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**Between keeping the distance and moving closer:
An analysis of young Cypriots' everyday experiences of
crossing the divide**

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List of Abbreviations

CFP	Cyprus Friendship Programme
EOKA	<i>Εθνική Οργάνωσις Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών/ Ethniki Organosis Kyp- rion Agoniston</i> , National Organization of Cypriot Fighters
EU	European Union
IR	International Relations
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
TMT	<i>Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı</i> , Turkish Resistance Organization
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
UN	United Nations
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

“I remember one day during my internship while I was doing a project with a Turkish Cypriot, I remember thinking, why do I believe Cyprus belongs to me more than to him? He doesn’t know any other home country, so why do I have this feeling? It’s wrong.”

(Melina, 21)

Melina and I are sitting in a café in the old town of Nicosia, very close to the Green Line that divides Cyprus into a Turkish Cypriot north and a Greek Cypriot south. A few weeks ago Melina started an internship at a non-governmental organization (NGO) working both north and south of the Green Line and employing both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. As part of her internship, Melina has crossed to the north for the first time. Growing up, she knew about the ‘other side’ only what she had heard from her family and at school namely that “they took our villages and threw us out of our homes”. While for her parents, who are both refugees from villages in the Kyrenia area in the northern part of the island, the home in the north has always been associated with great longing, Melina tells me that she could never fully understand and relate to that as her Cyprus only went as far as the Green Line. She has therefore tried to avoid everything concerning the conflict. By choosing this particular internship, however, she was now in regular contact with the north and Turkish Cypriots. As the opening statement illustrates, this has led her to reconsider many of her views and perspectives, a fact she is now trying to navigate with the stories of her childhood.

Young Cypriots like Melina have been born into an already existing political conflict that has created divisions within their local environments. They grow up in a deeply divided, highly politicized and heavily militarized climate (Fanti et al. 2017: 56; Fisher 2001: 311). Within this environment, distorted information about the ‘other side’ as well as feelings of distrust and stereotyping the other community are fostered and reproduced through family but also through the education system, the media and the wider political life (Hadjipavlou 2012: 367, 375; Papadakis 2008b: 128; Spyrou 2006a: 121). Unlike their parents’ generation, however, who in their youth had little or no interaction with the other community, the division that young Cypriots are experiencing today is permeable. In 2003, the Turkish Cypriot leadership decided to partially open the Green Line which

made visits to the ‘other side’ possible and put an end to the fixed, ”impermeable ‘border’ that had lasted for 29 years” (Christou & Spyrou 2016: 78). Today, quite a number of young Cypriots – especially those who live in Nicosia – make use of this permeability in their everyday lives: Young people from the north study in the south or go to school there; young people from the south use the cheaper shopping facilities in the north, to name just a few examples. By going about everyday activities across the divide, those young people play an important part in the negotiation of daily life in the divided Cypriot society but are often overlooked as independent actors in discussions about peace and conflict in Cyprus. Melina's story indicates that young Cypriots are not empty vessels that passively absorb existing adult views and narratives, but that they are more multi-layered and draw their own meaning from the messages they receive and the experiences they make. In this respect, McEvoy-Levy describes youth as an “organic social force” (2011: 173), continuously involved in conflict reproduction as well as conflict transformation. Due to their stage in life, scholars hold that their views are more fluid and they might have not yet fully internalised social structures that limit their thinking and behaviour (Boulding 2000: 147; Del Felice & Wisler 2007: 28). McEvoy-Levy argues that young people are actively involved in creating and shaping politics, whether they or adults are aware of it or not (2006c: 140). They do this through “their actions, through the meaning they give to those actions, and through their narration of their actions” (ibid.: 141). This corresponds with Oliver Richmond's (2011: 143) claim that “the everyday is the essential zone of the political”. Hence, focusing on how young people navigate their way through divided Cyprus as well as the complex processes through which they make meaning out of their experiences is an important way of exploring the conflict in Cyprus. Especially given that “young people's inherited collective memories and their selective navigation” (Christou & Spyrou 2016: 76) of the island constitute an alternative social reality that co-exists with political elite debates. Against this backdrop, my research question is as follows:

To what extent do young Cypriots' everyday practices of crossing the divide provide insights for the negotiation of peace in Cyprus?

This question is closely related to how young people negotiate the division in everyday life and is aimed at exploring the influence they can have. I argue that the way young Cypriots approach the division bears the potential of consolidating and reproducing conflict patterns, but it can also point to the transformative potential of Cypriot youth.

Following on from this, I argue that the transformative potential arises from the fact that in the everyday practices of young Cypriots dominant narratives of the conflict that are rooted in historical events and stories of historical animosity lose their significance. Instead, Cypriot youths tend to be more oriented towards the future in their navigation of everyday life and attach central importance to pursuing what is best for their lives. Being open to the possibility of leaving the past behind corresponds to Bryant and Papadakis' claim that one "of the primary harbingers of a 'time of peace' is a willingness to 'let the past be past'" (2012: 3). Shifting the focus away from conflict-reproducing narratives of the past ultimately creates an environment that is conducive to the macro peace process of the island and that facilitates the implementation of a solution (Hadjipavlou 2012: 389).

My overall aim in this thesis is to highlight the agency of Cypriot youth, to recognise them as competent observers of their own lived experience and to strengthen their role as important actors in the negotiation of the conflict in Cyprus. So far, politics and academia have largely neglected paying critical attention to youth and their experiences within the Cypriot conflict setting (Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 154). Most of the scholarly deliberations about youth in Cyprus have focused on how they are socialized into the conflict culture and have first and foremost highlighted the role of education and history teaching (Kizilyürek 2001, 2002; Koullapis 2002; Makriyianni & Psaltis 2007; Phillipou 2005; Philippou & Klerides 2010; Spyrou 2001; Yashin 2002), of the family (Hadjiyanni 2002) and the wider political culture (Hadjipavlou 2012: 376–377). In that respect, Hadjipavlou argues that the conflict culture socializes youth into conflict reproduction, disables them from critical thinking and thus prevents a critical questioning of social paradigms (2002: 201; 2007: 362). By putting the focus on the agency of young people, I seek to confront dominant narratives in Cyprus that see youth either as passive or as subjects that need to be moulded. I thereby do not want to romanticize youth agency as I do recognize structural challenges as well as the influence of the dominant ideological discourses that shape young Cypriots' worlds (McEvoy-Levy 2011: 169; Spyrou 2011b: 160). However, I suggest that an agential understanding of young people, one that highlights everyday practices at a micro-level will open up a new forum to allow discussion of the role of youth as well as their contribution to an understanding of peace within the Cypriot conflict setting. While focusing on everyday practices might seem trivial, continuing to ignore them bears the risk of missing out on the opportunity to support young

people who want to be actively involved in the creation of peace, “or even worse, marginalizing their work as somehow unimportant or far less important than ‘adult’ direct formal engagement” (Pruitt 2013: 8).

Who are youth?

In this paper I employ the term ‘youth’ as a distinct phase between childhood and adulthood (Kemper 2005: 6; Schwartz 2010: 4). The label ‘youth’ is a socially constructed category that varies historically and regionally and is shaped by predominant socio-economic conditions. The period of time in an individual’s life defined as youth is associated with the culture and society in which each individual lives (McEvoy-Levy 2006a: 3; Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 8). Based on this, there is no consensus on an age-based definition of ‘youth’ and a wide variety of definitions are used in different organizations, regions and societies (Simpson 2018: 9). Given social and demographic changes, the European Union (EU) nowadays uses the age range of 15–29 to define youth (European Commission 2015: 3). In contrast, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) see young people as being between 10–24 years of age, while the United Nations Programme on Youth uses the age range 15–24 (McEvoy-Levy 2011: 165; Simpson 2018: 9). Most actors recognize limitations of these definitions and note that variations exist on the national and regional level.

Following on from this, how can youth then be defined in relation to Cyprus? For one thing, it can be said that the island has undergone significant changes in the last few decades changing from an agricultural society to a service economy. Additionally, Cyprus has witnessed a considerable increase in mass education. As a result, the definition of ‘youth’ must now cover a longer period as compared to a few decades ago (Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 8). The authors of the Council of Europe Report on youth policy in Cyprus note that the term youth in Cyprus is weakly defined (*ibid.*). They point out that there seems to be “[...] fluidity in understanding the idea of young people” (Menschaerdt et al. 2007: 21). As young Cypriots often remain closely attached to their families and communities until they have completed their education and found a position in the labour market, the mid-twenties seem appropriate as an upper limit to youth (*ibid.*). For the purpose of this thesis, I adopted the narrow definition of the United Nations Programme on Youth

so that the young people who are at the heart of this work are between 15 and 24 years old.

Why everyday peace?

“We live in a free country that isn’t really free”

(Eleni, 24)

Young people are largely excluded from formal political spheres (McEvoy-Levy 2007: 104). Thus, recognising young people as competent observers and their activities and experiences as valuable makes it necessary to shift the focus from elites, institutions and top-down formulas to the everyday space that is capable of capturing the lived experience of young people. In this respect, critical peace and conflict researchers developed the concept of ‘everyday peace’ which aims to recognise the agency and importance of actors at the local level (Mac Ginty 2014: 549; Mac Ginty & Firchow 2016: 309; Richmond 2009a: 561). According to Highmore, it refers to “those practices and lives that have traditionally been left out of historical accounts [...] It becomes shorthand for voices from ‘below’: women, children, migrants and so on” (2002: 1). By taking into account the agency and actions of those local actors that are traditionally marginalised and by valuing their experiences, everyday peace aims at achieving a broader, more attentive understanding of peace (Berents 2015: 186; Richmond 2008: 451). In that sense, it is “context-specific and involves observations and decisions made by individuals and communities as they navigate their way through life” (Mac Ginty & Firchow 2016: 309). Working with the notion of everyday peace goes hand in hand with a broad concept of peace (Mac Ginty 2014: 561). This is important to note for this thesis since there are certain peace parameters in place in Cyprus, including the absence of violence as well as the existence of democracy, partial freedom of movement and comparatively high levels of prosperity on both sides of the Green Line (Adamides & Constantinou 2011: 242). However, as Papadakis and Bryant (2012: 2) put it, no Cypriot would say that there is peace on the island as the conflict still continues in stories and in the transmission of past traumas. My understanding of a broad, positive concept of peace in this thesis therefore includes the creation of sustainable structures that ensure social harmony and peaceful coexistence. This involves a critical look at one's own past, recognizing injustices committed by one's own side and acknowledging needs and fears of the other side. It also includes removing old

wounds and being able to move on from the past. More specifically, it encompasses elements such as the reduction of stereotypes and discrimination; the development of a positive image of the ‘other’; the recognition of commonalities and the appreciation of differences as well as the promotion of tolerance and trust (Boulding 2000: 1–2; Galtung 1964: 3).

Overview of the thesis

To pursue my research question and present my argument, this thesis is structured as follows: In chapter two I first provide a brief background to the Cyprus conflict that serves to contextualise the discussion. I therefore focus the account on the emergence of the division and central events that to this day play an important role in the narration of the conflict as well as on recent developments that the young people who are the subject of this thesis have actively witnessed. Then, I give an overview of how young Cypriots are discussed in the literature. Thereby I detail the dominant narratives that influence them as they grow up in divided Cyprus and critically reflect on the view that their early socialization into the conflict culture makes them agents of conflict reproduction and disables them from developing a critical mind towards their own society.

In chapter three I provide the theoretical basis of my thesis. I thereby build on the work of critical peace and conflict researchers who argue that agency and choice are crucial issues in young people’s lives and recognise the everyday as an important space of peace politics and knowledge production. The chapter first explores the dominant literature on youth in conflict which tends to put young people into rigid patterns of either being passive victims, dangerous threats or agents of change. This thesis builds on the work of various researchers who argue that such an understanding is insufficient to capture the lived experience of young people in many different contexts (Del Felice & Wisler 2007; McEvoy-Levy 2006b, 2011). Various authors argue that young people are agents of their own identity and interact with their peers, with adults and institutions in multifaceted and meaningful ways (McEvoy-Levy 2006c; Watson 2006). As a result, they are worthy of being studied independently and in more detail (Berents 2018: 4). Focusing on the agency of young people in their everyday lives is closely linked to ideas of building peace in the everyday (*ibid*: 6). In recent years, the everyday has become a useful site of analysis in peace and conflict research (Richmond 2009a, 2010, 2011; Mac Ginty &

Richmond 2013; Mac Ginty 2011, 2017). The concept encourages reflection on how to identify, hear and value local voices, especially those of young people and helps to explore how their subjective experiences can enrich an understanding of peace created in the everyday.

Having established the theoretical framework, chapter four then details my methodological approach. To analyse the manifold and complex issue of young people's everyday experiences I chose an approach drawing on ethnographic research methods. As my aim in this thesis is to highlight and strengthen the agency of young Cypriots, I have deliberately chosen an explorative approach to give young people space to determine the direction of the results themselves. The stories and experiences presented in this thesis are mainly drawn from in-depth one-on-one interviews with seventeen Cypriots between the ages of 15 and 24. They are supplemented by my own everyday experiences and observations and many more informal conversations and discussions with young people that occurred during casual socializing during my field work in Cyprus. In this chapter, I take the task of reflecting on my research very seriously, particularly on my role as a 25-year old woman with Greek-Cypriot background. Additionally, I outline the process of how I approached and analysed the data.

