

# **PEOPLE UNITED IN A COUNTRY DIVIDED**

## **BI-COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES IN CYPRUS**

**Wissenschaftliche Arbeit zur Erlangung des Akademischen Grades Magister Artium an der  
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yurdunu sevmeliymiş insan  
öyle diyor hep babam  
benim yurdum  
ikiye bölünmüş ortasından  
hangi yarısını  
sevmeli insan

ο καθένας πρέπει την πατρίδα ν'αγαπά  
έτσι λέει ο πατέρας μου συχνά  
η δική μου η πατρίδα έχει μοιραστεί στα δυο  
ποιό απ'τα δυο κομμάτια  
πρέπει ν'αγαπώ

my father says  
love your homeland  
my homeland  
is divided into two  
which part should i love

Neşe Yaşın

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## Abbreviations

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| AKEL    | Ανορθότικο Κόμμα του Εργαζομένου Λαού – Restorative Party of the Working People |
| CIA     | Central Intelligence Agency   |
| CTP     | Cumhuriyetiçi Türk Partısı – Republican Turkish Party                           |
| DIKO    | Δημοκρατικό Κόμμα –Democratic Party   |
| DISY    | Δημοκρατικό Συνγεριασμό – Democratic Rally                                      |
| DP      | Demokratik Partısı – Democratic Party   |
| EDI     | Ενωμένοι Δημοκράτοι – United Democrats  |
| EOKA B  | Reformation of EOKA   |
| EOKA    | Εθνική Οργάνωση Κυπριακών Αγωνιστών – National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters |
| EU      | European Union  |
| KKTC    | Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti – Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus             |
| NGO     | Non-Governmental Organisation   |
| PRIO    | Peace Research Institute, Oslo  |
| TMT     | Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı – Turkish Resistance Organisation                      |
| TRNC    | Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus   |
| UBP     | Ulusal Birleşik Partısı –National Unity Party                                   |
| UN      | United Nations  |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Program  |
| UNFICYP | United Nations Force in Cyprus  |
| UNHCR   | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees                                   |
| UNOPS   | United Nations Office for Project Services                                      |
| US      | United States (of America)  |
| USAID   | United States Agency for International Development                              |

# I INTRODUCTION

Deep blue sea, long and sandy beaches, the warm Mediterranean sun, picturesque villages... This is how Cyprus, the island of Aphrodite is known to most Europeans. However, this scenery changes when walking around through Nicosia, Cyprus' capital. Barbed wire, roads ending in walls of concrete and oil drums, fences, bullet holes, and half-rotten houses filled with sand-bags, and soldiers of various nationalities make up the picture of every-day life. Cyprus, the third largest island of the Mediterranean, is located only 50 km away from Turkey, 100 km from Syria and 800 km from the Greek mainland. The island's population includes 641,000 Greek Cypriots, 87,000 Turkish Cypriots, about 115,000 mainland Turks<sup>1</sup>, 4,800 Maronites, 2,600 Armenians and 900 Latins. Since 1974, Cyprus is divided into a Turkish Cypriot north and a Greek Cypriot south, separated by a 180 km long UN-controlled buffer zone.

The situation in Cyprus can best be described with Johan Galtung's term of 'negative peace', which he defined as the absence of violence. Even though no violent outbreaks have occurred in recent years and relationships between the two sides grow stronger, the unsolved conflict is still very present in people's minds and in every-day public debates. For 29 years, Cypriots have not had any possibility to cross the 'Green Line' separating the island's two major communities. They have lived isolated from each other, in an environment where negative stereotypes, enemy images and propaganda were kept alive throughout the years. In this atmosphere of division and enmity, a group of Greek and Turkish Cypriots that have met abroad, decided to resist all nationalistic concepts and principles and to work for the promotion of peace between the island's inhabitants. The first of these bi-communal meetings held in the buffer zone took place in 1990. As the interest was growing, series of conflict resolution workshops and trainings were held, and bi-communal activities expanded rapidly.

