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## Reconciliation in Cyprus, does it work?

Zihniye OKRAY<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Reconciliation can be described as; the process by which conflicted, warring, aggrieved communities agree to resolve their differences and animosities towards each other and come to a mutual understanding to co-exist in peace, to forgive, to abandon the fighting and move on (Musisi, 2010). In this paper the differences between Turkish Cypriot's and Greek Cypriot's discourses, chosen traumas and narcissisms of small differences between them will be discussed.

**Key Words:** Reconciliation; Cyprus; chosen trauma, narcissism, Turks, Greeks.

## Kıbrıs'ta Uzlaşma, İşe Yarıyor mu?

### Özet

Uzlaş; çatışmalı, düşman ve hiç bir şekilde bir arada yaşayamayacağını düşünen toplumların çatışmalarını çözümlüyip birbirlerini affetmeleri, yeni bir bakış açısına sahip olarak farklılıklarını ve düşmanlıklarını bir tarafa bırakıp, birlikte barış içerisinde yaşamaları, geçmişte olanları affetmeleri ve hayatlarına devam etmeleri olarak tanımlanmaktadır ( Musisi, 2010). Bu çalışmada Kıbrıslı Türkler ve Kıbrıslı Rumların, söylemleri, seçilmiş travmaları ve küçük farklılıkların narsisizmleri tartışılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Uzlaş, Kıbrıs, seçilmiş travma, Türkler, Rumlar

### Introduction

#### Beyond the facts: Psychic inheritances and Cyprus Conflict

Reconciliation can be described as the process by which conflicted, warring, aggrieved communities agree to resolve their differences and animosities towards each other and come to a mutual understanding to co-exist in peace, to forgive, to abandon the fighting and move on. With this definition it is crystal clear that it does not mean forgetting the past (Musisi, 2010). Mutual acceptance and the changed orientation in psychological manner between previously conflicted communities are the main points of reconciliation (Staub, 2006).

In order to have a reconciliation process in Cyprus first we must adhere the so-called 'Cyprus Conflict' from the counterparts of the problem in this case: Turkish Cypriots and Greek

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<sup>1</sup> Doç. Dr., Lefke Avrupa Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, Psikoloji Bölümü  
E-mail: zokray@eul.edu.tr

Cypriots. In political psychology literature, the main point that was emphasized mostly is that violence may resume, even if stopped by negotiations and agreements between communities. The main reason for those incidences is because the negotiations and agreements do not fulfill the needs of all segments of the hostile communities. There always have been an unsolved or not fully negotiated issues still remain. This may be because of the psychological aspects and also the common past of the communities (Staub, 2006). If there could be a solution on island it is not without the understanding of traumas that addressed by Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. In order to understand the conflicts that turned into violence usually not the objectively given differences but the differences in perceptions and how perceptions are publicly represented must be considered because they form public rhetoric and discourse. Two communities' perceptions of the starting point of Cyprus Conflict were different. They significantly differ from each other on this main topic. According to Greek Cypriots the starting point of the Cyprus Conflict dated back to 1974 when Turkish Troops from Turkey come to the island. They saw this as 'an invasion'. And the societal trauma for them is the war at 1974 which afterwards divided the island in two parts and it is still divided. For Turkish Cypriot's societal trauma dated back to 1963 when Greek Cypriots forced Turkish Cypriots to live in enclaves in subhuman conditions which continued for 11 years and lasted in 1974 when Turkish Troops come to Cyprus. Turkish Cypriots call 1974 a 'Peace Operation'. It is obvious that the discourse of two communities differ from each other (Volkan, 2008). Ideologies manifest themselves in discourses. Group members express their ideologies through their discourses. Ideological ideas gained by reading and listening of other group members. Also political propaganda, indoctrination, novels, newspapers and written history are the sources of ideology that form discourses. Discourse is a part of society, and they are socially shared ideas of group members (Van Dijk, 2000). Communities have built cultural system through years that keeps them together with unity, integrity and gave them chance to preserve, protect and propagate themselves; with this cultural system they can reconcile themselves with conflicted community (Musisi, 2010).

