room because he was waiting to talk to the teacher about a different matter. The Greek Cypriot student eventually started talking about the Turkish Cypriots and the conflict and said how he came from a refugee family and that “they” referring to the Turkish Cypriots were occupying what belongs to his family. The Turkish Cypriot student entered into the conversation and said “I don’t speak Greek, but I know what you are saying, so you might as well speak in English”. The conversation continued until the Greek Cypriot student said, “I must go, but it’s not because I am not enjoying the conversation, and I don’t want you to think that I am rude because I am leaving”. Surprisingly enough, he sincerely thanked the teacher and the Turkish Cypriot student, and apologized again for having to leave. The teacher immediately extended her apologies for the incident and explained how this student had been approached by ELAM and entered the group and how he has been “brainwashed” into their rhetoric.

As a matter of fact, a number of Greek Cypriot students at the school are members of the organization and many of them are not in any secrecy about it. Teachers' reports as well as fieldwork observations confirm that many students have drawn ELAM symbols and insignia on their backpacks and pencil cases, and this is not considered to be a violation of school conduct as the rules for appearance are limited to what the students wear and not what the students carry. One of the most notable symbols is the flag of Greece with the shape of Cyprus in the middle. The message is that Cyprus is Greek. Nazi swastikas are also symbols adopted by this extremist group and seen on students' backpacks.

Graffiti messages 'attacks' with hate language and anti-Turkish content are a common phenomenon. A teacher reports that such extreme bullying messages are found written on the walls of the changing rooms at the physical education facilities. It was also reported that in the past, Turkish Cypriot students took photographs of the messages and reported the incidents to the staff member of the senior management team who is responsible for such issues. Nevertheless, the Turkish Cypriot students have bitterly observed that investigations in search of the offenders were not happening, and thus, they have stopped expecting that anyone will ever be penalized for such actions. However, these graffiti messages are photographed and filed before the walls are painted over or the writing is scraped away. One teacher reports that one of the funniest hate language graffiti she remembers was a paradoxical message that was written in English language and said "The English School is Greek".

### **Physical Education in Self-Segregation**

The most segregated of all classes was that of physical education. The norm was that unless the teacher was giving a specific lesson on track and field, the students would simply

play a sport of their choice. The boys would grab a soccer ball and run to the soccer pitch where they played. This became evident during the first observation of such a non-structured physical education class. No Turkish Cypriot students were detected in any of the two teams playing, and everyone who was playing was using Greek language during the game. Eventually it was realized that the Turkish Cypriot students were not among the players. Further observation around the athletic premises led to the discovery of the Turkish Cypriot students, who were collectively playing basketball in the indoor stadium. This was realized to be the physical education class norm regardless of which grade level was observed. The Greek Cypriots were enough in numbers to form two teams and play soccer, while the Turkish Cypriots were few in numbers and would always result to playing basketball. In one occasion, a large group of Turkish Cypriots was observed playing soccer at the same time when a group of Greek Cypriots was playing soccer. The students seemed to be of similar age groups, yet the two groups played in mono-communal teams and in two different soccer pitches that were next to each other.

On a different occasion that occurred during a very hot day, two Greek Cypriot boys entered the indoor stadium intending to play basketball in order to avoid the high heat of the day. Three Turkish Cypriot students were ‘shooting hoops’ at the one available basket. One of the Greek Cypriot boys said, “Let’s go away, there is no available basket” but no comment was made about joining their Turkish Cypriot classmates and playing a game together.

### **Institutional Conflicts over the Prioritization of Institutional Needs**

#### **Governance**

Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students are merged together in mixed classes for the first time in year two. A teacher described how a few years ago, a Turkish Cypriot

student in year two placed his candidacy to be elected as class president and he won. “Children are children and carry innocence” the teacher explained. In fact, the Lloyds building, which is the section of the school where years one and two are housed seems very different than the rest of the school. During recess for example, children will play games, chase each other and are in general more playful. The following year, the student ran for class president again, but by then the communal lines had been drawn. “No Turkish Cypriot ever ran again” the teacher concluded. The problems that emerge from governance extend far beyond the class president election politics.

The school’s Board of Management, is comprised by 10 members plus the director of the British Council in Cyprus as an ex officio member. Only one out of the ten members is a Turkish Cypriot, even though one could say that unlike the ratio of Turkish Cypriot faculty, this is representative of the percentage of Turkish Cypriots that are part of the student body. The Board of Management is appointed by the Cyprus Republic’s cabinet of ministers, which essentially means that the school’s management changes to include people from the ideological alignment and political party that won the most recent presidential election. When this research was initiated, the Board of Management was appointment by the then elected government that was aligned with the political left. Mid way through the research and following a presidential election that brought a change in government from the left party to the right, a new board was appointed by the new cabinet of ministers. The headmaster of the school is essentially the executive officer who implements the decisions of the board. As a result of these politics, the new board did not renew the contract of the headmaster who was hired by the previous board and so he left the school at the end of the academic year. The political nature of the board of directors and its connection with the country’s politics and

government extends to create an array of problems that are based on ideological differences and official positions about rapprochement.

### **National Holidays and Commemorations**

As a public-private school, The English School remains closed for the observation of national and religious holidays as these are specified by the Ministry of Education. However, the school is not controlled by the Cyprus Ministry of Education and it is not directly affiliated with it. Hierarchically, the Board of Directors reports to the cabinet of ministers and the president of the republic is found on the top of the hierarchy. However, the holidays and commemorations that are observed by the school follow the Ministry of Education's list of holidays, which are related with the Christian Orthodox religion, the Greek national holidays and holidays of the Republic of Cyprus. The school commemorations are not observed by the entire school, as there is not an existing assembly hall that can fit the entire student body. Nevertheless, the Turkish Cypriot students are always excluded from these commemorations for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, the speeches and program for most of these commemorations are delivered in Greek language and many of them are religious related Christian Orthodox commemorations. Furthermore, there are Greek flags in the hall, the Greek national anthem is sung and in some cases, the commemoration takes place to celebrate the event of a war victory against the Ottoman Empire.

During the data collection period, a commemoration honoring the 1821 Greek revolution against the Ottomans was observed. The commemoration took place in the school's assembly hall which was filled with solely the Greek Cypriot students. A government official was invited to give the keynote address, which was composed around the nationalist Hellenocentric rhetoric and even included open remarks about the struggle for

*Enosis*. At the end of the speech, the keynote speaker made a remark that in this historic school of Cyprus, it is important to share the past with the new generations and not forget our history of struggles.

Many teachers reported their belief that these commemorations are certainly harming the effort that the school is engaged in. The teachers who are members of the team that promotes the school's bi-communal character have made efforts to alter the way these commemorations take place, and even remove the ones that are not directly related with the Republic of Cyprus. Even on the school event for the commemoration of the Cyprus Independence, which is supposedly a unifying event for all official related purposes, a compromise between the school's stakeholders could not be reached over the issue of the national anthem. The fact that the Republic of Cyprus does not have its uniquely own national anthem, and the two ethnic communities continued to hold dear the national anthems of Greece and Turkey, led the school to yet one more dead-end, and the Turkish Cypriots in additional isolation and alienation from the school's culture. As many stakeholders expressed, the school continues to fail in fulfilling its mission statement of respecting the diversity that exists within its student body.

### **Conflict over Muslim Religious Holidays**

A number of Turkish Cypriot students and their parents proceeded to engage in an argument that was initiated when a Turkish Cypriot student sent a letter to the Ombudswoman of the Cyprus Office for the Rights of the Child, accusing the school of not allowing her to practice her religious rights and observe the religious holiday of Bayram. The student's willingness to observe the Bayram would have a direct negative impact on her education as she would have no other choice but to skip school in order to go to the mosque.

This fact gained attention through the media and the claim escalated into a legal battle over the right of the Muslim students to observe the religious holiday of Bayram without missing their school day. In other words, they were requesting that as an indication of respect to religious diversity, the school should remain closed on the day of the Bayram. The previous left wing appointed Board of Directors facilitated this request on an unofficial basis, and even during the school year of 2009-2010 the school remained closed for these purposes. The new Board was not willing to proceed to such an action, which resulted into the legal battle which ended with the Supreme Court presiding that there was not a legal way through which the Court could force the school to remain closed in order for the Turkish Cypriot students to observe their religious holiday.