In April 2003, the restrictions that prevented people from crossing the Green Line were partially lifted. In contrast to the northern authorities' postulate that Greek and Turkish Cypriots could never live peacefully together, the scenes following the opening of the checkpoints resembled those in Berlin after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Refugees went and visited their former villages and houses and were warmly welcomed by the present

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<sup>1</sup> Population numbers by [www.visitcyprus.org](http://www.visitcyprus.org), last reviewed 29/01/2005. Official numbers about mainland Turks do not exist. These numbers are merely an estimate (Uludağ, Cyprus Mail, 26/03/2004). During the last official census of 1960, 180,000 Turkish Cypriots were counted. The majority of them has left the island during the past years and 'settlers' from Turkey have replaced them. Due to the highly politicised connotation of this expression, I will use the term 'mainland Turks'.

residents – the supposed-to-be enemies. New friendships developed and on weekends Cypriots from both sides queue at the checkpoint to enjoy a day on the ‘other’ side of the Green Line. Approximately 10,000 persons per day cross the Green Line, of which about 6,500 are Turkish Cypriots and about 3,500 are Greek Cypriots.<sup>2</sup>

However, the euphoric atmosphere did not result in a solution to the conflict. On 24 April 2004, all Cypriots were asked in separate referenda to vote on the UN-proposed Annan plan, which would have foreseen a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem, including the reunification of the island and the common accession to the European Union on 1 May. Whereas the plan was approved by the vast majority of Turkish Cypriots, it was rejected by the Greek Cypriots. The high political tension that appeared in the Greek Cypriot part of Cyprus, marked by a strong nationalistic force, proved that the Greek Cypriot community is not yet ready for a solution to the deep-rooted conflict.

## I.1 Research interest and relevance

The Cyprus conflict falls into the category of what Edward Azar labels protracted social conflict and what John Burton refers to as deep-rooted conflict. These particularly long-lasting conflicts are based on non-negotiable interests, such as identities, ideologies and the frustration of basic human needs. Burton and Azar along with other scholars of the field propose a long-term transformative approach in order to resolve these conflicts. This transformation process is to imply a “movement from the latent stage to confrontation to negotiation to dynamic, peaceful relationships”.<sup>3</sup> Scholars of conflict resolution approaches argue that settlements reached between the political or military elites of the conflict groups fail to address the needs of the conflict societies and thus impede an effective conflict resolution. Subsequently, conflict resolution measures focus on a comprehensive approach that encompasses the various levels of society. Instead of reaching an agreement that benefits the elites and is imposed on the broad society, they promote a process of sustainable peace-building. Even though each scholar proposes a slightly different method of encouraging this process, they all support the assumption that a sustainable peace is to be reached from within the society. Different methods are proposed, the most frequent being the *conflict resolution* or *problem solving workshops* and the *conflict resolution training*. While the workshops aim at enabling face to face conversation, conflict resolution trainings pursue the goal of educating the participants about their conflict and of

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<sup>2</sup> The Greek Cypriot daily newspaper ‘O Fileleftheros’ recorded the number of people crossing the Green Line on a random day. See Fileleftheros, 03/09/2004

providing skills to constructively deal with it. Participants of both conflict resolution workshops and trainings ideally comprise representatives of the conflict groups, who obtain a position of influence in their respective social surrounding. Participants are meant to act as multipliers within their social environment and thus to help spread the ideas and skills of the conflict resolution approaches to the wider society. Consequently, by conducting workshops and trainings for selected participants, a basis for a long-term conflict transformation is thought to be built.

While these approaches have been proposed in theory and tried in practice, as far as I know no one has ever empirically followed the proposed transformation process over a long period of time. Therefore the problem with these approaches is that they do not reflect the specific contextual conditions, the contextual surroundings of the conflict society.

In my thesis I want to show empirically how conflict resolution approaches work in Cyprus. Since they intensively started ten years ago, by now they should have widely spread into various levels and areas of the two societies. However, the recently proposed solution to the conflict has been rejected. While a transformation can be noted in the Turkish Cypriot community, a similar process has not yet developed in the Greek Cypriot community. Given the fact that the conflict resolution approaches have been applied by scholars of this field in bi-communal settings with representatives of both communities, my attempt is to explore the reasons for the fact that a transformation has taken place in only one of the two communities included. I therefore want to formulate my research questions as follows:

**Under what contextual conditions can a positive outcome of conflict resolution measures be achieved? What contextual conditions prevent that outcome?**

Even though I will work out the contextual conditions in a very specific case – the bi-communal activities in Cyprus – they will contribute to a generalised contextual framework that is not reflected in the approaches as such. Therefore, they will add to the existing theoretical literature in the field of conflict resolution and will help practitioners in other conflict areas.

