
**FAMILY IN WAR AND CONFLICT:
USING SOCIAL CAPITAL FOR SURVIVAL IN
WAR TORN CYPRUS**

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ABSTRACT

When a state collapses due to conflict, civilians may no longer be able to rely on state institutions to provide basic human needs such as food, health, housing and employment. Accordingly, people tend to shift from state-provided services toward family-centered forms of social capital that are especially useful as coping mechanisms in crisis situations.

This paper explores the survival strategies of Turkish Cypriot families during the war conditions of 1963/4-74. On the basis of a Key Informant Survey it attempts to empirically document the forms of social capital utilized in wartime. There is a large volume of literature on social capital, but the particular type of social capital of relevance in the Turkish Cypriot case reported below is non-formal type in conditions of war and ethnic conflict.

FOREWORD

The authors would like to thank Vamik Volkan, M. Tahiroglu, Jacqueline and Ismael Tareq for comments on an earlier version of the paper. However, they alone are responsible for all opinions and statements.

1. Introduction

The original hypothesis behind this research was that in times of civil war, government services, such as education, health and welfare, become unavailable. It is then that the family emerges as the leading support organization, to provide mutual aid to its members thus helping them to survive in times of insecurity, trauma and deprivation. This hypothesis was to be applied in a study of Turkish Cypriot families during the civil war in Cyprus from 1963 to 1974, a subject that has received surprisingly little attention (Volkan 1979, Oberling 1982). Hence the research aim was to determine, empirically on the basis of fieldwork, the extent and nature of social capital (Coleman 1989, Putnam 1993, Woolcock and Narayan 1999, Lesser, ed., 2000, Mehmet et al 2002) during and after the Greek-Turkish Cypriot ethnic conflict.

This hypothesis had to be abandoned, or significantly modified, early in the fieldwork. The explanation had to do with the historical facts of the ethnic conflict that erupted on Christmas Eve 1963. Turkish Cypriot survey informants indicated that in the aftermath of the conflict the post-colonial, bi-communal Republic in Cyprus as set up under the 1960 Constitution ceased to exist. The Greek Cypriots, by violent means, had ousted the Turkish Cypriots from the Republic, and declared themselves as the “Government”, serving only themselves. The Turkish Cypriots, now concentrated in small enclaves surrounded by Greek Cypriot forces, were then placed under an economic and political embargo by this Greek Cypriot government. Under these circumstances, the Cypriot Turks had to create their own government. As put by Oberling,

“having been reduced to the status of stateless persons during 1963-64 crisis, the Turkish Cypriots had had to organize themselves to survive the economic blockade that followed. Thus, a patchwork government had been set up. It consisted of the Vice-President of the Republic, members of the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce and a few others – all of whom formed a body known as the General Committee.” (Oberling 1982: 144)

Through the period 1963/4 to 1974 ethnic conflict continued in Cyprus sporadically. During this period, the creation of a Turkish Cypriot government became essential for survival. The Turkish Cypriot government underwent stages of growth and development as cycles of ethnic conflict on the island continued. Again it is instructive to quote from Oberling:

“..when Grivas embarked upon his campaign to overrun Turkish Cypriot enclaves, the Turkish Cypriot leaders realized that a more efficient administrative machinery was required. Thus, on December 28, 1967, a

Provisional Turkish Cypriot Administration ... was established.” (Oberling 1982: 144).

Early in the conflict there was a total breakdown of administration and the termination of essential public services for the Turkish Cypriots. In response, a *de facto* government was set up for public administration and financial and food aid from Turkey began to arrive. These formal services were inadequate due to Greek Cypriot embargoes and limited public resources. It is these constraints that gave rise to *social capital* amongst families, that vital element of trust and solidarity that brought beleaguered families together to cooperate in the provision of collective security as well as to share scarce food, shelter and other basic human needs. This social capital was non-formal, i.e. non-governmental, and it was supplemental to the formal distribution of public goods and services.

Therefore, the research hypothesis guiding this paper was changed as follows: To determine from research on Turkish Cypriot families, the extent and type of *non-formal social capital* that can be engendered to protect against the worst effects of violence and deprivation in times of ethnic conflict and safeguard survival. In this alternative research agenda, the family and community of families become an important source of *social capital*, non-formal in nature, i.e. outside public services.