### **English School Parent Association**

One interviewee had been asked by a mother of an English School student to accompany her in an open general parent assembly and act as her translator. Her shock returned into her narration as she recollected her memories from the experience. “Out of all places”, as she reported, the meeting took place in a space within the facilities of Nicosia’s main soccer stadium. Greek Cypriot parents arrived there far in advance and there was an almost separate program that preceded the arrival of the Turkish Cypriot parents. Mothers of English School students wearing Greek flag earrings were frantically shouting about the de-Hellenization of The English School and the selling off of its Greek Christian Orthodox roots and traditions that resulted from the Turkish Cypriot students’ return. The Turkish Cypriot parents were bussed in after all these parent interventions had already taken place. There were a couple of reasons why they were bussed in at a later time, as the interviewee explained. The first one was to avoid this tension that would obviously occur between



parents who were expressing such strong nationalistic sentiments. The second reason had to do with physical property. The year before, Turkish Cypriots arrived at the meeting by driving their own vehicles. The Turkish Cypriot license plates are distinctly different from the Greek Cypriot ones. While the meeting was taking place, the Turkish Cypriots' cars were being vandalized in the parking lot, under the huge Greek flag that is placed there.

The majority of the active English School Parents Association (ESPA) members are aligned with the above mentioned ideology, some teachers explain. As a result, a number of other Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot parents who believe that the school should intensify its efforts towards promoting the school's bi-communal character were alienated from the ESPA. This led to the idea of the creation of a new association, which would abide by a mission to promote the school's bi-communal character. This new group was set as a Parent Teacher Association, as a few members of the teaching staff became involved with the effort. However, the school has not officially recognized this association and as a result the latter only exists as an unofficial group entity.

### **The School Premises**

A strong wind blew and shut an open window with great force, as the metal rod that keeps the window steady and open was not put in place. The loud banging noise disrupted the lesson. The teacher then proceeded to say "You know you should take care of our windows. We have scarce resources. If they brake we are probably not getting new ones". The school premises are in obvious need of attention and restoration. The condition of most of the facilities, with the exceptions of the newer science building and the design and technology building are in poor conditions which are not indicative of an institution that prides itself to be the best public-private school in Cyprus and even be accompanied by an

elite reputation. As expected, many parents and students complain about these conditions, especially when it comes to the school's restroom facilities. During a conversation, a Turkish Cypriot student reported to a teacher that there were some specific groups of Greek Cypriot students who would gather to smoke in the bathrooms and also vandalized the property. Teachers oppose the idea of bathroom monitoring roles and placing security cameras has been considered, but characterized as an extreme and expensive solution. The result is the continuing vandalizing and deterioration of the school's physical spaces. The explanation or perhaps the excuse that was reported is the fact that the grounds belong to the government, and it is the government's responsibility to provide the funds for the school improvement and restoration works. The school fees, albeit high, are almost entirely spent on covering the faculty and staff salary budget. As reported, the payroll takes up 90% of the school's total financial resources that are collected from the fees.

The latest financial crisis in Cyprus has come to add to the school's financial problems. The government has to implement austerity measures and reduce government spending, which makes the restoration project a far more difficult target to be achieved in the near future. Furthermore, the increasing amount of parents requesting fee waivers or reductions due to the loss of their jobs or decline in their family incomes is another factor that worsens the situation. In the previous academic year, the board made the decision to increase its financial strength by increasing the number of student intake. This quick fix solution would have been very problematic in the long run, as if the practice had continued the number of students in 7 years would have reached an approximate 1300, which is a student population that the school cannot accommodate with its current available physical and human resources. Therefore, the additional fees collected from the additional students

would have perhaps not even sufficed for the hiring of new teachers and certainly not for the construction of new classrooms. The policy of having an additional class group was abandoned in the following academic year. Many teachers and members of the senior management team reported that the school's only viable solution in the long-run would be to increase the student fees. In fact, one of the senior administrators suggested that the fees should be doubled, and declared his confidence that even with this level of fees the school would continue to operate in full occupancy, as there are people who can afford such high fees for a high quality level of education.

In regards to the aesthetics of the physical space, the classrooms were also usually empty of decorations, project displays and announcements. The notice boards and assignment boards were unorganized and many times the items had been placed there in previous years. It was surprising to observe that in a few classrooms there were large signs of the school's evacuation plan that was last revised in the year 2000. The evacuation plan was based on a map of the school that even included the buildings that were now demolished and also obviously excluded the new science building that was later constructed. The school has more than 20 mobile classrooms, which are essentially steel structured rooms that can be transported on a trailer. These classrooms are poorly insulated and not adequately soundproof. These factors, and the general feeling that derives from the fact that such a large part of the school is being housed in mobile classrooms adds to the frustration of parents and staff and reduces the levels of the perceived quality of education.

### **Exam Fever**

My last day at school found me in an internal deliberation about all that I had observed and heard. It was the end of the school year and everyone was frantically preparing

for the upcoming exams. At the end of the day, it seems that this was all that mattered. The school was at large visibly segregated, the staff was pressured for results, the financial resources were becoming scarcer and some people on influential positions believed that spending eighty thousand euro on building community identity was simply a waste of money. “This money should be spent on improving test scores” this person reported in anger. Apparently, at the end of the day this is what matters the most to all the stakeholders involved.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONNECTIONS WITH THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

“I could see the elementary school from my bedroom window. During the years of the British rule, schools were functioning regularly. It was the rule that the colonial flag was to be flying on the school’s flagpole. When I was at the elementary school, I would wake up and look outside the window. If the colonial flag was high up, I would get out of bed and go to school. If the Greek flag was on the flagpole, I would shut the window and go back to sleep as that would mean that the school would remain closed for the day. Many of the kids would go to the school at night, climb on the flagpole and replace the flag. We would also place grease on the flagpole while sliding down, to make it a difficult task for the British troops to replace it. I did that quite a few times myself. For us kids doing it, this wasn’t an act of struggle against the British. We just wanted to skip school. Little did we know then about how important it was to get an education.”

- Mr. Yangos

### **The New Nation**

Cypriots indeed came in contact with modernity through their colonial experience. The British organized the public administration sector and created the land registrar, the legal system and other important state functions that are used to this day. They were also responsible for promoting education and centralizing the educational administration. Despite the fact that the island was granted its independence and a British made constitution in 1960, the colonial past continues to exist everywhere in the present. The English School is certainly a prominent remnant of that past.

Cypriots send their children to study at British Universities, as they believe that they are the best. Moreover, they drive on the left side of the road, the road signs are the same as the ones found in England, the legal system is based on the British legal system of ‘Common

Law' and the presidential house, which used to be the Governor's house, still carries a large sculpture of the shield of the colonial emblem above its front entrance. English names are considered to be more appropriate for businesses and many other British influences have entered the language and the culture of the people. For example, when my grandmother opened up a tiny mini market in the late 1980s, she gave it an English name, and its sign read "G&M Mini Market - Αποικιακά". Even though the word '*Apikiaka*' literally translates to 'colonial', the word became synonymous to groceries, as consumer goods would originate from the various British colonies. A few years ago, a graffiti message in the town of Nicosia read in the Cypriot Greek dialect "We are still living in a colony".

Counter to the widely known British colonial tactic of 'divide and rule', it can be argued that in the case of Cyprus the British designed a strategy that incorporated both 'divide and unite' in their effort to rule. In order to address the rise of the Greek ethno-national imaginary, the colonial power engaged in an effort to distant the Greek Christian Orthodox population of Cyprus from the national group of Greece, through the approach of constructing a Cypriot ethnic identity that would be distinct and distant from the Hellenic one. This created the identity characterization of 'Greek Cypriot' and 'Turkish Cypriot'. This Cypriot identity was promoted as the core identity that would encompass all the people of Cyprus, regardless of their existing ethno-religious identity. This effort was strengthened throughout the years of Governor Palmer's appointment. This aspiration served the strategic goals of the British, but the effort of this imposed nation building failed as the people's affiliation with the Greek and Turkish ethnies was far stronger, and the ideologies of unification with a motherland were more popular. A critical perspective over this historical sociological and anthropological phenomenon would indicate towards the Cypriots' inability

to imagine the prospect of their independence, as such a fact, or aspiration, had never existed in their culture. Culturally, these people had lived for centuries under the identity of a people under rule. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that instead of organizing and leading a struggle for independence, they set up a struggle that demanded that they would be ruled, albeit democratically, as another one of Greece's island.

A yet more critical perspective would reveal that the ideology of *Enosis* was promoted by the Church of Cyprus, which is an autocephalous organization that runs independent from the rest of the Greek Orthodox Church. The Church of Cyprus holds dear its privileged right to govern itself and would most likely never return to a previous state where it would be governed by a patriarch in some other geographic location and share its wealth with those larger units of this religious organization. It can thus be noted that despite the fact that the struggle for union with the motherland might have been pure at heart, it also served the political and economic aspirations of religious structures and members of the elite intelligentsia who were foreseeing towards a political career. The fact that other Greek islands that were under foreign occupation, were finally being united with the expanding Greek nation-state, also gave support to the public opinion and the populist pursue of *Enosis*.