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<sup>3</sup> Lederach 1997:75

## I.2 Methodology

### **I.2.1 Data**

For a political scientist, the method of fieldwork<sup>4</sup> is rather unusual. However, this anthropological method applies best to my topic of research, as the information gained during fieldwork are not in that form available in any other way. Especially in a social conflict setting, literature and other secondary sources are often biased and can not provide a complete picture of the complex social structures. As fieldwork enables the collection of rich and comprehensive information, I decided to base my research on an interdisciplinary approach and to use the anthropological approach as a methodological fundament of my study.

#### *I.2.1.1 Fieldwork*

The data that constitute the fundament of my study are mainly based on fieldwork in Cyprus. I have spent three months in total on the island; March 2004 and again September and October 2004. The particular value of fieldwork lies in the direct collection of data<sup>5</sup> as well as in the multiplicity of data collection methods, such as participant observation, plain observation, different types of interviews and participation in every day life. The most characteristic aspect of fieldwork is the method of participant observation. “It involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with [the researcher’s] presence so that [he or she] can observe and record information about their lives.”<sup>6</sup> Participant observation provides an “intuitive understanding” about the social and cultural structures and interactions in the field and allows the researcher “to speak with confidence about the meaning of data”.<sup>7</sup>

#### *I.2.1.2 Access to the field*

Before first flying to Cyprus, I tried to get in contact with several bi-communal groups, whose information I found in the internet. But I only managed to establish a brief email contact with Maria Hadjipavlou, both lecturer at Cyprus University and an active member of the Peace Research Centre and a bi-communal women’s group. At an international

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<sup>4</sup> Fieldwork is used in several academic disciplines, with each applying different methods of collecting and evaluating data. The concept of the fieldwork that I conducted refers to the anthropological fieldwork, whose main characteristic is the method of participant observation and which in its present form grounds on the concept of Bronislaw Malinowski.

<sup>5</sup> Illius 2003: 74

<sup>6</sup> Bernard 1994: 136

<sup>7</sup> Bernard 1994: 141

conference that I attended during my very first days, I met several bi-communally active persons, who then helped me with further contacts and introduced me to other activists. I used personal contacts as a method to contact bi-communal activists, as this method is more reliable than simply sending emails or calling people, and also this method helped me understand the local networks and their function. I was invited to many formal and informal meetings and events that were taking place during my stay. With the bi-communal activists introducing me to further activists of the field and providing me with contact information, I obtained a comprehensive insight into their network structure. Also I gained a relatively complete picture of the bi-communal field and its major actors.

During both of my stays in Cyprus, I lived in the Greek part of Nicosia, but spent much time in the Turkish part as well. I chose to live in the Greek part only for the reason of language, as my Greek is much better than my Turkish. My stay in the south was often perceived as an offence by Turkish Cypriots. During my first stay I lived in the Nicosia Youth Hostel, which was managed by a Greek Cypriot, and during my second stay I rented a room in a flat that I shared with two other young people. The private context of both my stays provided a completely different perspective of the peace-building process and the Cyprus problem in general from what I saw in the bi-communal context and it helped me build a more realistic picture of the situation in the south of Cyprus.

### *1.2.1.3 Research in the field*

Methodologically, my field research includes participant observation, formal and informal semi-structured interviews, informal talks, regular lecture of local newspapers and attendance of conferences that were not directly linked to the bi-communal field of conflict resolution. I conducted *participant observation* at 51 bi-communal meetings, events, conferences and workshops. In the meetings and workshops I attended, I preferably sat in the back and followed the discussions and interactions of the participants. According to the situation, to how many people were present and to the sensitivity of the subject discussed, I took notes during the meeting. In most of the cases though, I only took memory protocols and put them in writing immediately after the meeting, so that I could use them for my analysis later on. At the events I attended, such as demonstrations and marches, it was not possible to take notes during the happening, so again I took memory notes and wrote them down afterwards.