Chapter five is organised around the reports and stories of the young Cypriots whom I talked to during my time in Cyprus and sketches a typology that is developed from an analysis of the interview material. In the analysis I discuss elements of the typology, ranging from Cypriot youth approaching everyday life by using avoidance practices and thus reproducing conflict patterns to young people demonstrating empathy and understanding and critically question their own social, political and educational system. However, the patterns depicted in the typology are porous and over time young Cypriots renegotiate their perceptions and deal with everyday life in many different ways. The analysis highlights that young people negotiate the division in different and often paradoxical ways and that each of their approaches reflects broader positions on the prospect of reunification as well as attempts to represent a specific identity or community. In the sixth chapter I discuss the patterns presented in the analysis chapter and highlight where I see the transformative potential of young Cypriots. I thereby emphasise the agency and emotional intelligence in their way of navigating and negotiating the division. From this

I derive implications for the handling and inclusion of youth voices in efforts to resolve the Cyprus issue.

2. Growing up in a divided society: Illuminating Cypriot youth

Young Cypriots live in a deeply divided country, a country whose two main communities have been physically separated for over 45 years. This division has had an immense impact on the mindset and perspectives of Cypriot youth and on their lives in general (Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 9). In order to better understand young Cypriots, it is thus necessary to describe the political context in which they grow up in. In the following, I therefore firstly provide a brief background to the Cyprus Conflict. Then (chapter 2.2), I review the existing literature on youth growing up in divided Cyprus and problematize the dominant narrative about youth being uncritical actors of conflict reproduction.

2.1 Background to the Cyprus Conflict

Though one can go back many centuries in order to identify the reference points that Greek and Turkish Cypriots draw on to construct their identity, the more recent history of the island is particularly relevant to understand the dominant narratives young Cypriots are exposed to from an early age onwards (Spyrou 2006b: 97). The structural roots of the Cyprus conflict date back to the British colonial rule over the island which started in 1878 and lasted till Cyprus' independence in 1960 (Solomou & Faustmann 2010: 11). During the British colonial era, divides between Greek and Turkish Cypriots crystallized to which the British 'divide and rule'-policy has contributed a great deal. Unrest between the two communities became particularly apparent during the anti-colonial struggle in the 1950's when Greek Cypriots were fighting the British to achieve *Enosis*, i.e. the union of Cyprus with Greece and Turkish Cypriots in response demanded *Taksim*, i.e. the separation and union of part of the island with Turkey (Fisher 2001: 310; Hadjipavlou 2012: 373). When Greek Cypriots formed EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) in 1955 the struggle turned into guerrilla warfare that cost the lives of many hundred people. In response, the Turkish Cypriot community formed the TMT (Turkish Resistance

Organization) in 1957. They opposed EOKA until the 1959 Zurich-London agreements brought a temporary end to the escalating tensions, leading to the creation of an independent, bi-communal state in 1960, the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) (Adamides & Constantinou 2011: 244; Ker-Lindsay 2011: 22; Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 10f.). Granting Cyprus independence was a compromise reached by Britain, Greece and Turkey and based on a complex power sharing agreement and almost political equality between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The presence of two British Sovereign Bases and a guarantor status for Greece, Turkey and Britain were also agreed (Fisher 2001: 310; Solomou & Faustmann 2010: 12). However, the constitution failed after only three years when interethnic violence broke out in December 1963 which especially struck the Turkish Cypriots (Fisher 2001: 310; Makriyianni & Psaltis 2007: 52; Papadakis 2008b: 130). The violence resulted in the Turkish Cypriots leaving the government and terminating effective participation in the administration of the Republic (Solomou & Faustmann 2010: 12). The escalation also made it clear that Britain was unable to act as a peacekeeper on the island (Ker-Lindsay 2011: 40). In March 1964, this ultimately led to the establishment of a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force on the island, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), and the creation of the Green Line, a dividing line in the capital Nicosia to keep the two communities at distance (Hadjipavlou 2012: 374). Violence broke out again in 1967, this time leading to a far-reaching segregation of Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Ker-Lindsay 2011: 40). In 1974, tensions reached a new peak when the Greek military junta government along with the Greek Cypriot EOKA B – the successor organisation to EOKA which led the struggle for independence – staged a coup to overthrow the then president of Cyprus Archbishop Makarios in order to achieve *Enosis*. Turkey, invoking its guarantor status, reacted militarily by invading the island leading to the present *de facto* division of Cyprus and the displacement of around 142,000 Greek Cypriots to the southern side and around 45,000 Turkish Cypriots to the northern side (Adamides & Constantinou 2011: 245; Ker-Lindsay 2011: 41–43.; Papadakis 2008b: 131). The Green Line, which until then had only divided Nicosia into two sectors, since 1974 has divided the entire island into a southern part, controlled by Greek-Cypriots (63%) and a northern part controlled by Turkish Cypriots (37%). Until today, the 1974 events are highly contested which is visible in the different terminology adopted by the two communities. Greek

Cypriots refer to Turkey's intervention as an occupation while Turkish Cypriots refer to the event as a peace operation (Sitas et al. 2007: 4).

Since 1975, negotiations between the political elites of both communities have been taken place on and off, principally under UN auspices and based on the creation of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation. So far, however, these negotiations have not been crowned with success (Hadjipavlou 2012: 374). In 1983, the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community Rauf Denktaş declared the territory in the north a de facto state, the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' (TRNC), which to this day is only recognised by Turkey (Ker-Lindsay 2011: 51–52). After years of inconclusive negotiations, the 2000s brought a number of events that revived the Cyprus question. Shortly before Cyprus' EU accession in 2004, the two sides came close to reaching an agreement when the two communities were asked to vote in referenda on the thus far most comprehensive plan to settle the Cyprus issue, the UN-initiated Annan Plan. While the majority of Turkish Cypriots voted for the plan (65%), 76% of the Greek Cypriots rejected it (Adamides & Constantinou 2011: 245; Ker-Lindsay 2011: 67–68). Thus, Cyprus joined the EU on 1 May 2004 as a divided country and the *aquis communautaire* consequently applies only in the south (Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 11). While this was a severe setback for the reunification attempts, other events led to cautious optimism. After increasing pressure from within the Turkish Cypriot community, the first checkpoints dividing the island partially opened in April 2003, allowing Cypriots to cross freely from one side to the other for the first time in 29 years (Ker-Lindsay 2011: 62). Additionally, in 2008, the checkpoint located in Nicosia's symbolically important Ledra Street opened which further eased access between north and south Nicosia and contributed to the normalisation of intercommunal relations. The opening of the checkpoints enabled the visibility of the respective other community in the everyday and at the same time enabled an exchange on commercial, social and political levels. Furthermore, inter-communal activities - which already existed before the opening of the checkpoints - became more legitimate and with that demands for peace more concrete (Michael & Vural 2018: 7). With two new leaders being elected on the island, Demetris Christofias in the south and Mehmet Ali Talat in the north, formal leaders-level talks towards a comprehensive settlement began in 2008. Those were continued more intensely by their successors Nikos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akıncı, again two pro-solution leaders. However, in 2017, after ten-day-long track one negotiations in Crans-

Montana which included the three guarantor powers as well as the EU, the Cyprus peace process failed once again, mainly due to disagreements on the security and guarantees issue. This generally relates to whether or not foreign troops should remain on the island after reunification and how the guarantor status' of Greece, Turkey and Britain will be dealt with (Ker-Lindsay 2012: 89–90; Sözen 2018: 139).

Currently the Cyprus question is again in a deadlock. After the failure of the talks in Crans-Montana, the relationship between Anastasiades and Akıncı is considered to be broken, the mutual trust seems gone. While progress at the political level is currently stuck, a recent study by *Politis* newspaper (Lysandrou 2019) shows that crossings from Greek and Turkish Cypriots are higher than ever before. Beyond that, according to forecasts, 2019 is likely to be the first year since the opening of the checkpoints in 2003 that more Greek Cypriot will have crossed north than Turkish Cypriots crossed south (ibid: n.p.). This illustrates that it is worth taking a closer look at how Cypriots deal with the division in their everyday lives. Since this thesis puts Cypriot youth at the centre of attention, I now turn to take a closer look how they are discussed within the relevant literature.

2.2 The literature's state of the art: Youth and the Cyprus conflict

In a socio-psychological study of communal violence, Sherif and Sherif (1953: 10) recognized that people growing up in societies experiencing conflict between competing ethno-national groups form their identities around the conflict. Similarly, Elbedour et al. (1997: 218) argue that “identity formation is critically shaped by intergroup conflict and by the shared definition and interpretation of the ‘we’ group about the ‘they’ group that have developed in the course of conflict”. In this logic, the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ are constructed in a highly stereotypical way as mutually exclusive (Elbedour et al. 1997: 228; Habashi 2008: 28; Spyrou 2011a: 533). Scholars have confirmed this notion for Cyprus. Hadjipavlou (2012: 367) holds that more than four decades after the partition of the island, selective narratives about historical trauma, the self and the other, as well as misperceptions and stereotypes play an important part in shaping the identity of the Cypriot people. From an early age, young people are socialized into the conflict culture through their families, their school education, the media and their political system (Hadjipavlou 2012: 367; see also: Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 4; Spyrou 2001: 78; 2006b: 95). Connolly (2003: 178) provides evidence that there is a strong feeling of attachment to one's

own ethnic identity resulting from the fact that they are learnt and internalised at a very early age. He argues that from the age of three many children are already developing negative attitudes and prejudices towards other ethnic groups.

Though constructions of identity are diverse, since Cyprus' Independence in 1960 two discourses of identity have been dominant on the island, namely Helleno-/Turkocentrism and Cypriocentrism. The former emphasises common history, descent, language, culture and religion with the people of the motherlands Greece and Turkey (Papadakis 2009: 20; Papadakis 2008b: 131). According to this ideology – which characterizes predominantly the political right – Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are above all Greeks respectively Turks. On the contrary, Cypriocentrism emphasises the shared characteristics of Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Cypriocentrists, mainly belonging to the political left, are committed to the Cypriot identity and Cypriot symbols and tend to favour rapprochement (Papadakis 2009: 20–21; Psaltis et al. 2014: 67; Spyrou 2001: 77). Overall, Turkish Cypriots tend to stress the Cypriot part of their identity more than Greek Cypriots. Hadjipavlou (2012: 377) attributes this to the fact that Turkish Cypriots want to distinguish themselves from the large number of Turkish nationals living in the north. Nevertheless, in the lives of young Cypriots, both north and south of the Green Line, the first discourse propagating a strong attachment towards the 'motherlands' Greece and Turkey is more prominent (Hadjipavlou 2012: 377; Mavratsas 1997: 718; Spyrou 2001: 77). Reasons for this are for example the extensive use of the Greek flag in the south and the Turkish flag in the north as well as the fact that Greek Cypriots to this day use the state anthem of Greece, Turkish Cypriots the state anthem of Turkey (Hadjipavlou 2012: 377; Spyrou 2001: 78). Most formative, however, is that the educational system on both sides of the divide is heavily influenced by a Hellenocentric/Turkocentric ideology and is considered the main instrument of both communities to reproduce and foster their ethno-national narratives (Hadjipavlou 2012: 376; Spyrou 2011a: 533; Yashin 2002: 414). Until today, the school curriculum and textbooks are shaped by the respective motherlands and their educational system (Christou 2007: 713; Hadjipavlou 2012: 376; Kizilyürek 1999: 388; Spyrou 2001: 78). In studying memory and history in the Greek-Cypriot educational system, Christou (2007: 717) holds that students are aware of the fact that within the Cypriot society there are different interpretations of contentious events. Nevertheless, the students expect that the official history taught in schools is unambiguous and is in the best

interest of their country. However, in history schoolbooks in both parts of divided Cyprus¹, the ‘History of Cyprus’ has been presented in a selective manner. Papadakis (2008b: 128) states that history education is used to propagate a narrative focusing on the suffering of the own community and simultaneously silencing the suffering of the other. Greek Cypriots are taught how the ‘barbaric Turks’ invaded their land and that it is their duty to remember the struggle of their ancestors and to fight for reverting the status-quo. This educational goal of teaching the new generation of Greek Cypriots about remembering the ‘occupied’ part of the island and maintaining the struggle for a unified country is reflected in the slogan ‘I don’t forget and I struggle’ (Δεν Ξεχνώ και Αγωνίζομαι/Den xechnó kai Agonízomai) which is imprinted in Greek Cypriot pupils’ writing pads (Bryant & Papadakis 2012: 19). Turkish Cypriots are taught about their ancestors suffering under the Greek Cypriots and are socialized into the struggle to make the partition permanent which is manifested in the slogan ‘we shall not forget’ (Bryant & Papadakis 2012: 20; Papadakis 2005: 149). Research within the school context exemplifies that schooling plays an integral part in the selective presentation of the other and in internalising what it means to be a ‘bad Turk’ or a ‘bad Greek’ (Hadjipavlou 2012: 377; Spyrou 2001: 79; Yashin 2002: 415). As a result, Hadjipavlou (2002: 201) states that instead of promoting conflict resolution, empathy and critical thinking, public education “promotes socialization into the conflict reproduction” (Hadjipavlou 2012: 377). In addition to this, young men from both communities undergo another socialisation process as they are obliged to do military service (Greek Cypriots 14 months, Turkish Cypriots 15 months). The experience is marked by the notion that young male Cypriots have the duty to defend their side in an event of renewed armed conflict which significantly shapes their view of the ‘other’ as the enemy (ibid.: 376).