During the years of World War II, Cypriots were still members of a rather traditional society that was economically limited within agriculture and ideologically bound to religion and its leadership. As such a traditional society, the people's understanding of global perspectives was very limited. Organizations like the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade were being created at that same time and a new global politico-economic order was being set. Colonialism in its form of direct governance was proceeding to its end, and colonies were

strategically granted their independence, with an exit strategy that would ensure the continuation of a beneficial relationship between the new country that would be established and the former colonizer. Without doubt, the colonizer maintained the power in this decision and in the future relationship and therefore, the exit strategy would always be in the colonizer's favor. In the case of Cyprus, the exit strategy came with the granting of independence with a given constitution that provided for Great Britain to hold three percent of the land as sovereign British military bases. It also invited Cyprus into the British Commonwealth group of nations and maintained good economic trade relations that were mutually beneficial in the new country's continuing drive to modernity. The British rule and its exit strategy left Cyprus with a modern public administration system that previously did not exist and a seemingly functional political structure. However, at the time of their exit the British also left behind a weak government with an Archbishop as a president, a great void in the popular feeling for self-determination and *Enosis*, and an incomplete project of nation building which led to the creation of opposing identities that ultimately engaged in conflict within a framework of ethno-national confusion. The education system was used by all these different stakeholders throughout this entire process, as a means to serve each side's goals and aspirations.

### **The Opposing Struggle for the Control of Education**

Education is a method for nation-building and for creating a docile and productive population. The British promoted the spreading of education in Cyprus and tried to base it on pedagogical methods stemming from the ideas of prominent philosophers of education. However, at the time, Cyprus was a place where universal education was not the norm. Even in the cases and locations on the island where education was more accessible, it was mostly



limited within teaching reading and basic arithmetic. The needs of the colonial government mechanism necessitated the existence of an English speaking workforce. This prompted the creation of English language teaching mediums which were financially incentivized to create this workforce. These schools produced the people that would later pursue tertiary education in British Universities and would eventually return to take leading positions in the government and the elite society. The English School shares this background and its reputation as an elitist school continues to this day. There were of course other members of the elite that stemmed from the Greek Universities, and who had previously studied in the public Gymnasia. Those schools were closely related and funded by the Church, and they served throughout the years of the British rule as breeding grounds for the national aspiration of *Enosis*.

Throughout the years of the colonial rule, The English School would certainly not be an institution to promote such ideas, as it existed to serve the British colonial government, that later came to also own the buildings and manage its operations. Education in this institution was directed towards the nation building effort that was promoted by the British. The school did not promote the existing ethnic identities, but allowed their expression and accommodated their religious needs. Through the years of high anti-colonial strife, the school was always considered to be a possible target for the EOKA attacks, as it was considered to be a rotary of the colonial mechanism. As a result, Greek Cypriot parents were led to fear sending their children to this school, but the institution continued its operations. In the 1958-1959 school year for example, when EOKA was at its peak and the Greek Cypriot public opinion against the British was at its highest, in the total of 319 students that comprised the school's student population, only one out of seven was a Greek Cypriot whereas, almost four

out of seven students were Turkish Cypriots and the rest being Maronites, Armenian and other nationalities, including one American who was interviewed as part of this investigation (The English School Yearbook, 1959).

### **Adapting to History and Politics**

Institutions are peopled by directors who are often found in the position where they have to decide over maintaining the institutional tradition, or adapting to new realities. For example, in February 2015, a reputable women's only college in West Virginia was decided to cease its operations as a result of financial challenges that resulted from the decreasing interest in the offered women only, rural environment and small liberal arts school type of education. Similarly, as an educational organization, the English School had to make significant decisions and adapt to all the changes and challenges that surrounded and affected it. Throughout the years the school grew in size and reputation. It was initiated as a private school by a Canon and was later given to the Colonial Government in trust. During the island's transition from being a colony into being an independent Republic, the school was placed under the auspices of the president, a fact that de facto sets the school in an elitist position as it receives this unique special treatment. However, this position is also problematic, as it keeps the institution's political and ideological alignment in an ever changing position based on which party is in rule.

Throughout the violent past, the Turkish Cypriots were forced to abandon the school in more than one occasion and would return whenever tranquility and safety were reinstated. Despite all these challenges, the school remained loyal to its founding principle and tradition of being a school for all communities of Cyprus and this was verified by the school's decision to re-admit Turkish Cypriot students in 2003 when the checkpoints along the

dividing line opened for crossing. However, the school had failed to maintain other traits of its character, principles and traditions during the years when it only served the Greek Cypriot population. Albeit an English language school, the institution became a quasi mono-communal school serving the Greek Cypriot population. As the number of the annual student intake is specified and limited, there is little turnover of students, and there are no available spots at any given time for international students whose families had just moved to Cyprus to join the school. Therefore, this structure made the school to be characterized as an English school for Greek Cypriot students, as opposed to an international school for everyone, at any given time and in any given school year.

The mono-communal condition of the school and of the government that managed it, directed it into a shift in its tradition and its identity. Through the almost three decade period between 1974 and 2003, the school adopted a Greek Orthodox religious character, placed icons in classrooms, started the day with a Greek Orthodox morning prayer, flew a Greek flag next to the one of the Cyprus Republic and celebrated all the national and religious commemorations in the same manner that the Greek Cypriot public schools did. The school took part in student parades celebrating the Greek nation and the student body would join public school students in the several annual demonstrations to condemn the proclaiming of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Turkish military occupation of the island.

The EOKA members who were hanged or killed in action by the British have become the new Republic's heroes, as they had fought the British for the freedom of Cyprus. As such, teaching and praising the example of these heroes becomes a type of an invented tradition that is employed in the effort to strengthen the citizens' affirmation with the nation-state's identity. However, these national heroes happen to all be Greek Cypriots who fought

for the unification of the island with Greece. The statue of such a Greek Cypriot hero who took part in the anti-colonial struggle and gave his life for the ideal of *Enosis* has been placed in a prominent position in the school's grounds, facing the entrance of The English School, which is the colonial educational institution where this hero had studied. For the Turkish Cypriots, EOKA has always been seen as an organization that opposed their existence and its members are held responsible for the killings of Turkish Cypriots throughout the years of the colonial armed struggle and the first years of the shattered Republic. Therefore, the national heroes of the Greek Cypriots belonged to an organization that is feared and seen as anathema by the Turkish Cypriots. Thus, the heroes of the Turkish Cypriots came to be the people who lost their lives in a fight to protect the Turkish Cypriots from Greek Cypriot EOKA members. Ultimately, the statue of the EOKA hero was placed in the school in the post 1974 period, when the school underwent through a transition of its ethno-national character. In the years following the island's division, the students at the English School were certainly educated in a way that partook to the general collective ideology and teachings of the "I Do Not Forget" curriculum, but certainly not to the same degree as this happened in the public schools. However, education continued to be in English and students continued to pursue studies in British Universities which were arbitrarily considered by the public opinion to be of higher quality than any other academic institutions.

### **Re-adapting to the Past in Search of the Future**

The mono-communal norm and the Greek Orthodox character of The English School that was strengthened for three decades had to be altered at a short notice when the Turkish Cypriot students were readmitted to the school in September of 2003. As a result, the Greek Orthodox icons from classrooms were removed, and the Greek flags were put away.

Furthermore, questions pertaining to the policy of allowing religious symbols as part of the students' appearance were discussed, with all these issues prompting strong reactions from several stakeholders who were opposing the forced change and the abolishment of what were considered to be sacred relics. One of the most significant reasons for this opposition was the belief that these changes only served to please the students of the population that, as they believed, is after all occupying 'our' land. Such beliefs are not yet completely put in the past, as there are stakeholders who continue to oppose the existence of the Turkish Cypriot students in the school and are engaged in efforts to undermine its continuation.

The first few years that followed the return of the Turkish Cypriot students were characterized by a high focus towards integration, and this effort was led especially by a team of faculty members who strongly believed in the cause. However, two incidents of inter-communal tension that took place in the school made it to the news and attracted the attention of the entire island's population. Following those events, political leaders as well as the island's citizens were found discussing whether the endeavor of common education and even the greater aspiration for co-existence were at all possible, with the different stakeholders making claims that were aligned with their political ideologies about the conflict. People who represent such ideologies are among the stakeholders found operating within the school, either from a direct impact position like a board member or a staff member, or an indirect position as a parent.