The paper is organized in four Parts. Following this Introduction, Part II will discuss the concept of social capital, in particular demonstrating its relevance in studies of family in times of war and conflict when security and survival are uppermost in the minds of individuals and families. Part III is concerned with field work designed to document the bonding and bridging forms of non-formal social capital used by the Turkish Cypriot family in times ethnic conflict during 1963/4-74. The research is based on fieldwork conducted in spring and summer 2002. The methodology used in the fieldwork is a 24-sample Key Informant Survey. The main findings of the fieldwork are also discussed in this Part. Finally, Part IV summarizes the general conclusions emerging from this study.

2. Non-Formal Social Capital: The Turkish Cypriot Family in War Time

What exactly is *social capital*? It is an abstract and elusive concept, centered on social relations rather than markets like human or physical capital, and therefore it is hard to define precisely or quantitatively. If we turn to literature for guidance, there is a multiplicity of concepts concerning the definition and essential properties of social capital. One school of thought emphasizes social networks or “the connections that individual actors have with one another.” (Lesser, ed., 2000: 6). Accordingly, it is the positive interaction that occurs between individuals in the network that lead to the formation of social capital and its capacity for appropriation. In this context, issues such

as trust and reciprocity become the focal point of social capital. A leading proponent of this school is the sociologist James Coleman who compared social with human capital, a concept that linked economics and sociology. Coleman argues that “social capital is defined by its function.” (Lesser, ed., 2000: 20). The complementarity between human and social capital implies a form of asset, like a valuable property or skill, and it shares with other forms of capital the fact that it

“is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. Like physical capital and human capital, social capital is not completely fungible but may be specific to certain activities... Unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structures of relationships between actors and among actors” (Coleman quoted in Lesser, ed., 2000: 20)

Not all forms of social capital are positive and beneficial. There is also *perverse* social capital that causes disunity and mistrust within groups, and generally impedes development (Rubio 1997). Perverse social capital is likely to occur in communities fragmented into adversarial clans or families working at cross-purposes relative to the mainstream, such as gangs in ghettos, underground or illegal networks of drug cartels, and the *Mafia* (see Putnam below). Studies of war-torn societies (Ranis et al., 2000) confirm that social capital may be zero or negative due to lack of trust and broken social relationships.

Political scientists, too, have utilized social capital. For Frances Fukuyama (1995) and Robert Putnam (1993) the focal point of social capital is trust and reciprocity arising from intra-group obligations. Putnam defines social capital as “norms of general reciprocity: I’ll do this for you now, in the expectation that down the road you or someone else will return the favour” (Putnam 1993: 37). He subsequently applied his concept of social capital empirically in studies of communities in the USA (Putnam 1995) and Italy. Putnam’s study of Italy (1993a) is a major contribution focussed on why southern Italy has lagged the north in democratic development. It identified mistrust and low civic responsibility as the root cause, compounded by the presence of organizations like the *Mafia*.

By contrast, Michael Woolcock and Deepak Narayan (2000), associated with the World Bank, have analyzed social capital from the perspective of community development and income generation. Woolcock and Narayan do not reduce social capital to market-based asset formation or ownership. Rather they, too, bridge economics with sociology, by pointing out that social capital comprises the norms and attitudes that enable people to work collectively. Woolcock and Narayan review and classify the literature on social capital, using fourfold taxonomy – i.e. the Communitarian, Networks, Institutional and Synergy perspectives - (Woolcock and Narayan 2000: 228-239). They

make a significant distinction between bonding and bridging social capital, the former representing intra-group, the latter inter-group modes of cooperative relations (Ibid., esp. Fig. I on p. 232).

In blending economics with sociology, recent literature shifts the focus from market to the household and community relations, and confirms the centrality of the family unit in decision-making. The family is a major source of those norms and attitudes that motivate individuals to cooperate, share and work together, and in times of war and conflict, to fight together for survival. Trusting one's family members and neighbors is the key to the creation of social capital. Accordingly, this line of inquiry leads to the sociology of the family, and may extend the discourse back to Durkheim's ideas on social integration and social control, as some sociologists have done (See for example Portes in Lesser, ed., 2000: esp. 43-49).