Several authors suggest that the socialization into the conflict culture is reflected in young Cypriots’ attitudes and perceptions (Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 23f.; Sitas et al. 2007: 26). Fanti et al. (2017: 70) hold that young people experience the conflict through their parents’ memories as well as government policies and conclude that as a result young people possibly share their parents’ attitudes and level of trust towards the other

¹ In the northern part of the island, the left-wing Republican Turkish Party (CTP) published new history schoolbooks in 2004 that had Cyprus as their reference point and advocated for the unification of the island. However, this educational policy was reversed with the election of a right-wing government in 2009 (Christodoulou 2018: 381; Papadakis 2008a: 17).

community. Other studies illustrate that especially Greek Cypriot youth have inherited traumatic memories of the conflict from their parents and grandparents while Turkish Cypriots have experienced this to a lesser degree (Bryant 2012: 16; Hadjiyianni 2002: 209). When in 2004 the Annan Plan for reunifying Cyprus failed, the referendum results showed that the youth cohort (18–24) displayed the lowest approval rate. In line with that, subsequent surveys suggested that especially Greek Cypriot youth have a stronger disposition towards unification than elders (Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 23; Jakobsson-Hatay 2004: n.p.; Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 150; Sitas et al. 2007: 26; Webster 2005: 306). A recent study by Yucel and Psaltis (2019: 13) affirms that younger Greek Cypriots show less interest in cohabitation compared to the older generation, while younger Turkish Cypriots showing more interest in cohabitation compared to the older generation. In a similar vein, Sitas et al. (2007: 63) state that many young people demonstrate a sense of familiarity or contentment with the *status quo* i.e. separation. Leonard (2013: 330) argues that the lack of direct contact between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots born in post-1974 Cyprus is causing the youth to internalise separation as the normality. In the same way, reunification is viewed more cautiously (Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 23; Leonard 2013: 330; Sitas et al. 2007: 48). In addition, there is empirical evidence suggesting that many of the young feel alienated from politics (Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 4; Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 103). Hatay and Charalambous (2015: 4) show that students on both sides of the divide are only slightly interested in politics and Peristianis and Faiz (2009: 87, 103) illustrate similarly that Cypriot youth is only passively interested in socio-political participation. Additionally, they emphasise that young people see little reason to get involved as they feel that the few opportunities available to them are largely dictated and driven by adult agendas and processes. They assess their own influence as marginal. The alienation of youth from political life can also be found in Christou's (2006) work on memory and education in Cyprus. She holds that the national goal in the Greek Cypriot educational curriculum ('I don't forget and I struggle') is "discursively empty" (Christou 2006: 286). Christou claims that while most students when asked name a re-united and independent Cyprus as the national desire of the Cypriot people, this goal represents an "empty imagination" (ibid: 299) for the younger generation. Although young Cypriots do reiterate their loyalty to the national goal, to the "desire to go back to our homes" (ibid), Christou argues that they have very little idea of what this desire actually means and

entails. She states that young people lack the vision of living in a future united Cyprus with a united community, which is, however, a necessary precondition for finding peace on the island. As a reason, Christou points out that the educational system cultivates the desire to return to the occupied part but does little to advance what this means for Greek and Turkish Cypriots (ibid: 301). In this regard, Hadjipavlou (2007: 362) puts forward the argument that the conflict culture disables the youth from developing a critical mind towards their own society which hinders democratic citizenship. Taken together, this stresses that youth are “trained ‘enemies’” (Ungerleider 2012: 382) engaged in upholding conflict values and in reproducing memories of trauma, images of the other and perceptions of grievances. Current peace programs used at the local level therefore focus on training and educating the youth in peace through trust-building workshops and structured dialogue. This is expected to promote self-awareness, empathy and diverse perspectives on current issues (Hadjipavlou 2002, 2007, 2012; Ungerleider 2001, 2012).

However, qualitative and ethnographic research challenges the notion of young people simply internalising mainstream positions and shows a more multi-layered and differentiated picture (Spyrou 2000, 2001, 2006a, b, 2011a). In researching how children debate notions of national identity within the classroom, Spyrou (2011a: 537) illustrates that young people are not empty vessels passively absorbing adult views, prejudices and assumptions. Rather, young people are aware that the political climate in their country creates a distorted picture of reality and that this as well as the division of the island prevents a rapprochement and the formation of trust (Leonard 2013: 337). In various studies on national identity construction in elementary school classrooms in the south, Spyrou (2000, 2001, 2006b) provides detailed ethnographic material on children’s way of contenting nationalistic ideologies. Spyrou (2006b: 108) points out that messages young people receive in everyday life are contradictory and inconsistent leading them to partly accept the prevailing discourses and partly question them. He states that growing up in a society that revolves around an ethno-national conflict it is very difficult for young Greek Cypriots to develop a positive image of Turks. Nevertheless, the findings by Spyrou suggest that the multiplicity of voices children are exposed to disperses a fixed understanding of the Turks and allows them to construct different images, some that are more, some that are less stereotypical (ibid: 107). He argues that both, the reproduction of stereotypes as well as the production of new and alternative understandings arise in an “active process

of constructing meaning” (Spyrou 2006b: 95). Spyrou illustrates that although young people do internalise the mainstream adult positions and produce stereotypical entrenched positions, they also challenge them and are capable of forming their own views on social and political matters (2000: 75; 2006b: 107). This is supported by research done in other conflict societies documenting how young people are involved in continuous processes of accepting, rejecting and negotiating the dominant structures in their lives (Leonard 2013: 338). Studies conducted in deeply divided societies such as Northern Ireland, Palestine and South Africa suggest that young people are heavily influenced by the way politics is shaped and implemented in their country and actively engage as political beings (Leonard 2013: 328). Their practices and strategies demonstrate that they are not only the carriers of conflict and trauma but also creators of a peaceful culture and contributors to conflict transformation (Hart 2002: 46; Leonard 2008: 487; McEvoy-Levy 2001: 15). This suggests that the argument that Cypriot youth are unable to develop a critical mind towards their own society misses an important part of the story as it ignores that through their actions and their stories young Cypriots are a vital part of creating, shaping and reproducing politics. In the following I therefore present my theoretical framework for studying young people in Cyprus as agential actors in their everyday lives.

3. Theoretical Framework: Agential Youth and Everyday Peace

Critical International Relations (IR) literature calls for a complex, “interdisciplinary reading of peace” (Richmond 2008: 451) that is constructed of diverse voices and narratives. This includes seeing young people as actors in international politics and recognising the everyday and the local as important spaces of peace politics and knowledge production² (Berents & McEvoy-Levy 2015: 115; Matyók 2011: xxiii; McEvoy-Levy 2011: 169f.; Richmond 2008: 451f.; Watson 2006: 239). This chapter builds the theoretical basis for the thesis and is composed of two sections. The first explores understandings of youth in peace and conflict and highlights that each of the main contemporary discourses on youth in conflict only presents a piece of the picture. From that I derive the need to acknowledge

² Particularly relevant in this context are the works of Helen Berents (2015, 2018) who focuses on the everyday experiences of young people in conflict societies.

young people as agential contributors and their dynamic role in conflict and peace processes. By highlighting this, I aim at seeing young people not as passive actors or future resources but as active participants in the present. The second section of this chapter introduces the concept of the everyday as well as a tangible understanding of everyday peace that is built on the work of primarily Roger Mac Ginty and Oliver Richmond. I thereby emphasise that in a divided society like Cyprus, the everyday, which consists of observations, decisions and practices of the individual, offers a platform for capturing understandings of peace outside of elites, institutions and top-down approaches. Establishing this theoretical framework allows me to explore in the subsequent analysis chapter how young Cypriots navigate the division of their island in their everyday lives and to what extent youths' everyday practices across the divide provide insights for an understanding of the nature of peace in Cyprus.

3.1 Youth as agential contributors in conflict and peace

There is a vast array of discourses about youth in peace and conflict, ranging from youths as victims or threats to youth as a resource or agents of change (McEvoy-Levy 2011: 159). For a long time, the academic and political debate was dominated by a tendency to see youth as a problem to be solved, as either victims or perpetrators of violence (structural and overt). These perspectives tend to portray young people in a negative light, as helpless victims affected by violent conflict due to age, as conflict reproducers or even as criminals who are “inherently violent or easily manipulated by others into becoming perpetrators” (Del Felice & Wisler 2007: 3–4). For some time now, the role of young people as peace actors has been increasingly discussed. This literature illustrates the power and potential of youth as peace-builders, as positive agents having the capacity to bring about peace (Del Felice & Wisler 2007; Kurtenbach 2010; McEvoy-Levy 2006a, 2011; Pruitt 2013; Schwartz 2010). A clear separation between the different roles, however, makes little sense as those categories are not mutually exclusive. The roles of the same young people can change over time, from victim or perpetrator at one point to peace activist at another (Del Felice & Wisler 2007: 4). This can be illustrated by the fact that at the local level, and especially in conflict societies, youth partly mirror these discourses but also differentiate from them (McEvoy-Levy 2011: 161). In various contexts, young people are seen as “revolutionary vanguard, as moral guardians, as amoral thugs, and, in some

places, they are seen as a mix of all of these, and more, over time” (ibid.). McEvoy-Levy furthermore notes that young people, especially at the local level, carry an emotional meaning that cannot be put into rigid patterns:

They may come symbolize the nation’s suffering and existential peril, or its triumph and hope for the future. As symbol, “the youth” or “next generation” may justify continued hatred and aggression. They can also come to represent a rationale for concessions, negotiations and peace (ibid.).

Based on this, McEvoy-Levy (2011: 169) holds that the way young people’s self-image and how they understand their role will always be more diverse and complicated than either local or national politics or academia can grasp.

Simultaneously, over the past fifteen years, there has been an increasing recognition for young people as valuable agents in their own communities by peace and conflict scholars (Berents 2018: 6; see also McEvoy-Levy 2006c, 2007; Pruitt 2013; Schwartz 2010; Watson 2006). This body of literature constructs young people as agents of their own identity and as influencers of the social world they co-habit with adults. Research on the ability of young people to engage meaningfully in the world around them is mainly based on the contributions of sociologists Allison James and Alan Prout (1990). They argue that childhood is a socially constructed concept and point out that children are not passive beings in society but are active agents of their own lives and social worlds as well as the lives and worlds of the people around them (ibid.: 3–9; Spyrou 2000: 76). Considering youth as a socially constructed category stresses the plurality of and emphasises diverse constructions of youth (Berents 2018: 6). Research such as Alison Watson’s (2006) examination of children and their role in IR, Siobhan McEvoy-Levy’s (2006c, 2007) work on peacebuilding and youth in Northern Ireland, Stephanie Schwartz’ (2010) analysis of youth engagement in post-conflict reconstruction, Lesley Pruitt’s (2013) work on youth culture, music, and peacebuilding and Helen Berents’ (2018) ethnographic fieldwork on the lived experiences, aspirations and knowledge of young people in the Colombian conflict, amongst others, are demonstrative of the recognition that the experiences and accounts of young people are valid and important. Watson explicitly calls for the consideration of young people as a “site of knowledge” (2006: 239) in scholarly deliberations about peace praxis. Such research is supported by research in sociology, which focuses on the intrinsic value of young people and propagates the perception of them as “*human beings* rather than as *human becomings*” (Qvortrup 1994: 4). In this sense, young

people are viewed as valuable, knowing beings in the here and now rather than as immature beings on the road to becoming mature adults. As beings in their own right, they are important actors in society and are recognized as significant contributors in the present not just as resources for the future (ibid.).