The report about the group of mothers who attended the parents meeting wearing Greek flag earrings and passionately complaining about the de-Hellenization of their children, who they themselves put into the, non-Hellenic, English School, perhaps stands as an excellent example of the national confusion that exists among Greek Cypriots. However,

if considered from a different view point, this event may simply serve as an indication that these mothers and other parents believe that this is not an English school, but rather a Greek school where the medium of instruction happens to be English. Nevertheless, the school does not cease from being a school with a history rooted in the island's colonial past.

During the fieldwork observation at the school, religious icons were only recorded to exist in the janitor's office. Messages of "I Do Not Forget" were only recorded in the Lloyds building, as part of two students' Christmas cards. The two students who were in year one, essentially drew the "I Do Not Forget" logo as their Christmas card wish. In the Greek Cypriot public schools, "I Do Not Forget" is connected with every school function and it can be considered as one of the invented traditions that were created and became an integral and customary element of education in the post division era, in the country's effort to teach its future citizens to be demanding of their rights for the retribution of justice and the return of all refugees to their homes. As a result, Christmas school plays, end of school year plays and every other function is comprised by the theme of the Cyprus tragedy and the Cyprus struggle for freedom. The observed case of the Christmas cards in the Lloyds building indicates that even though the English School does not incorporate aspects of the "I Do Not Forget" curriculum, students come from public elementary schools carrying the perception that drawing a Christmas card with our wishes, entails drawing a Christmas card about our national struggle.

A member of the Senior Management Team reported that a number of people who serve on the Board of Directors have voiced their opinion that the school should adopt the official mandated "Goal of the Year" that is annually decided and announced by the Minister of Education. It just so happens that during the year in question, when this fieldwork was also

taking place, the goal of the year was “I learn, I do not forget, I assert” referring of course to learning about the occupied parts of the island and the history of the invasion, I do not forget these occupied lands and I assert my peoples’ right to return to them. The member of the Senior Management Team who reported this, believes that this effort by these members of the new Board of Directors who were appointed by a right wing government, aim towards creating tension in the school and an uncomfortable environment for the Turkish Cypriots, while also making a statement about the fact that this is a Greek Cypriot school that follows the Greek Cypriot Ministry of Education’s educational guidelines, when in fact it is not obligated to do so. Ultimately, the administrator reported his belief that this proposal was directed towards an effort to create an environment that would deter the Turkish Cypriots from continuing to pursue an education at The English School.

Even though the general norm at the school follows the structure of a non-integrated, yet functional, co-existence in the educational space and a co-participation in the learning process, a Turkish Cypriot alumni from the class of 1961’ who was interviewed reported that he has been told by a parent whose child goes to the school, that Turkish Cypriot boys have to even go to the bathroom in groups, because they do not feel safe to go there alone. Based on the research findings this seems to have been an exaggerated statement. However, the factual truthfulness of this statement is irrelevant in this case. What matters is the fact that this alumnus believed this to be the case, and for this reason he advised his child to send his two grandchildren to a different private international school in the South where such issues do not exist. In fact, two other parents who send their children to this same private school, one of which was a Greek Cypriot and the other a Turkish Cypriot, reported that their children are well integrated with students from the other community as well as with

other international students who attend this different private school. Their belief is that this school's international character and multi-ethnic student body, in addition to the exclusion of an educational agenda for promoting a national identity is contributing to the success of intercommunal integration. This other private school manages to have such results without employing an agenda of an enforced structured integration process.

### **Hyperbolic Zeal for Integration**

The group of teachers at the English School who passionately supported the efforts for integration during the first years of the Turkish Cypriot return, found out that their hyperbolic zeal to promote this cause resulted to the students' 'integration effort fatigue' and eventually the cause even started to be viewed with a negative outlook. Students felt that this integration agenda was pushed too harshly upon them, and even though they may had not been opposed to the idea in the first place, they felt that the endeavors of some teachers were simply violating their freedom for personal choice of who they would congregate with. For example, during a two day fieldtrip, the teachers assigned who would stay in each hotel bedroom, and they proceeded to pair up one Greek Cypriot with one Turkish Cypriot in each room. This prompted the reaction of some Greek Cypriot students, who notified their parents, who then called the school and the teacher to complain, and demand that their child be placed with whoever they want to be placed. In a different case, a teacher reports that students were paired up with a student from the other community and asked to talk about a number of topics during a class. One Greek Cypriot student, the teacher reports, turned to another Greek Cypriot student and said that "the bell would ring in a minute and that they would be done with this ordeal", referring to the forced interaction with a person from the other community. This culture was also recorded throughout the fieldwork observations. During a classroom



observation, the teacher asked a Greek Cypriot student who entered the class late to sit in an available seat that was next to a Turkish Cypriot. The Greek Cypriot student refused but the teacher insisted and so he took the seat. A few seconds later, the Greek Cypriot student stood up and moved into a different seat next to another Greek Cypriot.

This phenomenon of resisting forced integration was widely reported through interviews and observations. Contrary to this finding, the interviewed alumni who went to the school prior to 1974 remember that they had friends from the other side and that no one had forced them to be friends. However, the generation of these people had not been brought up divided and had not been educated through a nationally charged curriculum with a focus on the teachings of ‘I Do Not Forget’.

### **Invented Traditions of Never Forget**

Circa 500BC, the Athenians sent a small army to support some kingdoms that were under attack by the Persian King Darius’ armies. The Persians lost the battle and as the historian Herodotus writes, the Persian King asked to find out who these Athenians were, as he had never heard of them. Darius swore to take vengeance, and ordered one of his servants to remind him of his oath every night before dinner, by repeating to him the phrase “master, remember the Athenians”. Such traditions of remembering these chosen traumas are met in numerous conflicts around the world. However, the remembering is also accompanied by the trans-generational duty of taking revenge, which ultimately perpetuates the conflict. For example, in Argentina, the government placed signs on the freeways reminding people not to forget that the Malvinas are Argentinian. This refers to the Falkland Islands that the British hold as their territory. In a different example from Northern Ireland, murals on walls are a medium of promoting a ‘never forget’ ideology. Moreover, the “Orange walks” take place

every year and they are celebrations which mark Prince William of Orange's victory over King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. These have been for decades considered to be sectarian, and controversy or even physical fights occur in the cases where the parading group nears any Catholic churches and neighborhoods.

There are numerous examples from conflicts throughout history and from around the world, where practices of 'never forget' are actively pursued and promoted through formal and non-formal means of education. In the case of Cyprus this has been done through various direct and indirect ways, many of which have already been discussed in the previous chapters. Ultimately, following the 1974 division, the education system of Cyprus invented a series of traditions that are disseminated through formal curriculum and hidden curriculum practices which focus on perpetuating the national identity of victimhood and struggle. Even though many of the political realities have changed and the model for a political solution for reunification and co-existence is being sought, educational principles remain intractably tied to the Greek and Turkish ethnic roots as opposed to shifting towards the constructing of a unifying Cypriot ethnic and national identity. The school under investigation in this study proves that unified education is possible, but that the establishment and strengthening of social relationships is weak due to continuing invisible barriers and limited opportunities for naturally occurring interactions.

Unlike the example of unified schools in Northern Ireland, where co-education between protestant and catholic students derives from parents' expressed willingness for their children to escape from the dichotomy and conflict, the case of The English School in Cyprus depicts a school that became unified based on politics, the pursue of elitism and the opportunity for a high quality of fee-based education. As such, the parents, the students and

the school's administration are not primarily concerned and are not even necessarily aligned with the goal of strengthening the ideology of co-existence. Nevertheless, this fact creates opposing lobbies across several stakeholders within the school community, and this opposition essentially hinders the school's steady operations and isolates the students within their ethnic groups. Even though this school is a pioneer in its bi-communal character, it essentially exists within the ongoing conflict and is vulnerable to the island's political conditions and influences from institutions like the state, the Church, the media and even soccer clubs that are all maintaining the nationalist narrative that demands for the Cypriot state to be tied to the Greek ethnos.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

“Why is it possible to live in the UK or Europe; Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots or any other nationalities alongside each other without any conflicts, but not in Cyprus?”

- Teacher at ‘The English School’

### **Synopsis of Findings**

The research questions that guided this investigation pertained to the review of the school’s actions, curriculum changes and adopted educational policies that were geared towards the establishment of the necessary conditions that would ensure that The English School would continue to be an educational institution that meets the academic needs and personal development of its entire student body in its renewed era as a school for all communities of Cyprus. Furthermore, the investigation sought to examine how this bi-communal setting contributed to the establishment and strengthening of interpersonal relationships between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students. The research outcomes report that the school continues to offer an education of exceptional quality that meets the academic needs of all of its students and satisfies the expectations of their parents. However, the research findings demonstrate that despite the school’s efforts towards achieving the goal of integration through the use of peace education practices that attempted to make the school more multicultural than Hellenocentric, the school continues to be divided by invisible lines, resulting in the creation of a segregated environment even after a decade of unified education.