All of these approaches provide useful handles and themes in the analysis of social capital in the specific case of Turkish Cypriot families. There is, however, no exact fit of any single theory or paradigm. Unique circumstances and historical context prevent that prospect. What is feasible in fieldwork is to identify those sources and forms of trust and cooperation tying families experiencing trauma caused by ethnic conflict. Ties that bond and bridge lead to social solidarity and collective endeavors of self-protection.

a) Methodology

The field work for this research was conducted during March to June 2002 relying on Rapid Appraisal methodology (Kumar 1993). A series of Structured Key Informant Surveys was administered on different groups of respondents, from different age-gender backgrounds, in order to capture multiple layers of reality and recollections of trauma experienced, directly or indirectly, during war and conflict long ago. We sought also to determine how much these recollections have influenced family attitudes and decisions for the future.

A total of 24 respondents were interviewed, as summarized in Table 1. Respondents were chosen to reflect such standard socio-economic characteristics as age, gender, education, occupation and geographic location. There was a high degree of repetition of responses, giving confidence that the information gathered was accurate and typical of Turkish Cypriot values and attitudes.

TABLE 1
SAMPLE SIZE

Key Informant Groups	No. of Respondents
Adults born before 1955	13
Pile residents	3
Young respondents and University students under 30 years	8
TOTAL SAMPLE	24

Source: Authors' interviews

A pre-determined Questionnaire was used in these interviews. However, during the actual interviews the order of questions, as well as the questions and answers, were varied to accommodate age or unique situational traits of respondents. For instance, in interviews conducted in the mixed village of Pile, located in the buffer zone under UN administration and next to a British military base, respondents were asked additional questions to elicit information on living conditions in Pile, generally but mistakenly perceived as a model of Greek-Turkish co-existence¹.

Younger respondents, such as university students, represented a significant sub-sample. As these students grew up in a purely Turkish environment with no experience of bi-communal living, interviews with them excluded questions about socializing and friendship in mixed neighborhoods, issues that were vital in the case of older respondents. Though ideas of their past are fundamentally those of the family elders, these younger respondents expressed their own opinions not only about today's island reality, but most emphatically about future prospects.

3) Analysis of Findings: Turkish Cypriot Family as the Springhead of Social Capital

Traditionally the family unit is the most important social group in North Cyprus, more important than the individual in terms of identity, status and inter-personal relationships. While intra-family occasional conflicts may generate perverse social capital (e.g. conflicts over inheritance), a Turkish Cypriot family is a close, cohesive unit typically generating net positive social capital.

As mentioned before, there are few studies of Turkish Cypriot family. One important exception is Vamik Volkan's psychoanalytical study (1979) of war and adaptation. He notes: "The need of the individual to assert himself is secondary to the mutual identification within the family." (Volkan 1979: 54). Volkan identifies several

“peculiarities” in Turkish Cypriot family groups, in particular child-rearing practices and the role of the mother. Thus, though this family group still share many traditional values, such as “(t)he patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilinear characteristics of the extended family”, and despite the fact that :

“(t)he relationship that bonds such families is usually through the paternal side of the house...*it is the mother who is responsible for its emotional climate.* A Turkish saying has it that Hell and Heaven lie at the feet of the mother, and certainly her affect-laden reactions are likely to determine the behavior of all in the home.” (Volkan 1979: 54 Italics added for emphasis.)

Volkan utilizes earlier research evidence of how the power of the Turkish mother grows within the family:

“A new bride is timid when she enters her husband’s family, but as time goes on and her (especially after) her husband dies, “a striking metamorphosis takes place from what she was...to what she becomes – a powerful, authoritarian old woman taking revenge for her early sufferings and treating the new bride as herself was once treated. The sinister figure of the old woman is well known in Turkish folklore where she appears as an omnipotent character who can do either good or harm, who gets involved as a go-between in the love affairs of the young, and who is to be feared, respected, and consulted in every subject including illness.” (Volkan 1979: 54-55, citing Sumer 1970).