Applied to peace and conflict studies, this means that the subjective experiences of young people and the importance they attach to certain experiences are an important source of understanding the social processes underlying peace and conflict. It indicates that young people are able to bring about change by themselves, independent from other actors (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 287; 2011: 168). In conflict societies like Cyprus, this prompts considerations of how youth are involved in reproducing and transforming the conflict as well as in reconciliation efforts (ibid. 2006b: 284). In order to capture young people's role adequately, McEvoy-Levy (2001; 2006b, c; 2007) argues for a holistic understanding of youth behaviour in (post-)conflict societies and proposes a dynamic theory of the role of youth in conflict. The theory is based on the logic that youth have the potential to act as both destructive and constructive societal actors. The roles that young people assume can change over time, contributing either actively or passively to peace, stagnation or instability. They use their strengths in different ways, they can promote peace but also endanger it (Kemper 2005: 38; Schwartz 2010: 21). This is because youth, like no other group in society, interacts simultaneously "with school, home, the street, the workforce, cultural and social institutions like the church or voluntary and leisure organizations and the military" (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 284). According to McEvoy-Levy (ibid: 285), these institutions and the way they are involved in conflict dynamics have a considerable impact on how young people navigate life. As demonstrated in chapter two, the conflict in Cyprus – like many other conflicts worldwide – is reproduced through remembering past trauma, through stories and text that transmit images of the other, through perceived injustices and evaluations of the peace process. Young people are centrally involved in these processes through their own ways of creating meaning and are thus an important social factor in the negotiation of conflict and peace processes. McEvoy-Levy (2006c: 140) points out that young people are engaged in politics and conflict, "regardless of whether they or adults realize it or not". She argues that youth create and reproduce politics through constructing and absorbing narratives of their surroundings and transmitting those narratives to peers, younger siblings and adults (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 285;

2006c: 140). Young people create stories in their everyday that sustain and create conflict-legitimizing myths and memories. Nevertheless, they also criticize and deconstruct established narratives in order to bring about positive change and peace (ibid. 2006c: 166). With regard to seeing youth as positive agents for peace, Del Felice and Wisler hold that their potential lies specifically in them being “more open to change” (2007: 24) and thus more willing to listen to new ideas and try out new paths. Additionally, they see youth as being oriented towards the future. While young people have inherited memories of the past through parents and the education they receive, they have not witnessed traumatic events directly which makes them more willing to ‘forget’ the past and move forward (Del Felice & Wisler 2007: 24). McEvoy-Levy therefore argues in favour of seeing youth as an “organic social force, all the time enmeshed in cultural and conflict reproduction” (2011: 173). Seeing youth as dynamic agents recognizes that young people do not live and act according to a fixed set of rules but are independent agents, and in their everyday lives influence people, structures and systems in a variety of ways.

Moreover, McEvoy-Levy proposes that the endurance of peace will depend “on whether the next generations accept or reject it, how they are socialized during the peace process and their perceptions of what that peace has achieved” (2001: 5). When young people are given spaces during a peace process where their voices can be heard and where they can participate in decision-making in their communities, they may be more inclined to have faith in the peace process and drive it forward. But if young people are ignored, the disillusionment with the peace process will affect the way these young people interact with the state and its institutions in the future (McEvoy-Levy 2001: 5–6; Schwartz 2010: 18). This builds on conflict transformation theorist Paul Lederach’s claim to “[n]ever talk only to politicians and military leaders. Talk to taxi drivers. Talk to construction workers and housewives. Talk to elders, shamans, and for goodness’ sake, talk to children” (2005: 122). With this, Lederach calls on researchers to regard all people, their knowledge and experiences as important contributions and resources in the process of creating peace - even if those people may not be aware of their value themselves (Lederach 1995: 26, 83; see also Pruitt 2013: 19). This perspective gives support for looking not just at how youth are expected to be involved in peace work but exploring their practices in the present and how they might be engaged in peace in their everyday worlds. In short, seeing young people as dynamic agents requires treating their actions and their interactions with their

families and peers as well as how they narrate and give meaning to those actions as valuable and as a form of political engagement. The meaning they create might promote conflict reproduction, but it might also display how young people take part in contesting powerful discourses of hatred and animosity in their communities (McEvoy-Levy 2006c: 140f.; Pruitt 2013: 8).

Seeing young people as agential and as competent actors and observers of their own lives lies at the heart of this research. Centring young people who for the most part are not considered in official structures makes it necessary to shift the focus on the everyday and on ideas of peace constructed in the everyday (Berents 2018: 6; Berents & McEvoy-Levy 2015: 117). In the now following second part of this chapter, I therefore turn to the question of how their contributions and everyday activities can be captured to develop a more comprehensive understanding of approaches to peace.

3.2 Theorising everyday peace

A commitment to recognising and capturing young people's agency in their everyday lives requires a more detailed theorisation of the concept of the everyday and its applicability in peace and conflict studies (Berents 2018: 6). In this respect, Roger Mac Ginty (2014: 549) argues that recognising the practices and methods people affected by conflict use in their ongoing day to day lives challenges scholars to think about notions of peace that go beyond technocratic top-down approaches followed by many institutions and that prevail in conflict resolution and peacebuilding literature. Considering everyday practices as political engagement requires going beyond elite discourse and paying attention to the everyday lives of the local populations.

This chapter seeks to outline an understanding of an everyday peace which is built on the contributions of key theorists, in particular Oliver Richmond (2011, 2012, 2013, 2015) and Robert Mac Ginty (2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2017). They have proposed an attention to the everyday and the local in peace and conflict studies in response to the deficits of the 'liberal peace' which is currently the dominant model for conflict affected countries and for post-conflict peacebuilding efforts (Berents 2018: 27). To develop an understanding of the everyday in connection with young people growing up in Cyprus' protracted conflict, I first briefly discuss the liberal peace model and its limits before

turning to explaining the concept of the everyday and an everyday peace in more detail. I am neither interested in abandoning nor defending the liberal peace approach, however, in this chapter I follow scholars arguing that peace strategies are not only negotiated by official, governmental diplomacy but in everyday life and through a variety of informal, visible and invisible ways (Watson 2012: 40; Richmond & Mac Ginty 2015: 178). In a second step, I present different types of social practices that can comprise everyday peace. I therefore primarily draw on Robert Mac Ginty (2014) who has constructed a typology of everyday peace practices. According to Mac Ginty, those practices are primarily bottom-up conflict-calming measures which are predominantly aimed at coexistence and tolerance (ibid: 549). However, critical peace and conflict scholars also recognize that there is the potential for everyday practices to go beyond conflict calming measures and initiate change in the direction of an enhanced concept of peace and conflict transformation (ibid: 559; Richmond 2016: 5).

3.2.1 The Liberal Peace and its limits

Over the past several decades, the liberal peace paradigm has been the principal reference frame for internationally supported peace-making and peacebuilding efforts (Berents 2018: 27). The concept of liberal peace is based on the assumptions that peace results from effective political institutions establishing a monopoly on violence and the rule of law as well as from a political and economic liberalization of the state. In that sense, a liberal peace approach focuses on establishing democratic institutions and strengthening economic development and emphasises the importance of international organizations and local elites in achieving and implementing peace agreements (Paris 2004: 187–188.; Richmond 2008: 442, 466; Richmond 2011: 4). Besides pursuing the establishment of democratic institutions, economic stability and trade, a liberal peace approach seeks to align society and the state, create local ownership and reconcile different groups by supporting civil-society building (Branka 2015: 55; Richmond 2016: 1). In general, liberal peace strategies favour institutional top-down, policy-based approaches. These aim to transform societies through institutional formulas by trying to create common spaces for all members of society and to support civil society initiatives (Branka 2015: 2; Richmond 2008: 442).

At this point, I consider it necessary to briefly address Cyprus again as the peace process on the island has mostly followed liberal institutionalist ideals. The political leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities along with international actors have maintained control over the process throughout the years. Local norms in Cyprus are associated with a progressive thinking about peace and in this sense correspond more or less to the Western understanding of liberal peace which includes respect human rights, minority rights, democracy and a rule of law (Richmond 2016: 111, 171). Parallel to the state, there is a variety of externally funded intercommunal initiatives working for peace and operating very closely to the liberal peace model. However, these often reach only a small group of already engaged people and are partly isolated from the wider local community. As a result, in parts of the society the programmes of those initiatives are not known at all, other parts of society have difficulties in identifying with them. Many other local actors are marginalized and forgotten within the public discourse (Lidén et al 2016: 285; Kappler 2014: 149; Richmond 2016: 96, 106).

This corresponds to criticisms of the adequacy of the liberal peace model within the field of peace studies. The liberal peace approach has been criticized for perpetuating inequalities and working towards a state in which politics depends more on institutions and security structures than on civil society, human rights, justice and local peace (Mac Ginty 2015: 841; Pugh 2005: 38; Richmond 2011: 4f.; see also Berents 2018: 28). More concretely, critical scholars note that despite being a comprehensive model with a particular focus on supporting civil society initiatives, the dominant form of peace projects are still largely situated in the realm of top-down institutional strategies that are disconnected from local contexts and realities (Richmond 2011: 12). By putting the focus on top-down institution building, the liberal peace is prone to overlook everyday activities that are important for achieving peace (Branka 2015: 42). Rather, a preoccupation with institutions and elites has led to static approaches and uniform models for peace as well as a professionalization of civil society while neglecting local needs and everyday experiences. The myriad of everyday practices and experiences of ordinary citizens that according to critical scholars are more reflective of the type of peace that is lived by the population has for the most part been overlooked (Mac Ginty 2011: 42; Richmond & Mitchell 2012: 5–6). The following section therefore introduces the concept of an everyday peace which aims to respond to these shortcomings.

3.2.2 A notion of the everyday and of everyday peace

In general, the academic discussions on everyday life go back to Michel de Certeau (1984) and his influential work, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau (1984: xi) illustrates how unconscious, day-to-day activities of individuals are not insignificant but give a deep insight into power relations and the social structure of a society. He exemplifies this by pointing to ordinary practices such as reading, talking and walking as important tactics (ibid.: xvii). In the everyday, de Certeau distinguishes between strategic and tactical forms of behaviour. In response to strategic actions used by institutions and states to control resources and exercise dominance, individuals use tactics, which are malleable and derive from being part of and interacting with a community (ibid: 36–37, 40). As Richmond puts it, “the tactical in the everyday is a diffuse form of politics that is not institutionalised, but is able to shape, resist and choose institutions and strategies – an everyday agency” (2011: 128). In other words, ordinary individuals engage in different practices and navigate the everyday in a way that reflects their understanding of their community. In this thesis, I regard the everyday as the normal habitus for people, even if what is considered normal in a conflict society is considered abnormal in other societies (Mac Ginty 2014: 550).

In peace and conflict studies, ideas of peace that are rooted in the everyday have proliferated in the past decade (Richmond 2009a; Richmond 2010; Richmond 2011; Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013; Mac Ginty 2011, 2017; see also Berents 2018: 30). Those ideas focus on the agency of the population and underline the importance of local experiences and knowledge when analysing complex political situations as opposed to the top-down level of political elites. An attention to the everyday moves away from a fixation on institutions and recognizes the fact that “formal political processes and intimate, personal life are neither distinct nor distinguishable” (Berents 2018: 30). For Richmond, who builds on de Certeau, the everyday is not necessarily a model for peace. He defines it as

[...] a space in which local individuals and communities live and develop political strategies in their local environment, towards the state and towards international models of order. It is not civil society, often a Western-induced artifice, but it is representative of the deeper local-local. It is often transversal and transnational, engaging with needs, rights, custom, individual, community, agency and mobilisation in political terms. Yet, these are often hidden or deemed marginal by mainstream approaches (2010: 670).

In this reading, Richmond frames the everyday as a potential realm of resistance and critical practice in which agential individuals develop tactics to break away from

“institutionalism and elitism” (ibid: 676). By understanding the everyday as a site of dynamic power relations, critical agency and challenges, Richmond (2011: 123–124) provides a valuable contribution to the discussion of the complexity of peace. The conceptualization of the everyday as a site where local people develop political strategies towards the state counteracts tendencies in the literature that romanticize the everyday and see it solely a site of transformation or solidarity (Richmond & Mitchell 2012: 16). Moreover, it offers the potential to hear more varied voices in complex conflict and post-conflict scenarios and thus enables observers to better grasp the multiplicity of actors and practices that shape discussions about peace (Berents 2018: 31). The everyday can thus not be regarded as per se transformative or alarming. Rather, the significance of the everyday in the context of peace partly arises from the local population’s perception of it as “a sphere in which people find security” (Kappler 2014: 3) and from being a space where the agency and voices of local actors are perceivable (Branka 2015: 101). When thinking about peace and politics via the everyday, this everyday space becomes a place of political action and “a medium by which agency is enabled” (Richmond 2009b: 332). How people act and experience everyday life thus shapes politics. As Richmond and Mitchell (2012: 22) put it, an everyday knowledge, a *savoir faire*, is derived from the lived experience, from interacting within an everyday space.