Even though the language of instruction is English and all students are able to communicate with each other, interactions between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students during recess are rare, and the social network mapping analysis shows two almost completely separate networks within the school. Classroom seating arrangements always followed community patterns, unless the arrangement was designed and enforced by the instructor. During the classes of physical education, the segregation was even more apparent, with the Greek Cypriot boys playing soccer, while the Turkish Cypriot boys who were fewer in numbers would retract to play basketball, as they were either excluded or felt unwelcomed by their Greek Cypriot classmates, or simply felt more comfortable to be on their own.

A number of Turkish Cypriot students reported the academic superiority of the school over the alternative schooling options in the North. However, they also expressed their regret of ever coming to the school, and this regret stemmed from their feeling of social isolation. These negative conditions were also further worsened by racist attacks that mainly originated from Greek Cypriot students who are supporters of the local right wing football team and members of the far right nationalist group, ELAM.

Academically, the instructors focused on their teaching as this was obviously their primary mandate. Teachers reported that not all of their colleagues support the bi-communal character of the school and that there is a group of Greek Cypriot teachers who secretly oppose the school's practice to include Turkish Cypriots in its student body. None of the teachers made a direct statement to express such a belief, perhaps because no teacher would want to openly express such an opinion during an interview that was conducted by an external researcher. Based on estimates reported by teachers, 60% of the school's staff members support the school's bi-communal character, while 40% oppose it. Based on these

reports, the resentful feelings of the latter category stem from these teachers' personal opinions about the conflict, their political ideologies and their feeling of ethnic identity. This of course raises a concern and exposes the ironic fact that Turkish Cypriot parents are paying tuition fees to an institution, for their children to be educated by teachers who secretly oppose their presence in their classroom.

During the first years of the integration, it was necessary for the school to place a strong emphasis on promoting a bi-communal peacebuilding agenda. This was heavily opposed by a number of Greek Cypriot students and their parents, who accused the school's staff in charge of this effort for promoting the practice of rapprochement, which has historically been aligned with the political ideology of the left. These teachers were persecuted through attacks via social media which included a blog that was set up by a group of parents who were opposing the effort for rapprochement. As a result, many of these teachers and especially the younger untenured ones, abandoned their passion for promoting the goal of peacebuilding, and focused solely on their teaching job in fear of losing it.

During the last two years, one of the major debates at the school that has drawn the attention of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot media was whether the school would remain closed for the Muslim religious holiday of Bayram, in order for the Turkish Cypriot students to be able to observe their religious holiday. This had previously been the case under the former Board of Directors who came from the political left. When the Board of Directors was substituted by members of the political right, the holiday or other accommodation policies were taken away. This prompted the reaction of the school's Turkish Cypriot community, as the school was found at fault and in violation of its otherwise highly valued mission statement which proclaims the school's principle for providing equal opportunities,

upholding the rights of every individual, celebrating diversity and having an ethos of “...trust, mutual respect and understanding of each other’s culture, ethnicity, religion, gender and individual needs” (The English School, 2015). On the contrary, all public religious holidays related with the Greek Orthodox religion are observed as public holidays and the school remains closed on those days.

The school has been essentially left to adopt a *laissez faire* approach in regards to rapprochement opportunities and general communication among the students. A former member on the board of directors stated that spending money on this cause was “idiotic and a waste of financial resources” and finally noted that this budget should have been spent on improving standardized test scores. As one member of the Senior Management Team reported, “at the end of the day, what matters to all parents is that their children get the best grades and get into the best universities”, indicating that the parents are not concerned whether their children will make friends from the other community or learn how to co-exist in a potentially re-united Cyprus. Ultimately, people are drawn to the school because of its high academic standard and elite reputation and not by its bi-communal character.

Romantic relationships between students from the opposing communities are seen as taboo and are avoided due to peer pressure. In the few instances where those occurred, one of the students involved was half American and could thus “fly under the international radar” as a teacher reported. The sole reported example of a close bi-communal amical relationship that was recorded through the social network mapping analysis, is the friendship of two female students; a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot, with the Greek Cypriot stating that they are the closest friends, a fact that was verified by their teachers and through fieldwork observations. A key distinct factor about these girls is that they both spent the first years of

their lives abroad. They were both fluent in their native languages, Greek and Turkish respectively; therefore an explanation based on the claim of linguistic limitation cannot be made. However, they were both brought up in international and multicultural environments in which diversity is taught to be valued. Most importantly though, they were not pedagogically raised through the public elementary schools of the island, where the teaching of national identity is the epicenter of education along with the construction of the “enemy other”.

### **Peace Education at ‘The English School’**

The English School took immediate actions in an effort to address the new realities that came as a result of the Turkish Cypriots’ return to the school. Among other actions, religious and ethnic symbols were removed from classrooms and the school’s premises, a Turkish Cypriot teacher was hired to join the staff, followed by two more, and a Turkish Cypriot was invited to join the Board of Directors. Furthermore, committees for promoting integration were formed, with oversight from members of the Senior Management Team who acquired new roles and a mandate to promote a unifying school culture and the respectful acceptance of diversity. In addition, the expert opinion of an international consultant was sought and the consultation reports were taken into sincere consideration resulting to improvements in the school’s structure, policies and efforts. Among others, such proposals led to the revision of the mission statement and the creation of a Pastoral Team that was comprised by staff members and a new specialist who was hired to staff an office at the school, where students could receive consultation and psychological support.

Teachers at The English School were mobilized and about fifteen of them created a group that would work towards the goal of integration. Members of this team reported that



they sought to receive training on the theory, principles and practice of peace education. These teachers attended training workshops, and as mentioned in the findings chapter, they even organized a visiting trip to Northern Ireland where they experienced how a unified school operates in that setting. However, this initiative happened on a voluntary basis, and the teachers even covered their expenses for this professional development trip. Therefore it can perhaps be stated that given the specific circumstances that existed in the school, the fact that this initiative was not officially organized and offered by the school can be viewed with criticism. Furthermore, a different point that can receive criticism is the fact that peace education training seminars were not made into a mandatory professional development training course for all staff members.

The cases of social integration and close intergroup friendships that were recorded by this research, stem from the examples of students who in the past have received, or who are currently receiving, an education in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural institution, which excluded the teachings of the “I Do Not Forget” agenda from its curriculum. The English School is not incorporating such curriculum elements in its formal curriculum program either, despite the fact that some stakeholders wish for the school to do so. The school after all, follows a curriculum that is aligned with a British based testing organization. However, there continue to be elements in the school that promote such feelings of distress among the student population and other stakeholders. The school continues to hold celebrations of only Greek Cypriot ethnic and religious commemorations, which de facto exclude the Turkish Cypriots. On the contrary, an empty flagpole where one would have expected to see a Greek flag can also be contemplated as a political statement and an act of shedding away a symbol of the organization’s intimate identity, as this was shaped through the years of its mono-

communal state that lasted from 1974 until 2003. Finally, the lack of a Turkish language translation on the signs around the school's premises is an indication that the Turkish Cypriot student population's presence is not respectfully acknowledged. When these observations were brought to the attention of two members of the Senior Management Team by the principal investigator during a final interview on the last day of fieldwork, they reported that these were valid points and said that they had neither considered the fact that the empty flagpole is a statement, nor the fact that the lack of Turkish language on school signs was discriminatory. These administrators appreciated the feedback that was provided as they do have a genuine interest in maintaining a peaceful and respectful educational environment. However, the issue of ceasing the tradition of celebrating the Greek National holidays was a topic that seemed to be untouchable as it is believed that such an action, or even a proposition for this action, would once again result to reactions of mass proportions, similar to the ones that took place when the icons and flags were removed from the school's premises in 2003. Therefore, it was obvious that an effort towards an ethnically neutral curriculum at the school is still limited by the school's continuing perceived mandate of promoting the Greek national identity, even if that takes place behind closed doors while the Turkish Cypriot students are kept in class somewhere else around the building. As a teacher reported, the group of staff members that are promoting integration at the school, tried hard to alter this practice but their efforts were unsuccessful. Even in the case of the celebration of the Cyprus Independence from the British, a common commemoration ceremony that would be observed by both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students was not agreed upon, as the school insisted on having the Greek ethnic anthem be sung, as it is after all the official anthem of the Cyprus Republic. In conclusion, despite all the efforts to bring the school to its pre-1974 condition,

when it served as a school for all Cypriots without discrimination over ethnic and religious identities, the efforts are failing as the school continues to have remnants from the practices and traditions that were established during its mono-communal phase. Organizational change is difficult, especially when such a change is imposed in an effort to serve a peace building agenda amidst a conflict.