Additionally to participant observation, I did eight *formal* and 24 *informal interviews*. Both kinds of interviews had a semi-structured character as I had a list of basic points of interest that I discussed with all interviewees. I consider those interviews formal that I conducted

with persons working for an official organisation or institution. These included among others UNOPS, the Cyprus Fulbright Commission, the Turkish Cypriot Bayrak State TV and the Greek Cypriot Ministry of Culture. I met these persons in their office, which itself provided a formal environment. I tape-recorded the majority of these interviews. In one case, the interviewee did not have the official permission to give an interview and in two other cases technical problems were the reason for not recording the interview. In these cases I took notes while interviewing. All the interviews were transcribed. In an informal interview setting, I interviewed teachers, academics, people working for local NGOs and other bi-communal activists. Most of the interviewees have been active in the bi-communal field for several years. I consider these interviews informal because I met the interviewees in an informal environment. We usually met in public coffee shops or at their home, often with other family members around. I did not tape-record the informal interviews as the informal and casual setting seemed to more encourage people to talk freely. In some of the informal interviews I took written notes while interviewing, most of the times however I took memory protocols only which I transcribed in a written form afterwards. I preferred the method of taking memory protocols as it provided a very natural and open atmosphere of conversation and the interviewees seemed to feel more comfortable.

A very valuable source of information were the many *informal talks* I held during my field research. Informal talks included talks with bi-communally activists and experts during coffee breaks of a conference or a workshop, talks with activists while crossing the buffer zone and waiting for transfer, talks at informal bi-communal gatherings such as joint dinner or meetings for a coffee or for a drink. As I made friends both in the north and in the south, a bi-communal atmosphere was created when meeting altogether for a drink. I further held informal talks with the manager of the youth hostel and with the friends of my flatmates, with numerous Greek Cypriot men working in the kiosks and supermarkets, with taxi drivers on both sides, with restaurant owners in the north and mainland Turks working in cafes and restaurants, with the Turkish Cypriots selling tickets at archaeological monuments, with UN soldiers at the Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone and with the Turkish Cypriot police men stamping the visa. All these informal talks contributed to my information about the effect of bi-communal activities and to a comprehensive impression of the overall situation in Cyprus, of the different perceptions regarding the Annan plan, the reunification, the inter-communal relation and the future of the island. I also took memory protocols that I transcribed afterwards of many of these informal talks, though some contribute to my broad impressions only in form of memory notes.

I conducted most of the formal and informal interviews in English, as this is the language of the bi-communal field and most of the Greek Cypriot activists have studies in the US or the UK. Yet, I did several of the interviews with Greek Cypriots in Greek. All the interviews I did with Turkish Cypriots were held in English. Informal talks that took place in the context of a conference or a workshop were mostly in English, while nearly all other informal talks with Greek Cypriots were held in Greek. I held all informal talks with Turkish Cypriots in English.

I regularly read the *local newspapers* in order to follow the public discourse about the peace process in Cyprus. I regularly read the daily *Cyprus Mail* and the weekly *Cyprus Weekly*, both in English language. I varied between the Greek Cypriot daily *Φιλελεύθερος* (Phileleftheros), *Αλήθεια* (Alithia) and *Πολίτης* (Politis). As far as Turkish Cypriot newspapers are concerned, I read *Yeni Düzen* daily newspaper, but due to my limited knowledge of the Turkish language I mostly used the *Cyprus Media Net*, an online website that offers a selection of articles of daily Greek and Turkish Cypriot newspapers translated into Greek, Turkish and English.

In addition to the bi-communal conferences and workshops, I attended seven conferences that were not directly linked to the bi-communal conflict resolution process. Yet, I gained a lot of valuable information about the Cyprus problem and its sociological framework through these conferences. Also they functioned as a platform and were thus a valuable source for new contacts.