The notion of everyday peace can be understood as an attempt to conceptualize the way in which peace is created at the local level through individuals and groups (Mac Ginty 2017: 9). According to Mac Ginty (2014: 553), everyday peace involves observations and decisions made by as well as practices and norms deployed by individuals and groups in deeply divided societies. It refers to (routinized) practices by which people navigate “through division and insecurity using their own emotional intelligence and resources” (Richmond & Mac Ginty 2019: 10). This definition displays that everyday peace is not officially taught but rather based on personal perception and intuition. While everyday peace practices can be found in any society, they are particularly important in deeply divided societies that are more vulnerable to seemingly small incidents escalating and fuelling conflict. In such contexts, they have the potential to prevent persistent tensions from escalating (Mac Ginty 2014: 553; Mac Ginty & Firchow 2016: 309). At the same time, however, scholars point out that everyday peace activities are not necessarily conflict calming but can also intensify tensions, especially “if ingroup members find

cross-community contact threatening” (Mac Ginty 2014: 553, see also Hughes et al. 2008: 528). Apart from this understanding, which can be placed in the area of a negative concept of peace, everyday peace can also go beyond being just a coping mechanism to encompassing more ambitious forms such as everyday diplomacy (Constantinou 2015: 23; Dutta et al. 2016: 80; Mac Ginty 2014: 560; Richmond & Poggoda 2016: 17; Sennett 2012: 221). Since in this thesis I follow the argument that the everyday can also be a space in which youths' political agency and their transformative potential can unfold, it is conceptually important that everyday peace is more than just an accumulation of coping mechanisms but also a phenomenon that gives rise to political change. Including everyday into the term diplomacy means moving away from elitist, top-level notions to a more bottom-up profile of people-to-people practice (Mac Ginty 2014: 560). For Robert Sennett, everyday diplomacy is a means of conflict management and of promoting cooperation. He describes it as “one way people deal with people they don’t understand, can’t relate to or are in conflict with” (2012: 221). Specifically, this implies that everyday peace can be a more significant political phenomenon that offers the possibility of stepping beyond the realm of being a coping mechanism and qualitatively influencing the character of peace and conflict (Dutta et al. 2016: 80; Mac Ginty 2014: 559). This connects with what Richmond (2016) calls peace formation which is a local process that usually goes beyond the formalised and official sphere. In seeking to understand peace formation in the context of conflict, Richmond notes that the everyday is an important subaltern site of peace formation, in which everyday agency ensures basic needs and order without assistance of the state or internationals but at the same time makes clear demands on both (2016: 70–71). Mac Ginty (2014: 560) furthermore stresses that the potential of everyday peace lies particularly in the fact that seemingly banal interpersonal interactions can play an important role in breaking down barriers and prejudices against the ‘other’. He regards the everyday element of these interactions as particularly important in these contexts since it is usually repetitive, non-threatening and conveys a sense of familiarity. This allows individuals and group members to form a more complex picture of the other, one that goes beyond a one-dimensional notion (ibid.). Working with the notion of everyday peace goes hand in hand with a broad concept of peace. By assuming that elements such as maintaining social harmony and attempts to deal with conflict in everyday life to ensure peaceful co-existence are a form of peace activity it becomes obvious that peace formation is

present in many places and forms within the local population of conflict-affected societies. Thus, even if everyday peace is not always obvious, it can help to ensure a reasonably normal coexistence and thus be the “social glue” that prevents a (post-)conflict society from breaking apart (Mac Ginty 2014: 561).

3.2.3 Everyday social practices in deeply divided societies

In the above section I have tried to point out that the everyday is not passive but rather a highly political space. I have furthermore introduced the concept of everyday peace that can be described as practices individuals use to navigate their way through life in deeply divided societies. In order to better grasp this concept, in this section, I outline key aspects of social practices that constitute the notion of everyday peace. In attempting to unpack that notion, Roger Mac Ginty (2014: 555–557) has developed a typology of everyday social practices that constitute everyday peace. He distinguishes five activities or rather tactics that individuals use in their everyday interactions in divided societies, all of which are primarily concerned with coping and leading a ‘normal life’ in the midst of conflict: avoidance, ambiguity, ritualized politeness, telling and blame deferring. *Avoidance* refers to behaviour aimed at keeping the conflict away from everyday life, e.g. through disinterest or by deliberately avoiding certain conversations or situations. By the second everyday peace activity, *ambiguity*, Mac Ginty (2014: 556) understands a deliberate attempt to hide or ignore one's own identity. Closely linked to this is *ritualized politeness*, which refers to a special system of manners people in conflict societies use in interpersonal exchanges. As a fourth activity, Mac Ginty (2014: 557) names *telling* which describes a form of “social identification or social categorization” whereby individuals look for indicators to correctly categorize an individual. Lastly, *blame deferral* refers to shifting the blame for conflict dynamics to outsiders or certain groups within one's own society. First and foremost, these everyday peace social practices identified by Mac Ginty are coping mechanisms aimed at minimizing the impact of conflict in everyday life rather than addressing the causes of conflict and transforming it. The restriction to these practices is a rather minimalist interpretation of everyday peace – or a “negative everyday peace” as Richmond (2016: 17) puts it – aimed at preserving some kind of normality. Nevertheless, Mac Ginty (2014: 555) argues that also this negative everyday peace involves significant creativity and responsibility as it rests on considerable agency on the part of the

individual. However, as outlined in the previous section, scholars also point out a more ambitious form of everyday peace which can be described as “everyday diplomacy” (Constantinou 2015; Mac Ginty 2014; Sennett 2012) or “peace formation” (Richmond 2013, 2016). Everyday *diplomacy* characterizes more positive everyday peace practices such as questioning activities that reproduce the dominant norms legitimizing conflict and division – albeit sometimes only to a very limited extent. It involves, for example, challenging the norm that conflict and division are the only possible social forms, or establishing new communication and contact methods (Mac Ginty 2014: 560). Mac Ginty (ibid.) holds that in this sense, everyday peace can also send important signals to political elites. It may signal the unsustainability of seeing the ‘other’ as threatening and illegitimate, it may encourage political elites to break new ground or simply tell them that the conflict cannot continue unchanged. The following table provides a more in-depth overview of Mac Ginty’s (2014: 556, 560) typology of social practices that constitute everyday peace:

Table 1: Everyday peace practices and their manifestation (Mac Ginty 2014: 556)

Everyday peace practice	Manifestation
Avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoidance of controversial and sensitive conversation topics when in mixed company - Evading situations and people that have a chance of leading to conflict - Avoiding revealing too much about one’s true beliefs - Having virtually no contact with the ‘other side’ - Displaying little or no interest in the ongoing conflict and division - Living exclusively in the present and trying to as far as possible dis-remember past trauma
Ambiguity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliberate not-seeing of the other - Dissembling: temporary sublimation of an identity part and replacing it with a more neutral stance; practice of respecting differences largely by ignoring them
Ritualized Politeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Semi-scripted interchanges to avoid any language or behaviour likely to cause offence and risk escalation
Telling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determining the identity and affiliation of others
Blame Deferring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blaming outsiders or minorities within their own group for trouble
Diplomacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of new modes of intergroup activity - Ignoring/Overcoming dominant narratives of the conflict - Confronting people trying to maintain the conflict

Generally, these practices can be brief, fleeting or highly organised. Some practices and expressions are routinized in everyday life, while others only occur on particular days. Through everyday social practices, individuals cope with the challenges of life in a divided society. While these practices can continue to build walls, both mentally and physically between different groups in society, they can also constitute a category of resistance and rupture the idea of insurmountable conflict and division (Mac Ginty 2014: 555). The everyday peace practices presented in the table are not tested in the following analysis. Rather, the typology offers an orientation for the analysis of the results obtained in field research.

3.3 Conclusion: Agential Youth and Everyday Peace

This chapter has introduced two different theoretical frameworks and positioned the thesis in relation to both. Firstly, a conception of young people as multiple and socially constructed and secondly, a notion of an everyday as a political space. Building on the latter, I introduced the concept of everyday peace as a form of agency that has a conflict-defying, conflict-delaying and conflict-minimizing capital and can – but not necessarily has to – have a positive impact on the nature of peace. In bringing together this theoretical framework several ties between them are visible. Both theoretical discussions put people in the foreground who are marginalized and not visible in high-level political discourses. In addition, both assume that personal experience is valuable and argue for a participatory concept of politics (Berents 2018: 41). Recognising young people as competent observers and their activities and experiences as valuable, makes it necessary to shift the focus from elites, institutions and top-down formulas to the everyday space that is capable of capturing the daily experiences of young people. I believe that this theoretical framework is useful for the aim of my thesis, i.e. to take a look at how young people navigate the division of Cyprus and to examine the extent to which this allows conclusions to be drawn on the negotiation of peace in Cyprus, as it allows for acknowledging a dynamic role of young people in conflict and peace processes. Studies dealing with Cypriot youth have often put them into rigid categories (i.e. Cypriot youth are conflict reproducers or Greek Cypriot youth look more doubtful on reconciliation while Turkish Cypriot youth are more ready for cohabitation). By conceptualizing young people as actors who can simultaneously have a constructive and a destructive effect on the conflict, i.e. acknowledge their

dynamic role, I counteract this static division. A bottom-up approach that concentrates on the everyday can grasp this dynamic much better than top-down perspectives that often homogenise groups and overlook complexity and fluidity. At the same time, assuming that young people can promote peace but also prevent it, can only be adequately captured by understanding the everyday as a site of challenges and contestation and not just a place of solidarity and resistance.

4. Methodology

In various disciplines, including peace and conflict studies, the move towards the everyday defined as a political space has gained in importance in recent years. This modifies or rather shifts the focus away from the international level, the state or governments. At the methodological level, this requires researchers to think about methods that can capture the active contributions of individuals in the everyday. It furthermore requires researchers to be aware of the implications of any form of participation in the everyday live of the subjects they study, that go beyond just contributing to policy (Richmond 2010: 671). As mentioned in the introduction, my research is explorative and informed by ethnographic methods, namely participant observation and individual interviews. I have chosen this procedure as I did not want to approach the field with rigid categories in order to give young Cypriots as much freedom as possible to determine the direction and results of the research themselves. This corresponds with the aim of my research, to strengthen the agency of youth in Cyprus. At the same time, it allowed me to get a deeper and more truthful understanding of young Cypriots' ways of navigating and negotiating the division in everyday life. During the course of my fieldwork in Cyprus I spent a lot of time at the Home for Cooperation, a community centre in the buffer zone run by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The Home for Cooperation promotes workshops, events and meetings which nurture cooperation, diversity and cultural exchange. It is also a hub for journalists, civil society activists and people working in the political sector to discuss new collaborations or recent events in the Cyprus conflict. Being at the Home for Cooperation, every day at around 2 p.m. I saw small groups of students crossing the Ledra Palace checkpoint, going from the south to the north. Most of those young people were between 12 and 18 years of age and wore school uniforms of one of the private English schools of Nicosia. As I sat there in the buffer zone, surrounded by activists and diplomats, and watched those

young people crossing, I realized once again how important it is to recognize them as active agents in the conflict and to find out how they perceive themselves in this context.

This chapter outlines in detail the methodological approach of my research. Firstly, I address what it means for the research process to conceptualize young people as agential and to investigate their practices and experiences in everyday life. Then, I explain how I approached organizing and conducting the data. Thereby I aim at illustrating all my steps in a comprehensive way while simultaneously reflecting on them. I furthermore try to make myself and my role in the process visible. This is because research data can never be seen as completely objective as it is influenced not only by the structures of the research process but also by the subjective experiences of the researcher (Lune & Berg 2017: 133–134). Finally, the chapter describes how I collected and analysed the data and how I prepared the results for my analysis.

4.1 Methodological considerations

Getting an insight into the everyday life and everyday practices of young Cypriots requires finding ways to take them seriously, to recognise and respect their experiences, understanding and views (Berents 2018: 13). Thus, to analyse the manifold and complex issue of young people's everyday experiences choosing an approach informed by ethnographic research methods seemed most appropriate. Although I did not spend sufficient time in Cyprus to conduct "true longitudinal ethnographic work in the anthropological sense" (Berents 2018: 13), the research follows certain aspects of ethnographic fieldwork. According to Hammersley and Atkinson, ethnography usually involves the researcher participating "in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews" (2007: 3). One of the primary aims of my fieldwork was to find a way of genuinely engaging with young Cypriots and to listen to them talk about their own understandings and experiences of living on a divided island, of spending their everyday across the divide and of conflict and peace. During my time in Cyprus I had many opportunities to observe everyday practices and engage in conversation with local youth about these practices and their significance or meaning. With some of these young people I conducted one-to-one in-depth interviews as I believe that these could bring out many of the nuances and complexities that comprise young Cypriots and would allow me to grasp the concepts

and practices of everyday life in their multiplicity. I furthermore take into consideration other aspects of ethnographic work such as having a sensitivity for the cultural and social environment in which research is being conducted and a continuous reflexivity in relation to the research findings (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 15). The latter is also increasingly recognised within the field of IR, especially as the value of close, detailed work with people affected by conflict is becoming more important (Berents 2018: 14; Schatz 2009: 2). By paying attention to reflexivity, I mean in particular that I am aware of the fact that the research I conducted cannot be considered detached from my personal biography and characteristics. My positionality as a Greek Cypriot has certainly had strong implications on my methodological approach and requires a more thorough reflection, an aspiration I try to satisfy throughout the following sections.