### **Promoting the Mission Statement**

In the last few years and following the advice of the international consultant who observed the school, a great emphasis has been placed on the school's mission statement, which is found on the school's website and is printed on the first page of the 'Parent Handbook', which includes the school's rules and regulations and explains the operation and functions of the school. The mission statement itself was revised to address the new priorities of the school, especially as those relate to the issues of intercultural equality and respect of all ethnic, race and religious groups. The group of teachers who actively support the school's integration efforts have suggested and tried to make it a mandated school policy for parents to read and sign a statement, to the effect that they have read and support the school's mission statement. This was proposed in an approach to promote a general understanding of the school's mission. Ultimately, the reasoning behind this proposal was that all stakeholders should be aligned with the mission and be supportive of the school's effort to achieve it. However, the proposal for this school policy has not received adequate attention from the school's administration, as a teacher reported, and it has not been put in effect. However, a critical perspective on this proposal would point to the fact that collecting every parent's signature does not guarantee that the mission statement will be achieved. Despite the fact that a collective effort is necessary, the school's administration and staff are foremost responsible

to ensure the achievement of the school's mission. However, these latter stakeholders are at fault by default with the practice of maintaining the Greek national holiday celebrations and religious holidays, while also refusing to do the same for the students of the other ethno-religious groups.

### **The School's Approach towards Peace Education**

Even though based on the categorization of peace education programs proposed by Salomon (2002) the case of Cyprus is characterized as a region of intractable conflict, it can be argued that based on its unique current condition, Cyprus can be viewed as both a case of a region that is trapped in an intractable conflict over tangible resources, but that is also facing troubles of interethnic or intercommunal tension. Therefore, the school needs to approach its peace education initiative by addressing both the issues of ethnic tension and the issues that pertain to the ongoing conflict, the military presence, the Turkish occupation, the political tension and finally, the division. The fact that the school does not follow the curriculum that is mandated by the Cyprus Republic's Ministry of Education, theoretically allows the school more flexibility in deciding about what is to be taught and in what way. Furthermore, the international curriculum that is followed offers the school the opportunity to theoretically align its curriculum with aspects from the categories of global studies education, conflict resolution programs, violence prevention programs, development education and nonviolence education, that Ian Harris (1999) suggests.

The existing curriculum includes ample opportunities to discuss aspects of international studies, security studies, holocaust studies and other related topics, as the history curriculum that is taught is rather global and Eurocentric, as opposed to Hellenocentric, which is the case in Greek Cypriot public schools. During the fieldwork

research, observations of history lessons were conducted where the topic under discussion was World War I and great emphasis was placed on the conditions in the trenches. However, it was noted that no approach was made to further discuss the horrifying outcomes of war. The lesson did not contain an opportunity for critical discussion and the teachers in the cases that were observed did not make any explicit remarks about the tragedies of war and the aftermath of its destruction, in what could have been an effort to promote the ideal of peace. An approach to connect the global with the local by using examples from the Cyprus context was also not recorded during any of the observations. Ultimately, the lesson was contained within achieving the expected learning outcomes than corresponded with the content that was to be examined.

The course of ‘Global Perspectives’ that has recently been introduced into the school incorporates a unit where students learn about various conflicts that are taking place around the world. During this unit, an opportunity for specifically discussing the Cyprus conflict is provided, and this happened as a result of the efforts made by the staff members who promote integration. In fact, all teachers who teach this course are members of that team. Despite the fact that this unit was successfully integrated as part of the curriculum, there are merely two class periods allocated for this task; a timeframe which is certainly inadequate in achieving to reach any depth into the matter. Furthermore, the observation of these lessons revealed both the unease of students in discussing this matter, and in one case, the extreme reaction and inflammatory statements of a Greek Cypriot student of year three, who was affiliated with the far right wing group ELAM. The school should have ideally made an effort to provide opportunities that would connect the content of the existing curriculum with

the principles and practices of peace education and connecting it more with real life examples from the students' daily lives.

Incidents of physical violence and other instances of violent behavior are very rare. It is an even rarer phenomenon for a violent incident to occur between members of the two different community groups. Therefore, there is no immediate need for violence prevention programs for addressing issues that pertain to physical fights. However, fights are perhaps not occurring because, as reported, based on the observation of two bullying incidents, the Turkish Cypriot students did not engage with the bully. It is thus still a need for violence prevention programs and nonviolence education to take place, as both can be utilized by the school as strategies to reduce prejudice and to eliminate existing biases against the other group.

The English School certainly promotes a far more global oriented worldview than what is taught in public schools around the island. Furthermore, its debating club and other extra-curricular societies are bodies that are promoting a general agenda for global education. These clubs and societies of specific interest are not created with the goal of promoting integration among the school community. Nevertheless for example, students from any community may have an interest in environmental protection, and this interest may bring them close to each other in pursue of this common goal. Furthermore, many opportunities exist in the curriculum in subjects ranging from the sciences to economics and from arts and design to literature, where students can receive the opportunity to learn about global development, environmental sustainability and other themes that offer a global mindset and praise the benefits of peace. The existing curriculum and the available extra-curricular activities provide ample opportunities that the teachers could use in order to promote peace

education, by utilizing indirect practices, as oppose to direct practices of integration that students and other stakeholders have come to resent. However, the teachers are not engaged in such activities, because as they have reported, there is no instructional time left at their disposal and their priority is to cover the curriculum that is to be tested.

### **Prioritization of Needs and Allocation of Resources**

One of the most significant conflicts that have been observed in the school's overall operation is the conflict that emerges from the prioritization of needs and allocation of resources. This is not an uncommon phenomenon for an organization, as different stakeholders prioritize different needs, based on their own interests, assessments and perceptions. As such, some stakeholders believe that enforcing discipline should be the school's priority, while others believe that the priority should be to promote integration among the student body. The overarching priority though seems to be the goal of ensuring that the students will receive high test scores in their international exams. Tables of data presenting the aggregated results of the exams are available on the school's website, and it can be argued that the only purpose they serve is to function as an advertisement, demonstrating to the website visitors that students at the school do very well in their exams and earn high grades. Essentially, the most important service that the school offers is a good education that is substantiated by the reported high test scores. Spending time or money to decorate a classroom offers no apparent added value to the test scores, and perhaps this is why the classroom assignment boards are in the unorganized condition they are in. Based on the same argument, group work that would provide the opportunity for students to integrate has no use if the outcome will not benefit the test scores. After all, the exams are personal and if you teach to the test you must follow an individualistic teaching style. Finally, as

previously mentioned, there are key stakeholders who believe that spending money in creating and strengthening an intercultural school environment is a waste of resources, as there is no evidence that this has a direct correlation with improving the test scores.

### **Stop Pushing Integration onto Me**

Organizations and the people who comprise them are, more often than not, opposed to change. Therefore, knowledge from the area of organizational leadership would suggest an approach tactic that would necessitate for changes to be implemented in gradual steps, as opposed to an explosive restructuring. Given the nature of the sudden opening of the checkpoints and the almost immediate return of the Turkish Cypriot students that followed, the school did not have the luxury of time in organizing a smooth and gradual transition. Perhaps, it was even imperative for the school to proceed to such a radical restructuring of its practices and its identity, given the short available amount of time. However, the hyperbolic zeal that was demonstrated by the people who felt that promoting integration was an institutional priority, resulted to an integration fatigue, claims of reverse discrimination and reports of violation of students' personal decisions of socialization. Essentially, students felt that this integration "was pushed on them too hard" as a teacher reports. In the school's pre-division history, there was no agenda to promote integration, and yet, integration would occur naturally as alumni reported. It is nevertheless unfortunately acknowledged though, that the generation that is attending the school today is comprised by children who were brought up in the stalemate conflict and in the complete absence of the other. Furthermore, they are students with a constructed identity of a people of national victimhood, as this has been projected to them throughout their lives from their respective side's collective narrative. Some of these students even come to school carrying the refugee consciousness that their



family has brought them up with, as Hadjiyianni (2002) reports. Ultimately, these students are members of their still mostly isolated societies, and they exist within the narrative of their respective side's public opinion, the 'coffee-shop talks', the daily update of the conflict through the media, the recurring political tensions and the reality of a divided island.

### **Negotiating the Cyprus Conflict Today**

Beyond the education related lessons that result from the findings of this research, theorizing can also extend to review this conflict through a sociological perspective.

Considering the idea that schools are mirror representations of the society in which they exist, the research findings at The English School can be used to provide an insight about the current state of the Cyprus conflict. In fact, this analysis suggests that relationships between members of the two communities are mainly based on a market approach as opposed to a mere willingness for social integration. Ultimately, this correlates to the current general perceived condition in the Cypriot society.