In order to have an effective and real reconciliation five milestones must be taken into consideration. These are truth, apology, forgiveness, reparation and initiatives to promote interaction (Oliva, 2010). At that point a common history of two communities must be written again based on what really happened in past. But this is also a conflicted and complex task to do. Earlier we talk about different discourses that two communities have, but in political psychology literature precious term called chosen trauma must be taken into

consideration in order to write a common history without ignoring the psychological counterparts of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. Chosen trauma can be described as a mental representation of an event that causes a group to feel helpless, humiliated, victimized and face losses by another group (Volkan, 1998, 2002). Chosen traumas transgenerationally transmitted through the generations and they change their functions and form ethnic marker and at some point of the time the chosen traumas can be reactivated by the community. Usually this chosen trauma reactivated by a leader and leader-follower interaction takes place. Time collapse occurs when chosen trauma is reactivated. Time collapse is the term described by Volkan that refers to the fears, expectations, fantasies and defenses associated with a chosen trauma and contemporary threat. With the current event that occurs recently have different effects on large groups according their feeling of powerfulness and powerlessness. If the large group is in a powerful position, a sense of revenge and if the large group in a powerless position a sense of revictimization occurs according to the current event. Time collapse may also lead to irrational decision –making by leaders that affects large group members with cruelty to others (Volkan, 1998, 2012).

Chosen traumas and also time collapses for two communities in Cyprus considered to be different. Chosen traumas can be considered as cultural traumas when the definition of cultural trauma examined. A cultural trauma occurs when a community faces with a terrible event that leaves unchangeable scars on their consciousness, change their memories of past irreversible and this event considered to be the fundamental core of their identity (Alexander, 2004). Before describing the chosen traumas of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots three important terms must be mentioned in order to manage the violence and aggression in national and international arenas. These are historical hostility, dehumanization and unjust treatment (Çevik, 2012-2013). Especially historical hostility is very important in Cyprus case because the hostility between Turks and Greeks begins centuries before the Cyprus Conflict has started officially described according to political psychology literature (Itzkowitz, Volkan, 2002). Chosen trauma related with hostility for Greeks starts with Battle of Manzikert when Byzantine Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes defeated by Seljuq Sultan Alp Arslan in 1071. Battle of Manzikert is very important in history because it is the starting point of Turkification of Anatolia by Turks. Nearly 300 years after battle of Manzikert the conquest of Constantinople from Christian Byzantium Empire is the chosen trauma for Greeks (Kalelioğlu, 2008, Itzkowitz, Volkan, 2002, Volkan, 2012). This two historical events leads to the Megali Idea which can be described as the idea that Byzantium Empire is going to be

revealed. Greek poet and hero Rigas Ferreros draw a map in 1791 which shows the land that is going to be the homeland for the mentioned empire. West Anatolia, West-East Thrace, Aegean Islands, Crete, Rhodes, Cyprus and İstanbul considered to be the land of Great Helen Empire. (Yellice, 2012, Açıkşes, Cankut, 2014) With the liberation of Greece in 1821 Greek Cypriots in Cyprus demanded for ENOSİS in 1830 (Beratlı, 1999). As known in historical knowledge the Cyprus Island is under Ottoman rule at those days. But in 1878, Ottoman Empire hired Cyprus to Great Britain Empire. Greek Cypriots demand for ENOSİS again and again in the history. Nearly 6 decades ago on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1955 EOKA was declared in Cyprus by Greek Cypriots and their main ideology was according to Megali Idea and ENOSİS is joining of Cyprus to Greece. According to political psychology literature, as it mentioned above, it is clear, that the Cyprus Conflict starts long before 1974. Greek Cypriots in Cyprus never give up their Megali Idea. (Beratlı, 1999, Açıkşes, Cankut, 2014).

Chosen trauma for Turkish Cypriots is much more different from Greek Cypriots. The relationship of Ottomans with Cyprus legally starts in 1517. Mamluk Sultans of Egypt conquered by the Ottomans in 1517, due to this conquest the Venetians annual tribute of 8,000 ducats for Cyprus started given to Ottomans by Venetians (Finkel, 2006). The existence of Ottoman Empire in Cyprus starts with this event. After the conquest of Cyprus, Turks from Ottoman Empire send to the island with the imperial edict of Selim II from various cities and villages from Anatolia (Beratlı, 1997). From 1571 to 1878 307 years in total, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots lived together in Cyprus. (Açıkşes, Cankut, 2014). In 1878, Ottoman Empire hired Cyprus to Great Britain Empire and the island become a Crown Colony. 20<sup>th</sup> July 1878 - High Commissioner Sir Garnet Wolseley's inauguration date is very important for Turkish Cypriots according to transgenerational transmission of trauma, chosen trauma and time collapse (Beratlı, 1999). Turkish Troops from Turkey started the Peace Operation with the command of Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit at 20<sup>th</sup> July 1974. As seen in the Bosnia case Serbian propaganda was based on the reactivation of the Serbian chosen trauma and creates a time collapse. In Bosnia case the death of Prince Lazar and the loss of the Battle of Kosovo against Ottoman Empire was Serbian's chosen trauma and reactivation of this loss after 600 years was the time collapse (Volkan, 2004). In Cyprus case the date that Ottoman Empire's leaving the island to Great Britain and the Peace Operation date are the same but this is not a coincidence. In the light of literature the chosen trauma and time collapse of the Turkish Cypriots must be considered as the Ottoman Empires letting the island to Crown Colony. During the 11 years period, Turkish Cypriot's were living in enclaves and hope of help from