The political context of my stays in Cyprus has been very interesting. During my stay in March, the negotiations about the Annan plan reached their final stage. For the first time, a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem was within reach and the decision lay in the hands of the people of Cyprus. The atmosphere on the whole island was very politicised, the Annan plan and the proposed reunification with its costs and benefits were the one and only topic of discussion. Demonstrations in favour and against the plan took place. The bi-communally activists spent all their energy on promoting a peaceful coexistence of Greek and Turkish Cypriots and saw their year long efforts ready to become reality. During my second stay in September and October, I could still feel the deep disappointment of the Turkish Cypriot community about the rejection of the Annan plan by the Greek Cypriot community. The whole bi-communal field seemed to slowly recover from the outcome of the referenda. The present time was often been considered a time of change and a time of redefinition of bi-communal activities. Even though several months had passed since the referenda, I still found the Greek Cypriot community divided into YES- and NO-voters –

into traitors and patriots. I witnessed a curious witch-hunting campaign of the Greek Cypriot president Tassos Papadopoulos against the UNOPS Bi-communal Development Programme that since 1998 has funded bi-communal activities and projects, against USAID for being the main sponsor and against everyone who received funding out of this programme. Bi-communally active people were openly branded as traitors, who sold their country with American support. The UN was blamed for having interfered in internal politics and undermined the government by supporting a YES-vote in the referenda on the Annan plan. This campaign had a very negative effect on Greek Cypriot peace-builders of the bi-communal field and thus on bi-communal activism in general terms.

#### *1.2.1.4 My role as a researcher in the field*

When doing field research, the researcher enters a social context that he or she wishes to explore and to analyse. However, with the entering of the researcher into this context, the context might change. Being a stranger and an outsider, the researcher might affect the attitudes and behaviour of those persons that make up the object of the research. I am aware of that problem. My role during bi-communal meetings was clearly defined as the role of a researcher. And yet I believe that in most of the meetings or workshops I attended, I did not significantly change the situation. Participants barely made up a homogenous group. Also, especially in the later meetings I attended, my presence has already become familiar. Besides, bi-communal activists are used to researchers, as most of the trainings and workshops in the beginning have been conducted by American scholars and several researchers have since come to Cyprus and have explored different issues, among them the issue of identity. Bi-communal activities are meant to have a political impact and are thus no subject that is to be dealt with behind closed doors. During several bi-communal events, I was asked to act as a Greek Cypriot, as this group was usually smaller in number than the Turkish Cypriots. Through my German nationality I was clearly perceived as an individual, who is not involved in the Cyprus conflict in any way, and thus has no biased point of view when entering the field. My role as a German was a frequent topic of discussion. Again and again I was asked about the German reunification and its impact on the German people. Especially during my stay in March I was often ascribed the role of an expert of the field.

What appeared to be difficult to me was to clearly define my role and my position in the context of bi-communal activities. Participant observation requires both participation, and thus belonging to the group, and observation, which implies keeping a distance to the group. The better I got to know the actors of the bi-communal field, the more difficult I

found to keep the necessary distance. I completely took over the role of a participant when I went to the weekly meetings that were held to organise the Cyprus Day of Peace. As the number of participants was very low, I began to feel responsible for the functioning of the peace march that was to take place. I distributed leaflets to advertise the march and at the event I helped distribute candles. By doing so, I clearly positioned myself on the side of the bi-communally activists and I lost my researcher's distance. Opponents of the Annan plan often reproached me for belonging to the bi-communal camp and for being blinded by their one-sided perspective. However, my active participation was limited to this one event. In analysing my collected data, I have tried to keep a neutral standpoint.

#### *1.2.1.5 Literature*

My research is based on the conflict resolution approaches of John Burton, Edward Azar, Herbert Kelman, Paul Ledearch, Stephen Ryan and Louise Diamond. I further included studies about the Cyprus conflict in general and about Cypriot nationalism in particular. A large part of this literature is written by Cypriot academics and therefore a certain bias has to be taken into account. Literature on the Greek Cypriot part of Cyprus is more readily available while literature on the Turkish Cypriot part is scarce. As far as bi-communal activities are concerned, not much has yet been written. The most important contribution is written by Oliver Wolleh, who explored and analysed the Bi-Communal Conflict Resolution Trainer Group in 1996 and 1997. Further contributions have mainly been made by Maria Hadjipavlou and Benjamin Broome. In addition to academic literature I included newspaper articles and websites.