4.2 Process of Organising and Conducting Fieldwork

This thesis is based on fieldwork I did in Cyprus during a period of five weeks in March and April 2019. I conducted semi-structured interviews with twelve Greek Cypriots and five Turkish Cypriots between the ages of 15 and 24. The interviews were supplemented by my own everyday experiences and observations and many more informal conversations and discussions with young people that occurred during casual socializing and my daily life in Cyprus. During the course of my fieldwork I lived in Nicosia, the divided capital of the island, that can be described as a microcosm of the Cypriot situation since it is the place where the division is most visible. Due to my Cypriot background I know the country and its culture very well and was therefore able to start my research immediately, without first having to familiarize myself with the context. In addition, I already knew my way around Nicosia through a six-month internship I completed there during my master's degree and was familiar with people and organisations who could provide me with contacts and information at the beginning.

My fieldwork in Cyprus then developed as follows. I started by contacting Cypriots from both sides of the divide whom I already knew and who I knew regularly cross the divide. I met with them right at the beginning of my time in Cyprus to tell them about my thesis and to get their perspective. Most of them were over 24 years old, thus slightly older than the people whose voices I want to capture in this thesis. However, they gave me a first access to the field and subsequently acted as gatekeepers, helping me to get in

touch with young Cypriots of the age group I was looking for. Following those initial contacts and conversations I had at the beginning of my time in Cyprus, I then approached people using the ‘snowball’ method – i.e. asking interviewees for names of other young people I could potentially talk to – but also paying attention to inclusivity and ensuring that I included a representation of the diverse viewpoints and narratives present in the Cypriot society both north and south of the divide (see 4.2.1). In addition, I used observation as a research tool to become familiar with young Cypriots’ everyday practices of crossing the Green Line. I felt that participating in and engaging with daily experiences of the division as well as casual conversations added an important depth and understanding to my research. This of course included that I myself regularly crossed from south to north and vice versa. I mainly used the two most significant checkpoints in Nicosia – Ledra Street and Ledra Palace – as research sites since there the Green Line can be crossed on foot.

As mentioned in the introduction of the chapter, I spent a lot of time at the Home for Cooperation which is situated in the buffer zone at the Ledra Palace checkpoint. The community centre unites numerous peacebuilding activities under its roof such as the peace education project ‘Imagine’ which brings together Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot pupils. It is also home to the organisation ‘Peace Players’ that uses the connecting power of sports – in this case basketball – to unite and inspire young people to create a more peaceful world – to name just a few examples. Thus, the Home for Cooperation was an ideal location to observe young Cypriots and to see them interact with members of the other community. Being there also gave me many opportunities to get in touch with young Cypriots crossing the divide, to engage in conversations with them and to participate in youth activities such as the Peace Players basketball lessons. Spending time at the Ledra Street checkpoint area – the busiest pedestrian area in the old town of Nicosia – gave me another perspective. Ledra Street is buzzing with life on both sites of the Green Line with many shops, bars, cafés and restaurant lining up in a row. Hundreds of people cross the checkpoint there every day, mainly for entertainment and shopping purposes. Among them are quite a few young people, most of them students as I found out through conversations with them. I documented all my observations and experiences through field notes. Writing them down and reflecting on them helped me to keep my focus and to regularly reflect on myself. During the data collection in the field, I came across decisions such as

whom to interview, when and where, as well as what to ask and in which form. In the following sections I elaborate on this in more detail.

4.2.1 Selecting Participants

Freeman and Mathison (2009: 29) indicate that the process of selecting participants is one of the least described processes in methodologies. However, as they argue, “understanding why certain individuals and groups are being chosen and others are not is essential to developing an ethically and methodologically sound research project” (ibid.). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 35), the sample is not necessarily the result of conscious deliberation, it is however necessary to make any criteria employed as explicit and systematic as possible. Regarding my research interest, I considered it important to obtain an appropriate representation of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots as well as a fair distribution of ages and gender among the participants. Additionally, I considered it valuable to have a wide range of backgrounds – e.g. experiences with peace activities or not, political orientation – within the participants group to get an idea of the multiplicity of young people’s experiences of navigating life in divided Cyprus.

Following initial contacts and conversations I had at the beginning of my time in Cyprus, I approached people using the ‘snowball’-method as I considered it helpful to achieve the greatest possible diversity of participants. This proved to be successful only to a certain extent since most of the young people with whom I came into contact via the snowball technique had already been part of peace activities to varying degrees. One reason for this was certainly that my contact persons were exclusively civil society activists committed to reunification efforts. In order to diversify my sample, the acquaintances I made during my everyday observations proved to be an opportunity. During my crossings, I occasionally got engaged in casual conversations with people directly at the checkpoints or in cafés and shops close to the Green Line. At times I thereby met young people well suited for my sample and who I then approached for an interview. In general, it was often the case that I got acquainted with young people in groups. In such situations I found it more useful to approach those young people who were interested in involving themselves rather than having to convince certain individuals to participate in an interview.

4.2.2 Interviewing

In total, I conducted recorded interviews (digital audio) with 17 young Cypriots between the ages of 15 and 24 (see appendix one). I predominantly conducted in-depth one-on-one interviews. In one case, however, I interviewed a pair of participants as they felt more comfortable doing the interview together. In retrospect, this did have an influence on the quality of the interview as there were some points during our conversation where I felt that a one-on-one situation would have provided more depth. Different nuances in the views of the two interviewees came out only partly as they hardly contradicted but rather regularly confirmed each other. Nevertheless, I felt that including them into the sample would add a valuable perspective to the research, which is why I decided to interview them together rather than not at all. While engaging in casual conversation in daily life was fruitful, for the interviews, I considered it important to have certain reference points guiding me through the process. I therefore prepared a number of open-ended questions as starting points for the interviews (see appendix two), especially in order not to lose sight of my focus on young Cypriots dealing with the division in everyday life. However, choosing open-ended questions also gave me the flexibility to let the young interviewees tell their own stories and give them space to express what is important to them. It furthermore allowed me to pursue interesting aspects addressed by the young Cypriots without being restricted by a rigid set of questions. All of the participants' mother tongue was either Greek or Turkish, but they were also fluent English speakers. I conducted the interviews with the Turkish Cypriots in English, with the Greek Cypriots, however, in Cypriot Greek – the dialect spoken in Cyprus – which I am fluent in myself. I roughly transcribed all interviews and, where necessary, translated parts into English. Fragments from the transcripts are used verbatim and not corrected for grammar. Most interviews lasted about one hour and took place in a café, the home of the interviewee or an empty room at the Home for Cooperation. While authors highlight the importance of conducting interviews in a quiet, private, welcoming and controlled space (Freeman and Mathison 2009: 95), the reality is that in many situations this is impossible. Particularly when conducting the interview in a café the surrounding was at times quite noisy, mainly because of loud music and not because of many people. Recognizing the noise, however, I do not believe that the interviews are less valid because of this. This is because I paid attention to choose places where people cannot sit that close to us to possibly listen to our conversation as I

felt that this could have prevented them from making political statements. The interviewees had a choice of confidentiality and some requested that their identities be kept anonymous. As a result, I decided to keep all of the interviews confidential. In presenting this research, I have thus chosen to use pseudonyms for the participants. A main reason for this decision was furthermore that through this thesis I aim to shed light on the individual experiences of young Cypriots and acknowledge their agency and I felt that merely reducing them to their gender or age doesn't do justice to that.

4.3 Challenges and Limits

During my field work in Cyprus, I encountered a variety of methodological, practical and conceptual challenges that are worthy of further discussion and reflection. Some of these challenges were surmountable, others must be recognised as limits to research. Some of the obstacles I encountered during the research facilitated the process, others made me reconsider what was possible and ultimately affected the shape of my research project.

My fieldwork was limited to a period of five weeks. While I contacted people that could assist me in my research before leaving Germany, it was only in Cyprus that I was able to really start the process and look for interview partners. Although Cyprus offers favourable conditions for research as much takes place in a confined space, I did feel the pressure of having to gather all relevant data in a limited timeframe. Especially since by setting the age range at 15 to 24, I also included minors and they required a special approach. To meet ethical standards, I was committed to gain their parents' or guardians' approval before talking to them, which proved to be rather difficult in the short amount of time. Although I have had casual conversations with several Cypriots under the age of 18 and have met quite a few Turkish Cypriots who attend school in the south, there are only three Cypriots under the age of 18 in my sample due to the challenges in gaining consent. The small sample size and the issue of representativeness that arise from that are other factors I want to reflect on. In general, drawing upon a large group of interviewees strengthens the information obtained and reduces the risk of outliers and unusual views diluting the results (Mac Ginty 2017: 11). However, this thesis makes no pretence that the findings are scientifically representative of Cypriot youth as they are rather indicative. Thus, justification for the sample size comes from the qualitative focus of this research

and its interest in individual experiences and personal information. It was important that a range of different young people was interviewed, but that the discussions with them have a certain depth (ibid.).

As already mentioned, my positionality as a Greek Cypriot certainly had an influence on my research. On the one hand, my close connections to the Home for Cooperation have supported my research process, but on the other hand I am also aware of the fact that the civil society activists I met there represent only a small part of society and it can even be seen as an isolated space. Despite all efforts, I can therefore not rule out a slight bias towards pro-reunification positions among the interviewees. In addition, I have neither managed to achieve a balanced ratio of gender nor of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots within my sample. As far as the gender aspect is concerned, this is because, although I approached a similar number of young women and young men for an interview, I was more successful with young women in actually arranging the interview during my time in Cyprus. Concerning the number of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, due to my knowledge of Greek language and the fact that I lived in the south, it was easier for me to establish a relationship with Greek Cypriots which then led to an interview. I also felt that they were very comfortable and open with me during the interviews and regarded me first and foremost as one of them and not as a student pursuing a degree. I am thereby not trying to say that I believe that the interviews I conducted with Turkish Cypriots are not profound enough or lack quality. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that conducting interviews with Greek Cypriots in their mother tongue while that was not the case with Turkish Cypriots created different conditions in the interviews. However, since I do not carry out a linguistic analysis, but rather use the interviews as a basis for carving out different everyday practices of Cypriot youth navigating the division, I do not believe that this negatively impacts my analysis.

4.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of my data is not an isolated process but closely linked to my data gathering as I already started sorting and analysing the material in the field during the observations and interviews. The conditions of the field mentioned in the previous sections shaped the kind of information I received and thus influenced how I was able to analyse and reflect on the material. At the same time, I am aware that, although I intended to approach data

gathering and data analysis without fixed categories, I did not approach the field entirely free of them, as I had already obtained an overview of the relevant literature. Against this background, primarily Mac Ginty's typology of everyday peace practices has influenced the interpretation of my material. The most significant part of my data is the interviews I conducted with young Greek and Turkish Cypriots in Nicosia. In addition to this, I gathered additional data through observation and casual conversations with young Cypriots from both sides of the divide that feed into my analysis. The observations were valuable as they broadened my understanding of the information gathered in the interviews

In order to organise my material into data of a form that is useful to my research question, I first made a rough transcription of all interviews in the language they were conducted in – i.e. Greek or English. I carried out data analysis on the Greek respectively English transcripts before I translated certain sections of the Greek interviews into English to include them as quotations in this thesis. I started the analysis by reading through the interview data multiple times and looking for patterns – similarities and dissimilarities. I thereby made rough notes on emerging topics and colour highlighted those in the text. I prepared several sheets of paper on which I listed the major topics of interest separately. In the course of working through the material, I pinpointed and then annotated several other subtopics or themes below these major interest topics. Additionally, I marked concrete examples, i.e. concrete statements, on each topic or theme. Lune and Berg (2017: 92) note that during this process researchers will often be very aware of every detail that conforms to what they expected while attending less to things that they did not expect. Since part of my argument in this thesis is that young people's activities in everyday life can point to their transformative potential, I have taken this remark by Lune and Berg to heart in order not to read the interviews one-sidedly, focused statements boosting prospects of peaceful coexistence, but to stay open for any themes that emerge. Table 2, below, shows the themes and sub-themes that came out of the structuring of my field results.