In regards to child-rearing, Volkan notes the practice of “more than one mothering figure.” (Volkan 1979: 57) and goes on to argue: “In the extended family the upbringing of a child is not the exclusive prerogative of his mother; other women in the household feel entitled to mother him in their own way.” This practice gives rise to certain typical psychological characteristics among Turkish Cypriots:

“Thus, until in adult life he (the child) becomes a satellite around the family center, he has many “mothers”, the list often including, besides the natural mother, a grandmother, an aunt, an older sister, and perhaps a wet nurse, all competing. The classic child/mother unit must be stretched to include them, and under these circumstances the frustrations of the child struggling for separation-individuation are unlike those of the child constantly in a one-to-one encounter with the same woman.” (Volkan 1979: 57)

Volkan notes that similar practices can be observed in other societies. Moreover, it is also to be acknowledged that with modernization, and the passing of traditional society, the Turkish Cypriot family is far from static, and continues to be greatly affected by historical and political circumstances. It should be noted in particular that British colonialism and relations with the Greek Cypriots have had significant impacts on the Turkish Cypriot family. Thus, with the establishment of the Kemalist Republic in Turkey in 1923 and with the onset of the secularist reforms, Turkish Cypriots sought to abandon the Islamic *Sharia* system of polygamy and arbitrary divorce by husbands in favor of modern Civil Code of family law. However, the British colonial authorities resisted this reform. It was not until 1950's, and after a bitter struggle, that the civil family law was adopted (Tahiroglu 2002). Interestingly, the same was not true in the case of secularizing Turkish Cypriot education. Tahiroglu indicates that the colonial administrators did not, or could not, prevent the Turkish Cypriots who, in fact, adopted the Latin alphabet and Kemalist secular curriculum in schools even ahead of Turkey itself.

As for the Greek Cypriot influences on Turkish Cypriot values and attitudes, the single most significant impact has been the growth of Turkish Cypriot nationalism. From the beginning of *Megali Idea* (the idea of Greater Greece, inclusive of Cyprus, Istanbul and parts of Turkey) soon after the creation of Modern Greece in early 19th century (Oberling 1982: Chap. II), but especially after the transfer of Cyprus from the Ottomans to the British in 1878, the Greek Cypriots, under the leadership of the Church, have aspired to ENOSIS (union of the island with Greece). The Cypriot Turks resisted cultural and political domination by Greeks. This has given rise to an extensive literature that seeks to define their historical origins (Gazioglu 1992), to consolidate and enhance their culture (Dogramaci et al., eds. 1996), and to analyze Greek-Turkish relations (Bahcheli 1990, Volkan and Itzkowitz 1994). In recent years, there have also been some interesting studies in contrast by Greek Cypriots (Mavratsas in Kerides and Triantaphyllou, eds., 2001: Chap. 8).

The Turkish Cypriot family, within the broader context of the evolving Turkish Cypriot identity and solidarity, has been strengthened as a result of the shared trauma and stress experienced in the war period 1963/4-74. Child-parent links, traditionally strong, were cemented by shared experience of sacrifice: Thus, when markets suddenly ceased to provide food, shelter and other basic human needs, aid channels through the family became the means of support. Similarly, when the labor market disappeared as a source of income, the family emerged as the next best alternative of income support. Overall, survival of the Turkish Cypriot families during 1963/4 – 1974 depended, in a large measure, on the stock of bonding and bridging social capital embedded within the community. Much of this stock was non-formal especially in the early stages of the civil war when Turkish Cypriots were, as stated by Oberling, became “stateless” in their own

land.

Below are some sketches of this experience emerging from the key informant interviews, starting with a picture of life in a mixed village before December 1963 when inter-communal fighting broke out on the island on Christmas Eve (Stephens 1966, Clerides 1989).

a) Life in a Mixed Village before and after December 1963²

E. was born in 1931 in the Turkish quarter of the mixed village of Istavrogonno in the Paphos District, now in South Cyprus. He married M., also of the same village, in 1949. E. grew up in a Turkish Cypriot enclave surrounded by several large Greek Cypriot villages. Schooling was separated along ethnic and religious lines, as were all other social institutions from cooperatives to football clubs. The couple, who both learnt good Greek, remembered only one case of intermarriage in the region: a case of elopement which terminated in 1975 when Turkish Cypriots from the South were moved, *en mass*, to the North³, and the Greek Cypriot wife in this marriage decided to stay behind in the South.