It can be theorized that the Cyprus conflict has morphed into a new pragmatism based version, where the conflict is described by a complex hybridity that encompasses nationalism based tension, ethnic racism and mere apathy. The nationalism based conflict divided the island and its people in 1974, even though inter-communal societal relationships and trust had been shattered as early as 1963. Following the events of 1974, people on the island and especially the Greek Cypriots, continued their lives entrapped in a cycle of mourning and the adopting of a collective victim identity that was promoted through education and the collective narrative of each side, which ultimately became an integral element of people's performativity. The government and every other seemingly bi-communal institution, like the school under investigation, had to readapt to the new realities that the war and the division

had caused. At the same time, the Turkish Cypriots engaged in an effort to have their identity recognized by the international community in an effort that resulted to a diplomatic competition over which side would best attract the attention and gain the support of the international community.

The post 1974 generations grew up in the complete absence of the other community who was merely presented as the enemy. This continued for 29 years of complete division, until 2003, when as previously mentioned, few checkpoints opened along the dividing line and people started crossing to the other side, mainly for the purposes of visiting their place of origin and to engage in commerce. The first years that followed the opening of the checkpoints gave rise to a renewed hope that the conflict and the division was reaching to an end. This aspiration was certainly not shared by everyone, and a plurality of opinions was heard. Some of the harsher Greek Cypriot voices were calling for their side to shut the checkpoints. However, the crossing continued and regulations for trade across the dividing line were quickly put in place.

More than a decade later without bloodshed and with continuous crossing and commerce occurring, an empirical observation reveals that there is limited amicable social interaction occurring between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. At the same time, there were extremely few cases reported about the occurrence of any type of inter-communal violence. Thus, this fact perhaps suggests that these Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots who are considered to be in a long lasting stalemate conflict do not after all hate each other to the point of killing, fighting or even quarrelling. Nevertheless, at the same time people do not have the opportunity to interact with people from the other side, while also many simply do not wish to do so. Still though, no violent actions have been committed by anyone since the

opening of the checkpoints. No killings, bombing attacks, fistfights and almost no bodily damage of any kind has occurred as a result of a hate related incident. This however can essentially be analyzed as a condition of negative peace and as indifference in regards to the other, or even characterized as resent or mere apathy. A different rational explanation could be that people fear engaging in a dispute that could be magnified under the ethnic lens, and escalate into an event that will gain island wide attention and create an island wide tension, which is similar to an explanation that was given by a man who lives in the bi-communal village of Pyla that Papadakis (2005) reports.

On a different level, efforts for establishing intercommunal friendships are also not the norm and in fact, there continues to be prejudice about the people from the other side. Just like in the case of The English School, there are groups of people on the island that are working towards promoting the efforts for rapprochement. Most examples of intercommunal friendships, especially among the young generation, result from people who are engaged in these groups. In the few cases where intercommunal romantic relationships emerged, they were between such people. However, the relationships were seen with surprise and they were often challenged by the disapproval of parents, who may not have had personal reasons for opposition but would be considerate of the social reaction to their child's decision.

The ability to cross the previously impenetrable ceasefire line has caused various changes in the conflict's status. Even though this conflict is considered to be a long lasting stalemate conflict that has caused a condition of long term mourning and left behind thousands of refugees, casualties and missing people, the decades of political stagnation and division have brought the acts of violence in a dormant state. Following the opening of the checkpoints, almost no person has turned to the use of force against someone from the other

community, perhaps in fear or concern of initiating an incident of intercommunal tension. It is commonly said by Greek Cypriot members of the older generation, that they do not want their children to live through what they have lived, referring to the 1974 war. The Turkish Cypriot members of the older generation make similar statements, referring to the years when they had to spend in the enclaves, a fact which carries forward a sense of mistrust in the Greek Cypriot community. Still though, more than a decade after the opening of the checkpoints, interactions with ‘the other’ are limited. Therefore, it is argued that what has happened is a shift in the conflict. Even though for many Cypriots, and especially the refugees, this conflict continues to be one over tangible resources, for many Cypriots from both sides of the division, it has come to resemble simply an issue of interethnic tension based on ethnic racism or mere indifference.

Taking into consideration that for all political purposes, the Republic of Cyprus considers the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to be co-citizens of the same republic, and political negotiations are based on the pursue of a just and viable solution based on a bi-zonal federal settlement, it can perhaps be hypothesized that the current situation is to an extent an ethno-linguistic segregation which was initially militarily imposed, but now socially maintained and strengthened through the continuing military presence, the educational culture of “I Do Not Forget”, frequent political tensions and lack of communication between the people of the two communities.

All these opinions are met within the premises of The English School. There are parents, teachers and students who oppose the school’s bi-communal character, as well as ones who support it. There are few students who have become friends and few who commit ethnic based bullying, but refrain from physical fights in concern of facing consequences and

placing their selves in the spotlight of island-wide tension. There are political implications stemming from the school's operations, but at the same time, the school tries to serve as an example for bi-communal education. Essentially, the culture of the school is indeed mirroring the culture of the Cypriot reality. This is a culture where two communities exist apart from the other, and engage in exchanges which are primarily limited to a commercial character, whether that is purchasing groceries, or an education. This is nevertheless a fragile condition in a new era when Cyprus is entering into the geo-political energy map through its newly discovered natural gas resources. The financial gain prospects that will result from these resources have raised a debate regarding who has rights over their use and most significantly, their revenue. Tension has reappeared on a new political agenda with Turkey defying international laws and sending research ships and warships inside the Cyprus Republic's waters, with the Republic of Cyprus calling this a new invasion and responding to it through the means of international diplomacy. Continuation of the apathy is therefore a danger for this fragile condition and it is imperative that research and efforts in the area of peace education must be intensified and adopted.

### **Conclusions**

The establishment of the Cyprus Republic in 1960 came at a time when Cypriots were still pursuing a political future within the boundaries of the Greek and Turkish nation-states, which were their respective ethnic motherlands. The islanders' inability to understand the nation-state as a political unit that could encompass a plurality of ethnic groups, as opposed to a unit with a mono-ethnic capacity, led to the destruction of the new nation-state. One of the major causes that led to this outcome was the failure to establish a unifying Cypriot identity that would have supported the success of a nation-state where all citizens would co-

exist in respect and within a democratic society. The necessary political maturity did not exist at that time, and in the years that followed and even up to this day, the Greek and the Turkish ethnic identities continue to be promoted as the ethnic identities of the people, resulting to an ethno-national confusion.

The future solution to the Cyprus problem is currently sought through the negotiations for the establishment of a bi-zonal and bi-communal federal state that will have a single identity and a unique international status of recognition. However, based on the current negotiations, the two states will be distinctly different in their ethnic, linguistic and religious composition. In the case that the people of the two constituent states continue to consider themselves to be ethnically different than the other, and with the ethnic identity overarching the national one, then it can be argued that the new nation-state will once again face the failures of the past.

My experience living and studying in North Carolina in the United States of America has taught me a number of different lessons that I find interesting within a comparative perspective with the Cyprus context. Despite the absence of a unifying national curriculum within this multi-ethnic nation-state, there continues to be a firm belief in the overarching and encompassing American identity that is promoted through education and through traditions like the pledge of allegiance, fourth of July celebrations, the singing of the national anthem before all sports games, thanksgiving celebrations, school plays about the founding fathers of the nation and more. Education in the USA has been in the forefront of promoting the American identity and assimilating its population. The example of this nation-state that was created by immigrants of different ethnic, tribal and religious identities can serve as an example for nation-building, despite the existence of dark pages in its history.

Ideological constructs such as the superiority of some races over others were promoted through education and provided the rationalization for slavery and other atrocious acts, which at the time were considered to be justified. Education did have the power to create and promote such an ideology that came to be considered as the dominant norm for centuries. However, the use of formal education was recruited in the effort to create an ideology that opposed this previous one. It is certainly the case that other societal functions and units including politics, family, civil society, and religious groups among other, contributed to the shaping and the spreading of this new ideology and guided education policy and practice towards it. In this effort, school desegregation was considered to be a key element in achieving the goal of promoting societal cohesion.

In a different context which, at principle, has similarities with the idea of desegregation, The English School in Nicosia Cyprus re-admitted Turkish Cypriot students in 2003, terminating a 29 year period of their absence that came as a result of the 1974 Turkish invasion and the division of the island that proceeded it, which was also accompanied by a forced exchange of populations. The unexpected political decision to allow the movement of people across the until then impenetrable line gave the opportunity to Turkish Cypriot parents to send their children to The English School, which is located in the Greek Cypriot controlled area of the island. A political decision by the Cyprus Republic's government was taken, allowing for the re-admittance of the Turkish Cypriots who came to this school in pursue of a better quality of education.