mainland Turkey was understandable because mainland Turkey aka Ottoman Empire send 'her children' to Cyprus and leave them to a foreigner's mercy -Great Britain Empire- and on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1974 'mother comes to nourish her children' again.

Reconciliation can be described as the process by which conflicted, warring, aggrieved communities agree to resolve their differences and animosities towards each other and come to a mutual understanding to co-exist in peace, to forgive, to abandon the fighting and move on (Musisi, 2010). The differences between groups even they can be minor they will be exaggerated by the group members to perceive themselves grandiose upon others. All human beings are in need of identifying some people as enemies and some as allies in order to protect their sense of self which is a complex unity gained with the experiences of individual ethnicity, nationality and other cultural signifiers (Volkan, 1985). The need for enemy, works on unconscious level - the group members unconsciously projects their own unwanted characteristics onto the enemy which results in resemblance with them and with those resemblances the group wants to keep distances with their enemies (Ataöv, 1998). Narcissism of minor differences between two groups can cause unimaginable also unthinkable levels of vandalism and brutality to each other (Kolstø, 2007). Freud describes narcissism of minor differences as the strangeness and hostility among individuals due to their minor differences and individuals or groups activated narcissism of minor differences in order to produce enemies. Narcissism of minor differences holds the members of the group together because only by this way the aggression can be projected to other group. Usually conflicts bursts between the groups that have borders, in other words, between the groups that are neighbors (Moses, 1996). For all neighborhood relationships the imaginary or real border line must be intact and also for a peaceful relationship this border must be protected fragilely (Mijolla-Mellor, 2014). The presence of the enemy not only gratifies the needs of individuals but also gratifies the needs of the groups. Enemy will absorb all of the bad and unwanted characteristics that belongs to a group with projection and all good and wanted characteristics is going to be the property that belongs to the other. This is dehumanization process of the enemy. Groups that are considered to be enemies get use of this produced reality and this situation became an institutional fact, in other words rhetoric of the discourse. This accepted discourse is the real border for a peace situation (Çevik, 2012-2013, Moses, 1996). This process is reciprocal between the groups which results the sameness of the enemies. Enemies always needed to complete one's own identity even the enemy have a minor difference. Minor differences, usually symbolize greater diversities and in the times of conflicts or crisis

they are the main reasons for vandalism and brutality. In Cyprus case although Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have major differences like religion and language but also they have a lot of common traditions and customs. But minor cultural differences are more important than major ones. And also minor differences underlie a wide range of conflicts. St Louis (2005) states that; sameness makes differences in some ways like representations of differences as an antithesis to assure self-characteristics and make a political difference. Narcissism and differentiation are important factors that show motivations such as fear, failure, defensiveness, protection and affirmation (St. Louis, 2005). Upon Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriot they always need each other to identify themselves, in other words a Greek Cypriot defines himself in relation with Turkish Cypriot. Ignatieff makes a conclusion upon minor differences as the direction of looking at the minor difference is important. It may be seen as minor difference when looking from outside but it may be a major difference when seen from inside. And he added that the outside observer or third parties are not able to measure it (Ignatieff, 1997).

### **For the last words**

Reconciliation in Cyprus Case is grift and complicated. The groups that have passed through massive social traumas transmit their heritage to other generations. If social traumas are not solved or worked on them they will be repressed or denied but the impact of such trauma can be seen or manifest itself in various ways in new generations. The therapeutic interventions of such massive social traumas are not accepting the denial or repression of those traumas but instead to be aware of history and nature of those events faced by the previous generations or ancestors. If the historical continuity can be established instead of erasing the past the large-group identity can be established. When transgenerational transmission of trauma is not recognized and dealt openly they may produce identity confusion (Volkan, 2008).

For the reconciliation in Cyprus Case like Schopenhauer's hedgehogs not too close to hurt each other but close enough to survive.

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