#### *1.2.1.6 Evaluation of the collected data and methodological procedure*

My research is based on the following set of circumstances:

- Conflict resolution activities in Cyprus have intensively started in 1994 in bi-communal settings and have thus included both Greek and Turkish Cypriots in equal numbers.
- Conflict resolution activities have been conducted during the same period of time with participants of both communities.
- A decade after the activities started, a transformation process can be observed in the Turkish Cypriot society only. This transformation to a significant extent can be attributed to the outcome of conflict resolution activities.
- The general concept of conflict resolution activities in Cyprus has not yet achieved a positive outcome in the sense of a general transformation and resolution of the conflict.

Given that the same method of conflict resolution activities has been applied to both communities within the same period of time, but has created a different outcome, I assume that the difference of the outcome can be attributed to different contextual conditions in the two communities. In principle, Mill's *method of difference*<sup>8</sup> would be suitable for such a case. The two communities that constitute my two cases, experience the same conflict, the same framework of approaches and, as both live on the same island, they share the same general living conditions. However, my two cases do not vary in only one variable, as proposed by Mill, but in a complex set of variables. In order to determine this set of contextual conditions, I reviewed my field data. I then indexed and systematised my data which yielded preliminary contextual conditions. I have identified four contextual conditions (political framework, economic framework, education and the concept of identity), which could possibly have influenced the outcome of the conflict resolution activities.

Based on my field data, I will describe each contextual condition in both communities. In a next step I will analyse its impact on the outcome on the transformation process and I will then show, whether the respective contextual condition has a positive or a negative effect on that process. Even though I only have two cases to compare – the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot community – I assume that the results are still generalisable to a certain extent. Furthermore I have identified three contextual conditions (external actors, network structures and communication), which I assume do not have a different effect on each community, but affect either both communities or the bi-communal activities as such. In these three cases I will also describe the contextual conditions, based on my data, and will then try to analyse their impact on the outcome of conflict resolution measures. I am aware that because I do not have a comparative case, my result will be explorative and will not be completely generalisable. However, I think that these contextual conditions contribute to the general project of conflict transformation and therefore should not be left aside.

The level of analysis of my research will be the sub-systemic level. The focus of my research will be the conflict resolution activities and their impact on a transformation process of the two Cypriot societies and hence, the inner-Cypriot level. I will also take external actors and structures into consideration, however only their influence on the inner-Cypriot level is of interest to my research. Their functioning on the systemic level will be left aside. Even though Greece and Turkey can hardly be separated from the Cyprus conflict, I will not focus on these actors. Greece and Turkey do not directly influence the

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<sup>8</sup> For a summary of Mill's method of difference see Hopkin 2002: 252-255

bi-communal development. They do have an influence of the political framework of each community, which I will take into account. However, they act on a different level of the conflict; their dispute does not necessarily represent the interests of the local communities and thus has to be taken into consideration in a different research setting.

My study is divided into four major parts. In the **first part** (chapter II) I will present conflict resolution activities in general. I will outline several approaches within this field, which have been expressed in the bi-communal workshops and trainings in concrete. I will then draw a critical summary in which I will reflect the contextual reference of the approaches. The **second part** (chapter III) attempts to give an overview of the Cyprus conflict. I will first describe the historical development and will then outline the different perceptions of the two communities of the conflict. I will further give a short overview about official and unofficial peace initiatives that have been conducted in the context of the Cyprus problem. Last, I will illustrate the present political situation. In the **third part** (chapter IV) I will introduce bi-communal activities in specific. I divide the recent and intense bi-communal development into three phases that I will describe with their particular characteristics. Afterwards I will try to outline the transformation process and make plausible to the reader that a transformation has occurred in the Turkish Cypriot side, but is still absent in the Greek Cypriot side. The **fourth part** (chapter V) comprises the main focus of my research as in this part I will present and analyse the contextual conditions that I have identified and I will show their impact on the outcome of conflict resolution activities. Finally I will draw a comprehensive **conclusion** (chapter VI) in which I will I will summarise the findings of my research with regard to Cyprus in specific and to protracted social conflicts in general.

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