As an adult E. became a shepherd while also engaged in mixed farming, growing wheat, barley and grapevine on his 20-donum land. He learnt Greek in order to carry out business dealings. Prior to 1955, there was lots of interaction with Greek Cypriots and he remembered playing cards in coffee shops, attending weddings and taking part in all kinds of mixed social relations. "Kids played together in the village and there were no politics" E. recalled. His wife M., who learnt Greek to socialize with Greek Cypriot neighbors, had one close Greek Cypriot friend who spoke good Turkish. As late as December 1963, the two would meet in secret in the fields to chat and exchange news. The reason for secrecy in these meetings was that inter-ethnic relations in the village had begun to deteriorate from 1955 onwards. On April 1, 1955 Grivas, backed by Archbishop/President Makarios, launched his EOKA campaign of violence first directed against British colonialism but fundamentally representing the onset of revolutionary struggle for ENOSIS to unite Cyprus with Greece.

In August 1958 E. joined the Turkish Cypriot resistance movement, TMT, which had established a secret cell in the village. Against a backdrop of EOKA violence, the Turkish Cypriots increasingly feared for their security, expecting an attack anytime. "The rope broke" at about this time when Greek Cypriot police arrested some Turkish Cypriot villagers for gun possession. The tense climate in the village lasted until December 1963 when inter-communal fighting on the island erupted. During the civil war period from December 1963 until the Turkish military intervention in July 1974, life in the village was one of siege. Families survived by sharing food and other resources while the men shared duty as soldiers to defend themselves. Insecurity was the biggest and constant threat: E. and M. recalled several incidents of Greek Cypriot attacks, which were always

repelled. Finally, the entire village was relocated to the town of Akdogan in North Cyprus in 1975, the year following the Turkish military intervention.

b) Student, Soldier, Businessman

N. is a successful businessman in Nicosia, active in business organizations and a regular participant in peace-making workshops organized by Americans, Nordic countries and other third parties sponsored by the Americans and Europeans. He was born in 1941 in the mixed neighborhood of Arpalik in Nicosia District. He was educated in the English School, and then at the Political Science Faculty of Ankara University. He and his elder brother were members of the University student contingent that was secretly sent to Erenkoy in North-West Cyprus in 1964 to establish a military beachhead against Greek and Greek Cypriot attacks in the area. N. served at Erenkoy for almost two years. It was a terrifying experience, as they had to fight off successive rounds of attacks by Greeks. He lost his elder brother in one of these attacks. His eldest son was named after his lost brother both as a symbol of respect and of continuing solidarity. The surviving student soldiers were finally pulled out and returned to Turkey but the experience has left a deep traumatic impact on several participants in this campaign in some cases resulting in permanent psychological damage.

Surprisingly however, N. is neither bitter nor dysfunctional as a result of his Erenkoy experience. He has become a successful businessman, emerged as a leader in the business community, and is an articulate voice of Greek-Turkish reconciliation based on equal partnership between two states in Cyprus, living side and side in peace. He remembers that in his childhood his grandparents, landowners in the village of Bodamya, did a lot of socializing with Greek clients. Prior to 1955, inter-communal relations were normal and peaceful, but after 1955 (when EOKA violence began) N. noticed for the first time that “Greeks were different” from Cypriot Turks. For the latter “ENOSIS meant leaving one colonial rule for another.” For N. conditions became worse after the Christmas 1963 general attack by Greek militia on the Turkish Cypriot community. His father, a senior police officer in the mixed Republic, in 1965 had his life threatened by his Greek Cypriot counterparts, an event that caused him to join the national movement in defense of Turkish Cypriot community. This event also demonstrated for N. that the last shred of trust was finally broken between the two ethnic groups on the island.

c) Trust and Solidarity in Social Relations

Trust was one of the recurrent responses in the Key Informant Survey. Trust was used consistently used in the twin theme of (1) “broken trust” between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots in contrast to (2) intra-group trust amongst Turkish Cypriots under a common external threat to survival. Typical of these sentiments was the case of A. Aged over 60, A. was born in Turkish Cypriot village of Yayla, near the Greek Cypriot town of

Polis in the North-West of the island. Her family was relatively well-to-do with significant ownership of land and real estate in the village. In 1952 when she married, she moved to Kucuk Kaymakli, the scene of some of the heaviest fighting in December 1963. She and her family became refugees. While none of her parents or siblings died in the fighting, she lost a nephew. As a result of the ethnic divide along the Green Line which the UN then created, A.'s family suffered a big financial loss in the form of some 100 donums of prime land, water rights, and several houses left behind in Yayla after they were removed to the North.