Table 2: Themes that resulted from data analysis

General Themes	Specific Themes
Personal Information	
	1. Personal/family history

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Current family situation 3. Education (experience of) 4. Community programmes 5. Friends 6. Lack of opportunities 7. Military
Everyday activities across the divide	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entertainment (shopping, nightlife, casino) 2. School/University 3. Meeting friends 4. Taking trips, visiting sites 5. Visiting homes of villages
Behaviour in north/south	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoidance 2. Ambiguity 3. Confrontation 4. Politeness 5. Curiosity 6. Comfort/Ease
Feelings towards 'other side'	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Love - Acceptance - Appreciation 2. Negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annoyance - Discomfort - Disconnection - Hatred
Attitude towards Cyprus Issue	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indifference 2. Ignorance 3. Annoyance 4. Urgent solution needed 5. No change can be expected 6. Moving forward, leaving it in the past

With the various themes depicted in table 2 I have prepared my material for the analysis. The detailed presentation of how I analysed the material underlines my commitment to see the data as the basis for the development of the work. This is illustrated once again by the range of topics that came out of the analysis. The typology presented in the following chapter that arises from the interviews can be seen as a form of conceptual scoping

that seeks to think through the interview findings presented above. It should not be understood as a rigid typology as the same young person can belong to different types and move fluently between them. The key issues that have emerged from the data form the basis for the following analysis chapters. Some topics are thereby more relevant while others provide context for the discussion

Before proceeding to the analysis chapter, however, I would like to briefly reflect again on where I see the political in the everyday activities of Cypriot youth, that can point to their transformative potential. As the activities presented here such as shopping, going to school or meeting friends are not intrinsically political, this is an important and necessary level of reflection and will help me to interpret the results of the analysis with regard to my research question. I am thereby aware that my reading and interpretation is only one of many. The narration of and remembrance of history plays an important role in the ongoing conflict in Cyprus and hinders a possible solution (Bryant & Papadakis 2012: 1). History is used by Greek and Turkish Cypriots to strengthen their own position at the international level, to assert their arguments in the formal negotiation process on the island and, as already mentioned in Chapter 2, also plays an important role in the everyday, at school or in the family. In that sense, in Cyprus, stories about the conflict are reproducing and continuing the conflict (ibid: 2). Papadakis and Bryant claim that peace in the case of Cyprus means the possibility of leaving the past behind, removing old wounds in order to move into the future, or as they put it, “one of the primary harbingers of a ‘time of peace’ is a willingness to ‘let the past be past’” (2012: 3). In this sense, I see the political in everyday life when narratives of the past lose their significance and instead narratives directed at the present or the future become more important. On a more ambitious level, it manifests itself in young people not wanting to let stories from the past to determine their future, critically questioning the way the past is told, perceiving and acknowledging the ‘other's’ concerns and fears, and connecting communities. This is consistent with the broad definition of peace presented in the introduction.

5. Analysis

Christos (17): I mean, I know very good people on that side, like, I met people from there talented, good, with a good heart, truly wonderful people. And so I believe, ok, what if something happened in the past. We need to move on, we need to make a change. We need to truly look who those people are and for what reasons we don't like them.

Hazar (21): For us it's normal...you know, everyone goes. Like me, I come here to go to university because education is better in this side. Because you know, the Turkish side is not internationally recognized so if I graduated from a university here...I mean I would be able to apply for masters but it wouldn't be that recognized because after all, there are not enough regulations on the academic stuff so we prefer to come to this side.

Yiorgos (24): The first time I went with a friend and it was just out of curiosity, everyone goes...I mean, we didn't really go for a specific reason, just out of curiosity and because they have cheap stuff. I mean, everyone goes there to buy things. And then we just continued to go.

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The 17 young Cypriots I interviewed are by no means a homogenous group. I spoke to both Greek and Turkish Cypriot youth who have grown up in different political situations and have been influenced by contrasting narratives. I talked to young people whose parents or grandparents had to leave their homes in 1974 and flee to the south or north but also to youth who have no family-related connection at all to the 'other side'. I met young Cypriots whose closest friends belong to the other community and again others who have never talked to Greek Cypriot respectively Turkish Cypriot peers. Some of the young people I spoke to are members of inter-communal peace initiatives, others have never heard of such initiatives. However, they all have one thing in common: all of them make use of the permeability of the Green Line and have integrated the division into their everyday lives.

This thesis stresses the need to explore in more detail the everyday practices of young Cypriots growing up with conflict legacies. I thereby focus on young Cypriots who have incorporated the division into their daily lives and go about activities across the Green Line such as shopping, going to school/university, going for day trips, eating out and meeting with friends. Those young people play an important part in the negotiation of daily life in the divided Cypriot society but are rarely acknowledged. Through this

research, I want to shed light on young people's voices and experiences within the Cypriot conflict setting while emphasizing the importance of a "grounded approach" to resolving a protracted conflict "that affects all members of a community" (Berents 2018: 3). I assume that in protracted conflict peace is not only negotiated on a higher political level but also in everyday life. This means that the young people moving through that environment also negotiate and contribute in one way or another to the ongoing process of building peace.

In the following I present three different readings of young Cypriots that illustrate different approaches of navigating and negotiating the division in Cyprus. The three types highlighted in the following chapters are again divided into subthemes that reflect the most common patterns I experienced during my field work in Cyprus in March and April 2019. The emergence of this structure is influenced by the theoretical foundations presented in chapter three, above all the typology of everyday social practices by Mac Ginty (chapter 3.2.3). Likewise, the themes that I have identified after a first structuring of my data (table 2) have all been included in one way or another in the analysis. However, I want to point out that my readings do not exhaust the range of perspectives and possible interpretations. I also want to stress that it is not my intention to divide young Cypriots into definite groups characterised by static views. Rather, these categories are porous and, over time, young Cypriots renegotiate their perceptions and deal with everyday life in many different ways. Thus, taken together the analysis highlights that young people approach everyday life in different and often paradoxical ways and that each of these ways reflects broader positions on the prospect of reunification as well as attempts to represent a specific identity or community (Dikomitis 2005: 8).

5.1 Keeping the distance: The reluctant

Kostas (22): Turkish Cypriots, Turks, it makes no difference to me. You see their life over there, the way it is. They left it the way we gave it to them. If you go to Ledra Street and take someone who is like 60 or 70 years old, he'll tell you it used to look exactly the same in the past. They have not changed anything.

For me the situation is clear, I can never live peacefully with someone whose grandfather might have done this or that to my relatives, I can't, I don't feel good about that.

I'll never be able to accept them. I think it is best if everything stays the way it is. Or we close all the checkpoints and then for me the only solution is expulsion, everyone has to

go. We close the checkpoints, we can't go there, they can't come to our side. And if they don't go, we need a war. I mean, how is it possible for people to walk by the place where the Turks killed Solomos³ every day?

I met Kostas while crossing the checkpoint at Ledra street from south to north. He was with a friend, I was alone. We passed the Greek Cypriot checkpoint at the same time, walking past the queue of people waiting for the police officers to check their passports. I briefly held up my Cypriot identity card (ID) to signal to the officials that I was Greek Cypriot - as such you do not have to show your ID at the Greek Cypriot checkpoint - and then we walked one after the other through the Buffer zone towards the Turkish Cypriot checkpoint. We were checked by the Turkish Cypriot officials next to each other and out of habit, I showed my German ID. Kostas, seeing that, smiled and said, "that's how I would do it too". We started a conversation that eventually led us to sit down together for an interview. Kostas is a 22-year old Greek Cypriot from Limassol who after his military service moved to Nicosia to begin his training in the gastronomy sector. As is clear from the introductory quote, he holds strong nationalist positions as well as a rejectionist stance towards a possible reunification. Although he tells me that he would like it if all the checkpoints closed, he crosses the Green Line two or three times a week. Kostas is a smoker and shortly after moving to Nicosia two years ago, he started going to the north to buy cigarettes as they are much cheaper there. Since then, he has been going there regularly to purchase cheaper products, not just cigarettes anymore but also clothes, shoes or medicines. In addition, he regularly drives with friends to the casinos in Kyrenia and has been to the beach in Famagusta several times. Kostas is symbolic of a number of young people I have met – mainly Greek Cypriots – who regularly cross from south to north, who do so primarily out of personal interest, but otherwise have no connection to the 'other side' and community and are either rather sceptical about any form of reconciliation or do not consider it an option. While Kostas' views were exceptional among my interviewees - in other interviews I did not encounter such strong nationalist positions - his approach of navigating the division reveals several dimensions that I have noticed in

³ He refers to the death of Solomos Solomou in the summer of 1996. At the time, a group of Greek Cypriots demonstrated for the right of free movement on the island and unlawfully entered the Buffer Zone. One young man, Tasos Isaak, got caught in the barrier's barbed wire and was beaten to death by members of the Turkish ultra-nationalist organization *Grey Wolves*. A few days later, his cousin, Solomos Solomou, attempting to take down a Turkish flag in the buffer zone, was shot dead by a Turkish officer (Hadjiyanni 2002: xi-xii).

other interviews and conversations in everyday life in a similar vein. These are the loss of importance of ethno-nationalist convictions when it comes to personal gain; the reproduction of stereotypes and a feeling of unfamiliarity and discomfort on the ‘other side’; as well as the use of avoidance mechanisms (Mac Ginty 2014) and a display of disinterest in the division.

Self-interest trumps ideology

In my account of the Cyprus conflict (chapter 2.1) I pointed out that the partial opening of the Green Line in 2003 made cross-visits possible and contributed to the normalisation of intercommunal relations. At the same time, however, it also brought a new and “highly politicised public debate” about the significance of this change for the protracted situation in Cyprus (Christou & Spyrou 2016: 78). As the ‘TRNC’ is not internationally recognized, the opening of the checkpoints was a relief for many Turkish Cypriots as it created new opportunities and loosened up the economic isolation they have experienced since the division. For some, this development also meant a step towards cementing what, in their minds, is a border separating the ‘TRNC’ from the Greek Cypriot RoC in the south (Christou & Spyrou 2016: 78–79; Navaro-Yashin 2012: 200, 224). In contrast, for parts of Greek Cypriots the opening was as symbol of hope as it was considered an important step towards solving the ‘Cyprus Problem’ and towards the refugees returning to their homes in the north; for others, to cross over was “equivalent to a betrayal” as it involved accepting to show their passports to the Turkish Cypriot representatives (Christou & Spyrou 2016: 78). Thus, although it is possible for Cypriots to move around the island today, refusing to cross to the north is still a rather widespread attitude among Greek Cypriots. The refusal has mainly political reasons as many consider that showing their passports to go to the north is an act of political recognition of a territory they consider illegitimate and ‘occupied’ (Bereskin 2015: 47). In a similar vein, many of them state that they do not want to display their passports and be reduced to “tourists in their own country” (Dikomitis 2005: 8). Since, from the point of view of the RoC, the ‘TRNC’ is an illegal state, this means that any practice in the north, such as spending money on goods, food and drinking, falls under the rubric of illegality. Of those people crossing, a large number do so in an act of pilgrimage. Greek Cypriot refugees regularly visit the ‘other side’ to see their homes, to visit churches and cemeteries, to “collect soil from the graves of their ancestors

and anoint themselves with the water from springs in their villages” (Christou & Spyrou 2012: 306; see also Dikomitis 2005: 11). While I did encounter these entrenched views on crossing during my research stay in Cyprus, the young people I talked to – here I mainly refer to Greek Cypriots – were far less rigid about crossing and spending money in the north. Kostas for example, who is very clear on his position that for him the illegality of the north is not negotiable and that he can never accept people who are denying the occupation being the central issue in Cyprus (“those who say that the illegal occupation is wrong and the source of it all, with them I have no problem”), regularly crosses to go about everyday activities such as shopping. By doing so, he breaks out of this narrative, which he himself is also aware of:

Kostas (22): I go there because...for example I smoke and here, I get 30g tobacco for 8€, over there I get 50g for 4€...I also buy a lot, T-shirts, shoes, a lot of things...eh, everybody is for themselves. Ok, it's wrong what I'm doing, I know that. The thought I have in mind is that every euro I give them is a bullet. So yes, it's wrong what I do, but if I have 20€ to buy what I want and don't get it here, over there I get it.

Similarly, Christina, who is regularly in the north with her parents - both refugees -, tells me that as a matter of principle they don't want to spend money there. Still, it happens every once in a while:

Christina (19): We don't want to spend money there. But my mom once bought a bag there because it was a good brand and much cheaper. And the quality was also very good and so we have bought some more things when we went.

In addition, Eleni tells me that for a long time she refused to go to the north because she did not want to show her passport to move around in her country. In recent years, however, her attitude has changed, also because more and more people from her environment have been to the north and told her about it:

Eleni (24): To be honest, I don't care about politics, I don't care about the Cyprus issue. I just always felt like, ok, why should I show my ID, be checked when being in my own country? I thought like that for a long time...ok then I went for the first time and now I go to the shops to see if there is something special, shoes for example that are very special and that I can't get here, so yes, I go to check what they have, if they are ahead in their fashion.

While Greek Cypriots crossing to shop have often been talked about in negative terms (Dikomitis 2005: 10), during my time in Nicosia, whenever I passed the checkpoints, I saw a long queue of Cypriots waiting to pass to the ‘other side’. In this context, the most recent figures on Cypriots from both sides of the divide crossing are also revealing: According to *Politis* newspaper, for the first time since the checkpoints opened in April

2003, the number of crossings by Greek Cypriots in 2019 surpassed those of Turkish Cypriots. The numbers even tripled in the first half of the year compared to the previous one, a fact that is also reflected in credit card spending. The number of Turkish Cypriots crossing south has likewise slightly risen (Lysandrou 2019: n.p.). Talking to Georgia, a 23-year-old architecture student whose parents are refugees from the Kyrenia area, she tells me that while she herself is rather reluctant when it comes to spending money in the north as she does not want to support “this very particular government”, she does not categorise anyone who goes and shops in the northern part: “I know many people who cross to buy stuff, clothes, petrol, drugs...I mean, it’s understandable, you can’t judge someone who wants to go there to buy cheaper stuff”. For many of the young Cypriots I talked to – Greek and Turkish Cypriots – entertainment purposes, primarily shopping, belong to the most important reasons to cross the Green Line.