Despite the fact that more than a decade has passed during which the school has steadily been admitting Turkish Cypriot students who now represent 14% of its student body, the school remains to be visibly segregated based on the students' ethno-linguistic and

communal background. The school has proceeded to take measures that would ensure the acceptance of diversity but has been unable to make important changes that pertain to the abolishment of the celebration of Greek national holidays. Furthermore, it has failed to accommodate the religious needs of its Muslim students while it continues to facilitate all the religious rights of its Greek Cypriot student population.

A group of teachers demonstrated a great passion towards promoting integration at the school, but the exaggerated level of this passion resulted to an ‘integration fatigue’ and a condemnation of the practice. Despite all of these facts though, the school seems to operate in an orderly fashion and the students seem to be happy and enjoying their educational experience. However, their social interactions are limited almost entirely within the circle of their own community. Instances of close intercommunal friendships are rare and they are explained by these students’ past experiences in an international setting, away from the everyday reality of the Cyprus conflict.

Based on the findings that resulted from the classroom observations, it can be reported that the teachers have ample opportunities to incorporate peace education throughout their lessons, by simply connecting elements from its theory and practice to the existing curriculum. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the teachers have not received any training in peace education, and others have no interest in doing so, as they oppose the school’s bi-communal character. Even the teachers who are trained, and who would be willing to do so, are faced with the problem that emerges from the limited amount of instructional time and the great pressure for high test results, which is the school’s highest priority.



Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory states that under appropriate conditions, interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members. However, the results of this investigation indicate that the groups of students at this school remain to be segregated within their own communal lines. This may be explained by suggesting that the appropriate conditions are not met, as there are limited naturally occurring opportunities for students to meaningfully interact with each other and manage to proceed to a reconceptualization of group categories, as Allport (1954) suggests.

The research limitation that resulted from the complexity of acquiring the necessary permissions from the University of North Carolina's Institutional Review Board to interview minors resulted in the absence of a focus on the 'student voice' in the findings of this research. However, the absence of students' opinions is not absolute as such views were gathered through the data collection method of the observations and participatory observations. Even in this case though, the linguistic limitation that stems from the principal investigator's inability to speak Turkish made it impossible for data to be collected through the observation of conversations that took place in Turkish. Conversations in Turkish and Greek would only occur in Greek and Turkish language classes and during recess. Furthermore, a Greek Orthodox priest comes to school to teach a more "Greek Orthodox" religious studies class, for students whose parents wish for them to be enrolled in this class, which is considered to be an elective course, which is also taught in Greek language. Finally, the last observed case when a school function took place in Greek was the commemoration ceremony for the Greek national holiday of the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1821, which commemorates the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire.

Ultimately, this research reaffirms the fact that schools are institutions where the construction of nationhood is expected to take place, and where traditions are created and followed. This school proceeded to change its identity on a number of occasions throughout its history, as a result of colonialism, post-colonialism and political changes. Nevertheless, it continues to be bound to its elitist character and still, to its Greek Cypriot traditions, which were adopted and strengthened through the period of its mono-communal state.

The initial failure of creating a Cypriot ethnos that would function as the foundation of a Cypriot nation-state failed, as the Cypriot ethnogenesis was not the people's will at the time before, or after, the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus. However, the Republic of Cyprus today remains to be politically recognized as an independent nation-state, which flies a 'foreign' motherland flag next to its own, and officially uses another nation's national anthem. There is not a foreseeable hypothesis that Cyprus will join the Greek nation-state, but still, a large number of Greek Cypriots self-identify as Greek. Subsequently, the Cyprus conflict remains to be rooted in the confusion of ethnic and national identity, and perpetuated through an intractable education system that has failed to address the different realities that have emerged from the creation of the new republic.

The English School is today an institution that is faced with this challenge and it has sought the solution through the theory and practice of peace education and an effort to create a multicultural school environment. In April 2015, days before the completion of this dissertation, a Turkish Cypriot student was elected as the Head Boy of The English School, which is the school's term for the student body president. This is the first time that a Turkish Cypriot was elected in this position in the School's history. Based on the number of votes that he received, it is obvious that Greek Cypriot students also voted for his candidacy, and

the election outcome became a headline in the island's news reports. At the same time, the school received threatening calls and messages that said that the School is Greek and that groups of people would enter the school's premises and fill it with Greek flags. As a result, the police patrolled the school in the first days following the election. At this point an analysis of the election cannot be included in this investigation, but it is certainly an interesting development that invites further research.

Ultimately, the research findings of this investigation suggest that the peace education implementation process at The English School is in need of closer attention and a series of bold decisions need to be taken. These decisions pertain to the abandonment of the practice of Greek national commemoration ceremonies and to the accommodation of all reasonable religious practices. The English School's example has demonstrated that the promotion of a peaceful school culture that would invite and facilitate social interactions between the members of the different communities, should be approached through a method of carefully planned integration engineering process, that would naturally embed the practices of peace education in the existing curriculum, as opposed to directly enforcing them. Ultimately, learning about the ideal of peace should be a lesson that occurs naturally, and such a lesson has the power to help young people escape their society's intractable conflict and endow them with a vision of achieving a peaceful and more prosperous future.

### **Epilogue**

This dissertation is inspired by my belief that a peaceful and reunited Cyprus is possible. My experience at Seeds of Peace international camp, offered me the opportunity to re-conceptualize the category of the 'enemy other' through a well-structured educational experience that was based on peace education and conflict resolution. Ever since the summer

of 1998 when this experience took place, I have continued to work towards this cause through various non-governmental organizations and civil society groups that have been working with the same passion towards this endeavor. Beyond the methodological aspects of the research limitations, my own ‘hyperbolic zeal’ can be perhaps considered as a personal limitation that stems from my unalienable subjectivity. Despite any criticism that may arise as a result of my background and my expressed positions, I strongly believe that I maintained a neutral perspective throughout my fieldwork and the analysis of my data collection, while being in search of the answers that would inform my research questions. In fact, when I was composing the proposal for this dissertation, I was far more optimistic in my hypothesis that I would have found a school that was to be characterized by a high level of bi-communal integration.

As mentioned in the dissertation, the Headmaster had asked me to offer an abstract description of my research before the beginning of my fieldwork period, and this description was forwarded to the teaching staff. I do acknowledge the fact that, had my research description stated that I was researching “the problem of the de-Hellenization of the school” then it is possible that a different set of people would have agreed to be interviewed and project ideas that would pertain to this “problem”. Despite this limitation hypothesis, the observations were conducted everywhere around the school’s premises, and as previously mentioned, no teacher declined the principal investigator’s request to observe their lesson. In that aspect, the triangulation of the data collection methods was beneficial for the quality control of the collected data.

The opening of the checkpoints and the induction of the island in the European Union that followed shortly after, came to be the start of a new era in the Cyprus conflict and

allowed for a civil society and market based re-conceptualization of the category of the other. The necessity of economic relations and the reaching of a condition of minimum economic disparity between the two sides can be seen as a precondition for a future unified solution. Co-education at The English School and at the other private schools in the South that have admitted Turkish Cypriot students should however be seen as more than a mere economic transaction. Since the beginning of the possibility of co-education, thousands of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot youth have had the opportunity to experience life in a bi-communal environment and have come to share the same school identity. This fact however, can only have a meaningful impact if the co-education experience is accompanied by the existence of a climate of respect that is conducive to unforced integration and welcoming to the natural establishment of friendships.

These thousands of Cypriot youth who have studied in these schools have joined a few more thousands like myself, who at some point in their lives had the experience of participating in a peace camp or another conflict resolution and deliberation session, and who have come to demystify the category of the unknown 'other'. This group of people has increased to reach an amount that is significant in the context of the island's relatively small population. The idea of rapprochement with the other community of the island has shifted significantly over the last decade, and as a result, this action that was formerly characterized as an act of treason is now considered to be acceptable. This conflict maturity was reached as an outcome of a synergistic approach that was driven by members of the civil society who promoted peacebuilding and rapprochement. Furthermore, within the last decade, the political climate has improved and the extreme tensions and 'arms race' have decreased as

the level of foreign investment and economic growth increased. The existence of a secure and peaceful environment is essentially a necessity for human progress.

Within this context, the example of The English School case study is ultimately solely allowing us to examine the outcomes of this pioneering effort towards a bi-communal education setting, at an institution that has a public-private character as opposed to merely a private one. The English School's current model has been characterized by many as an experiment and it attracts island wide attention whenever any type of bi-communal tension arises. In conclusion, the knowledge that is produced through the efforts, the successes and the failures of The English School is important to be analyzed, understood, conceptualized, disseminated and used for the advancement of the area of studies, the theory and the practice of peace education.

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