The following exchange took place during the interview with her, first with regard to inter-ethnic trust, and secondly intra-group trust within Turkish Cypriots:

d) On inter-ethnic trust:

Question: When you think of Greek Cypriots, what are your first feelings?

Answer: Hate because I suffered a lot.

Question: Would you be willing to live in a mixed village again?

Answer: No, not after all the past hostility. Not even for economic reasons. Peace of mind is more important.

Question: How many cases of Greek and Turkish Cypriot cases of inter-marriage do you know? Answer: Are you crazy? None.

e) On intra-group Trust:

When asked to rank trust in an ascending order within the Turkish Cypriot community itself, A. stated that she trusted first her parents, grandparents second, brothers and sisters third, extended family members next, and neighbor last. By trust in this case what A. meant was that if her parents needed help, including financial aid, who would they turn to? She stated that unlike family members, help provided by neighbors would always have to be repaid, in contrast to reciprocal exchanges in intra-family obligations.

f) Family Investment in Education

E. is a retired school teacher, born in 1944 in the mixed village of Minarelikoy, a short distance north-west of Nicosia on the slopes of Five Finger Mountains. Although never a refugee, E. was forced to evacuate his village in January 1964, along with other Turkish Cypriot villagers, at the outset of ethnic violence. He relocated to Meric, another village not far from his, in the Turkish Cypriot controlled area and became a commander in the Turkish Cypriot militia having taken part in several military operations. The years

from 1964-74 were a period of hardship: “no food, bread, just bullets and a national cause” he recalls. E’s wife, A*, is also a school teacher, and they have two daughters. N., the eldest recently qualified as a neurologist after some 10 years of medical studies in Ukraine, while her younger sister, also highly educated, is a fitness instructor running her own small business in Istanbul.

The E.-A* family has modest means, now living on pension. The education of their two daughters is a good demonstration of the Turkish Cypriot households’ top priority placed on education as a joint family investment in children and as a pathway to family-sponsored career development. Families cut down on other expenses, often sell land and real estate, in order to invest in children’s schooling. Even though education in North Cyprus is free and compulsory from primary to secondary level, families spend large amounts on private pre-school and after-hours coaching in order to prepare their children for competitive examinations.

N., now 30, is aware of her families sacrifice and investment in her and her career; she lives at home with her parents even though she now has a secure government job and a professional practice. The bonds between daughter and parent in the E.-A* family is living testimony to the social capital formation in Turkish Cypriot families.

g) The Special Case of Pile

Interviews with three families in the unique village of Pile in the buffer zone (see above) strongly reinforced A.’s views and attitudes (see above). Pile has the unique distinction of being the only bi-communal village with mixed neighborhoods. In theory, it is administered cooperatively by Greek and Turkish Cypriots mayors under the aegis of the UN garrison there.

X was born in Pile in 1944, subsequently migrated to England where he made some money and returned to his village in 1988, built a house and earns his living doing odd jobs in the service sector. Thanks to his fluency in English, he has participated in inter-communal projects, sponsored by the United Nations such as street improvement. X has stated that life in Pile is very insecure because the Greek and Turkish Cypriot neighbors do not trust each other whatsoever. Even a small incident, such a parking violation, is capable of bringing to a halt the social and economic life of the village that shares physical space but in no sense shares inter-communal solidarity.

M., another respondent from Pile, elaborated on the economic and trade embargo under which the Turkish Cypriot families in the village have to live. Some 10 years ago economic welfare of these families was much better because there were some 43 thriving Turkish Cypriot shops, restaurants and businesses, selling goods and services from Turkey and North Cyprus at competitive prices to tourists from the South. Then, the Greek Cypriot authorities suddenly terminated the tourism from the South, upon

complaints from traders and hotel owners in the South. The Greek Cypriot police installed a Police checkpoint on their side of the border to prevent shoppers importing Turkish goods. Overnight Turkish Cypriot economy of Pile took a nose-dive. As M. put it: “Greek Cypriots only want Turkish Cypriots working as (cheap) laborers.”

O*, M.’s brother and neighbor in Pile, stressed that although this is a mixed village, there is no cross-ethnic socializing, and that the atmosphere is always tense, ready to explode. He shares his brother’s perception that “the heart of the (Cyprus problem) is that the Greeks swore to make the island their own.”

The picture that emerged from interviews in Pile was most surprising. The informants there demonstrated the greatest insecurity and pessimism of all interviewees. In actuality it is by no means the model of a future reunited Cyprus, as some have argued.

In the light of our findings from Pile and elsewhere, we now examine the important subject of security and the role of family as the provider of protection in times of war.

h) Security as Social Capital

In the Cyprus civil war period between 1963/4 and 1974 there was no inter-communal police and security forces. Movement of persons on the island was dangerous because of the absence of rule of law, and constant threat of ethnic fighting. Arbitrary searches by militia, arrests and disappearance of persons on highways were common occurrences. In this environment the solidarity of Turkish Cypriot families emerged as the primary source of protection. They organized defensive networks, taking arms in defense of life and property. Households banded together in voluntary and ad hoc networks to become defenders of homes and villages under attack. The social solidarity displayed here confirmed existing social capital and increased it in the process of defense cooperation. In these defensive roles, a fledgling Turkish Cypriot militia and the underground TMT supplemented voluntary family soldiers. The informal security and protection emerged as a vital form of social capital. To this day, some 40 years later, family security and peace of mind constitute the foremost need in the minds of Turkish Cypriots. This security need is so compelling it shapes visions of discussions about the future of the island.

The emotional scars of the Cypriot conflict are also reflected in the respondents’ obsession with security. Volkan (1979: 81) notes that “it would appear that a fifth of those living in enclaves were refugees, survivors of overwhelming stress and change, victims of massive psychic trauma of expulsion from their homes, the loss of many dear to them, and constant fear. Statistics verify the degree of uprooting and change they suffered.” It should be noted that very few of these survivors received professional counseling due lack of such professionals. It was up to the families and community members to help each other emotionally as well as materially.

i) Food, Shelter and Services

With the imposition of an economic embargo by the Makarios regime in early 1964, Turkish Cypriots were cut off from normal trade and market networks. Civil servants lost their pay and position. Their economic livelihood, as well as that of bi-communal business and trade people, was suddenly terminated.

The civil war created refugees as exemplified by the case of A. Thus, families were obliged to share food, shelter and other basic needs with refugees and displaced persons⁴. In time, the Turkish Red Crescent began to supply food aid from Turkey and gradually this supply was regularized through official Turkish Cypriot authorities, mainly military channels. Similarly, schools and hospitals resumed and maintained operations under difficult circumstances. Transportation in the island was always dangerous right up to the Turkish military intervention in the summer of 1974. Many families reported missing relatives due to arbitrary arrests or executions during this period.

j) Identity Transformation

In the period 1963/4-74, a new community identity emerged out of the common threat facing the Turkish Cypriot. It is during this period that “Divided Cyprus” (Stavriniades 1975: 109) became a reality, and two national identities evolved on either side of the UN Green Line, Cypriot Turks and Cypriot Greeks⁵. The former were forcibly herded into enclaves adding *in toto* to about 3% of the island’s territory. For over a decade, the community was cut off and isolated from the rest of the world. No one was exempt from the loss of liberty and freedom, economic hardship and denial of human rights. From that time on, for island Turks the *Cypriot* identity is utterly dead, having been replaced by a national Turkish Cypriot identity. In our survey we have not found a survivor of this generation who will forget the past enough to consent to live with Greek Cypriots ever again under one government.

The younger generation of Turkish Cypriots, born after 1974 have no direct experience of these tragic memories, although they are relived through parental reminiscing. Young people generally share their parents’ and elders’ mistrust of the Greek Cypriots, and though there is support for reunification of the island, the preponderant expectation is that of physical separation, or two ethnic identities living side by side. It is fair to say that the youth’s political vision of the future tends to be less nationalistic, and generally more pessimistic due, largely, to economic factors such as high unemployment among the young.

Typical of this younger generation is H. who was born in 1977, is currently a graduate student at university, and has never met a Greek Cypriot. He is worried about

employment prospects for young persons. He is especially worried about the high unemployment rate among the youth, including university graduates. H. is also concerned about the large military presence in the North. He is rather pessimistic about future prospects, believes a lot of young Turkish Cypriots will leave the island while more settlers will arrive from Turkey. He expects that, for strategic reasons Turkey will never give up Cyprus, and North Cyprus will ultimately be united with Turkey, which is not, in his opinion, the best solution.

A radically different vision is reflected by A**, a female university student born in 1982. Her grandfather spoke Greek and recalls having Greek friends with whom he worked or met in coffee shops sharing a table. A** is also pessimistic, fearing that Cyprus will ultimately be re-united because Greek Cypriots have economic power. “They will kill us slowly, not by war, but through their economic power. If they like this area, they won’t let us live here.”

4) Conclusion

Two major conclusions emerge from the empirical results of this study of the experience of the Turkish Cypriot family in the war time period 1963/4 - 1974. First is the vital role which non-formal social capital played in the survival of the community when it was under violent attack by the numerically superior Greek Cypriots in pursuit of political aims. Although resources and aid from formal government channels supplemented it, in the initial period of the civil war non-formal social capital was decisive for survival. The Turkish Cypriot family proved critical for ethnic survival. Family social capital nourished a new national identity amongst Turkish Cypriots, finally leading to the establishment in 1983 of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Secondly, protection and security is a critical cause and effect of non-formal social capital in times of ethnic conflict. Turkish Cypriot families in villages and urban *mahalles* (quarters), when suddenly confronted with a Greek Cypriot onslaught on Christmas Eve 1963, voluntarily took up arms in defense of their families and their communities. As noted above, the bonding of these family soldiers created a largely volunteer army utilizing non-formal social capital. A fundamental theme reiterated constantly in the interviews was the need for security and peace of mind. In wartime the fundamental need for security was realized through social capital epitomized by trust and social solidarity and manifested by mutual cooperation in defense. Equally emphatically, for the future security was stressed in order to avoid the trauma and tragic experiences of the past. Vamik observers⁶: “During 1963-74 when state-provided security was lost, the Cypriot Turks also symbolically created a condition in order to feel secure: They displaced their own images to caged birds (parakeets) and then took care of the birds (hundreds and hundreds of them in houses, coffee shops and stores). As long as the birds sang and remained fertile, the Cypriot Turks could maintain their illusion of security.”

The caged birds still exist, though in much fewer numbers. This can be interpreted as a continuing expression of hope and optimism.

In sum, the conclusion emerging from this study is reconfirmation that social capital, especially non-formal, is a critical resource, essential for group survival. Our findings suggest that in groups such as the Turkish Cypriots with high levels of social capital (i.e. manifested in group solidarity, mutual trust and readiness of families to cooperate in war and peace), survival is more likely, and hope is high. The corollary implied is that for those groups with low levels of social capital (i.e. when families are disunited and there is no trust in relationships), survival in the face of external threat is highly doubtful.

In war and conflict all groups suffer loss, trauma and experience the need to heal. This paper focussed as it is on Turkish Cypriots, in no way is intended to minimize the Greek Cypriot suffering and need to heal.

ENDNOTES

¹ See, for example, the website: www.cs.ucy.ac.cy/~ank/pyla.html where it is claimed that Pile (Pyla in Greek) “is the only place where Greek and Turkish Cypriots live together. They have been living peacefully for as long as our memory can account.” Accessed on 8/11/2002 2.23pm

² Respondents will be identified only by a letter to protect individual identity. * signifies differentiation.

³ This was part of a population exchange agreement between Turkish and Greek Cypriot leadership, negotiated under UN auspices, whereby Greek Cypriots moved to the South.

⁴ Turkish Cypriots abroad, especially in England and Australia, also provided significant financial support typically through family networks.

⁵ Vamik Volkan, in a personal communication, has cogently inquired that “since their primary identity refers to their ethnicity” might the islanders be labeled as either Cypriot Turks or Cypriot Greeks? We agree with Volkan, but since the conventional usage in the literature is Turkish or Greek Cypriot, we have retained this usage.

⁶ In private communication.

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