Lefteris (20): There are more stores over there. Here, I can only buy from one store, and that’s in the mall. Otherwise, I have to order what I want on the internet and have it delivered to Cyprus. You see, I am very tall and when I want to buy something, I have no choice here, over there I go and always find something.

Hazar (21): I also cross to shop sometimes. I cross because there is no TopShop let’s say in the north or there is no McDonalds or there is no H&M. So, if I want to buy these things, I need to come to this side. But now with the devaluation of the Turkish currency unfortunately we can’t shop as much as we like, like in the old times because now...it’s like 200€ is now 1000TL and it wasn’t like that.

Hazar mentions a point here that certainly should not be underestimated when considering young Cypriots everyday activities. The devaluation of the Turkish Lira, which has been felt in the north since the beginning of 2018 and peaked in the summer of 2018, has made it much more expensive for Turkish Cypriots to cross the Green Line and buy in the south (Morley 2018: n.p.). For Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, who are still feeling the effects of the economic crisis (Mark 2016: n.p.), shopping in the north became even cheaper, which has certainly contributed to the increase in the number of people regularly crossing to the north⁴. While rational economic interests are at the forefront here, Eleni -

⁴ One interesting aspect I have been told by several people is that there are quite a number of Greek Cypriot students in Nicosia who live in the north because the rent is much cheaper on that side. Unfortunately, during my research in Cyprus, I did not succeed in finding a person to whom this applies, which is why I cannot give more detailed information on this aspect. Nevertheless, I did not want to leave this unmentioned.

who primarily goes for shopping purposes - demonstrates that this can also entail a further, non-economic significance:

Eleni (24): Now that I'm there regularly, shopping and so on, I find it sad that I haven't been there before. I know I'll do things differently with my children, I will go to the north with them and show them how it is there.

Stereotypes, Discomfort and Disconnection

The opening quotation in this chapter illustrates that Kostas' view of Turkish Cypriots and the north is determined by pronounced enemy images as well as stereotypes and prejudices. In a divided society like Cyprus, where contact between the two conflicting communities is restricted due to a physical boundary, certain stereotypes are cultivated by the government(s) and its institutions and passed on to the society through education and the media (Hadjipavlou 2012: 371). Christos and Bariş tell me that in their childhood they were aware of certain narratives that stirred up fear of the 'other side':

Christos (17): The first time I crossed with 7, of course I felt a bit weird. In a way I felt like being under suspicion because I thought that the people there are bad, because that's what we learn and that it is dangerous. That's what people told me and I didn't really know what the katechòmena [the occupied areas] are, and Turkish Cypriots and the war. I just felt that the people are different there and sometimes I felt hatred because of that.

Bariş (22): So, I think growing there were always these people, either from immigrant background or just like nationalist people telling you these stories, so don't go to the border, don't even get close to it...so all the stories that we've been told when we were kids made us this way...like sceptical.

During my interviews I noticed that for young Cypriots who did not go to the 'other side' continuously with their families or with school from an early age, these stories are more likely to have had a breeding ground and cultivated fear and anxiety of the act of crossing.

This is evidenced in Lefteris' account of his first time crossing to the north:

Lefteris (20): To tell you the truth, the first time I crossed I was afraid. I mean the first time you go you just are afraid. Because of all the things I knew...like that they are very strict over there, someone told me that the police comes when you cross, that you get arrested and I was a little scared about the police because here I know how the police is but over there I don't. But also, I feel like the police there is looking at us very strictly...in a way like they don't want us to be over there, us Cypriots.

All the stories Lefteris had heard throughout his life made him feel like he was entering an area where he cannot be sure that he, as a Greek Cypriot, will be treated lawfully. Thus, the first few times he went, he was accompanied by a strong feeling of discomfort that he

still couldn't quite get rid of. I witnessed this aversion to Turkish Cypriot officials primarily when talking to Greek Cypriot male, which is why I would like to briefly point out one institution that plays a central role in the lives of young men in Cyprus, the military. The military service is an experience that marks male youths' view of the other, 'the enemy', and their duty to defend their side in an event of renewed armed conflict (Hadjipavlou 2012: 376). The deeply formative character of the military experience for some young men became clear in my interviews:

Lefteris (20): Well sure, there is a lot of propaganda in the military. They told us one thing like, 'instead of your mother crying, it's better if his mother cries'. On so many occasions they told us this thing. Okay, that's very macabre, but still you do learn things. You get out of there a different person, especially from the military of Cyprus.

Lefteris' report on his experiences in the military supports Hadjipavlou's view that the military educates male youth to adopt a hard stance towards the other, leaving no room for any sensitivities and a view of "the 'other' as a human being with similar fears and concerns" (2012: 376).

Similar experiences of discomfort were reported to me by some Turkish Cypriots. Emre tells me that although he crosses regularly in Nicosia, he avoids other parts of the island:

Emre (19): I have no problem in the south you know. I just don't want to go to places where people are racist and don't like Turkish Cypriots...so for example I don't really go to Paphos and that area.

And Hazar who crosses nearly every day to go to university in the south expresses that generally, she feels at ease being in the south, only sometimes she experiences unpleasant situations:

Hazar (21): Sometimes, they can make you wait for no reason in the border. I think it's also a political game, this is very strategic. Like for instance when I come to school, sometimes there is a very big line and they have like two, three boxes where they can put people in to speed the process but they don't and I think this is a strategy, 'you want to pass, you have to wait'. And you know, sometimes they take your ID and just talk and you are standing there like...so there are weird moments like this. I know that if they want to, they can speed up the process but sometimes they don't want.

And while she feels very happy at her university in the south, she acknowledges that there are certain situations that some of her Turkish Cypriot peers would find discriminating to the extent, that they might think about leaving the university:

Hazar (21): I have some Greek Cypriot friends at university and usually I don't have any negative experiences. Except there is this one teacher, I mean, he is not bad to me or other

Turkish Cypriots but you can feel a suppressed hostility from him. Like when he talks, he never says the Turkish side, he says the occupied side. I mean, I don't take it as an insult, but I am sure there are other people who do. Like ok, we know we are occupied, like why do you put it into our face? So, there are these small sensitive issues and maybe other people would consider leaving the university.

While Hazar tells me that she found a way to deal with discriminatory behaviour when being in the south, this might not be the case for all young people. Although for the most part growing up with stronger reconciliatory behaviour than Greek Cypriots (Hatay & Charalambous 2015: V), experiences Turkish Cypriot youth make in their everyday life might make them doubt positive prospects for reunification and strengthen reservations against the other community⁵.

Research in social psychology building on Allport's (1954) 'contact hypothesis' generally states intergroup contact – both quantity and quality of contact – reduces negative out-group attitudes (Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 18). For Cyprus, a number of surveys have consistently supported intergroup contact theory (McKeown & Psaltis 2017; Psaltis 2012; Yucel & Psalits 2019). In particular, the studies have shown that there is a link between intergroup contact and feelings of threat towards the 'other' as well as prejudice. More precisely, contact frequency as well as positive contact lead to the reduction of threats and prejudice (Psaltis 2012: 98–99; see also Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 18). Considering that for some interviewees, being in the north confirms certain stereotypes they have, the contact frequency aspect of Allport's hypothesis is not fully supported by my findings. While the youth I talked to who have had certain doubts regarding going to the 'other side' confirmed that repeated crossing and experiences made in everyday life (e.g. one is not questioned or arrested at the Turkish Cypriot checkpoint) reduces threat-oriented beliefs, the same, however, cannot be said unrestrictedly for a dismantling of stereotypes and discomfort. This is reflected by Yiorgos and Georgia describing what they feel while being in the north:

Yiorgos (24): I only go to the shops. I mean, I still get annoyed of them checking me every time but that's how it is. But with the people I had no problem so far, everybody's been friendly. But the way it looks over there is a shame, it could be so much nicer, much cleaner, tidier. The place itself reminds me of Cyprus but everything else, it all looks all so foreign.

⁵ In my conversation with Esra and Özge, the two students told me that they've heard of incidents at another English School in Nicosia, where Turkish Cypriot students have been mobbed. Similarly, former students at the English school told me that during their time there, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were still predominantly part of different groups of friends. However, since I haven't found an interviewee who witnessed this first hand I cannot provide any additional information at this point.

The signs, the language, foreign number plates on the cars, our phones don't work and none of the signs are in English. Basically, you think they want to make it Turkey. And I think that is also the attitude of the Turk, wherever they go, they want to make everything Turkish.

Georgia (23): Every time I go to the other side, it makes me sad go see the buildings so run down. I feel very connected to the old town of Nicosia and I don't want to see it that way. I don't like that they just leave them the way they are. And then I ask myself, ok, you live here, this is your country, but do you love it? Why do you let it all go to rack and ruin and do nothing? I don't know...it seems to me that they are just there, but not that they have respect for it, they don't seem to care. I don't know why... are they just indifferent? Is it their culture? I don't know.

Hence, for some young people, external differences, for example in language and in architecture to a certain extent function as a barrier preventing them to develop intergroup trust and to rethink their stereotypes. This goes along with previous research (Binder et al. 2009; McKeown & Psaltis 2017; Pickett et al. 2014) that contact of positive quality is more important than contact alone. In line with this, a finding made by Pickett et al. (2014: 602) in their study of Israeli Jews and Arabs suggests that it is not the quantity but only the quality of contact that matters. This is supported by my finding that whenever I witnessed stereotypes or discomfort continuing or even strengthening through everyday activities across the divide, the interviewees did not have contact of a qualitative nature with the other community – i.e. going beyond talking about superficial and casual issues such as a potential purchase. This already reveals another pattern, I now turn to, which is that a number of young Cypriots negotiate the division by resorting to avoidances practices (see Mac Ginty 2014) or showing disinterest in the situation in their everyday lives.

Avoidance and Disinterest

According to Mac Ginty (2014: 549), people in divided societies refer to routinised social practices to navigate their way through a divided society. The conflict geography in Cyprus, the physical division in form of the Green Line, facilitates or enforces the potential of having virtually no contact with 'the other side'. To the young people that I have spoken to, this does not apply as they regularly cross the line in everyday life. However, considering the interaction while being on the respective other side or with members of the other community, differences are apparent within young people. Some of the youth I met, who cross only in pursuit of entertainment, shopping or other 'materialistic' purposes, are avoiding the respective 'other' or touching on any controversial and sensitive

issue when in mixed company. For example, Kostas notes that even though “he might be good with me, I don't want to make friends with them, go to cafés or stuff. I'm trying to stay away as best as I can, so when I am there like being ok from a distance”. This is in line with Mac Ginty's suggestion of avoidance techniques – be it the avoidance of contentious topics of conversation or evading situations and people that could have a chance of leading to conflict – being the principal everyday peace activity, i.e. a practice that aims to deemphasise the conflict in everyday life and allowing a façade of normality to prevail (2014: 555). Young people – in this case mainly Greek Cypriots – often told me that being on the other side, their personal contact with people from the other community is reduced to a minimum and mostly reduced to superficial conversations.

Monika (19): I don't know any Turkish Cypriots, no I don't have contact with them. But actually, where we always go in Ledra street, there are Turkish Cypriots and most of them also speak Greek...yes, some know and they also understand us, so we talk to them in Greek when we need to know something.

Yiorgos (24): Eh well I go because it's cheap, petrol, cigarettes. I go mainly for those reasons. So, I go because it benefits me, not really because I want to get to know any Turkish Cypriots. But so far, I haven't had any bad experiences with them, so everyone was friendly, nice.

From Kostas, I also got the impression that avoidance practices are not only employed when in mixed company but also when being around friends to avoid creating any discomfort or disharmony in the own group:

Kostas (22): Eh, I don't really talk to people. I mostly go with friends and we also have different opinions. But we don't talk about it much, it's not good if you talk too much with your friends about politics and stuff. Everyone has their own opinion and believes what they want.

Those accounts indicate that for young Cypriots who have grown up with very strong ethnonationalist narratives being promoted through education and the media, avoidance techniques can be a way of managing and navigating the division in everyday life without completely deviating from the official narrative. Avoiding or showing disinterest can help maintain the moral distance to the other but in this way might also contribute to a perpetuations and normalisation of the division and thus help sustain the long-term nature of it (Mac Ginty 2014: 557).

5.2 Changing attitudes: The learner

Melina (21): I used to think differently. I mean, I grew up in a family with the same propaganda...how am I supposed to tell you. I can't say that they told me lies, but just one side of the story. 'They took away our villages, threw us out of our houses' ...my grandma told me: 'Do you know what it means to have to leave with five small children and not know where to go? Do you know what it means having to flee with nothing?' Somehow that shocks you. And I'm not saying I don't understand what they went through. I think my dad was ten years old when he had to leave his village, my mom was seven years old. But ok, at one point you also have to say what happened, happened, the same happened to the others, the Turkish Cypriots. That didn't just happen to us.

It never crossed my mind to do an internship related to the Cyprus issue (to *kypriakó*). I actually wanted to do an internship at an NGO and found the advertisement by chance and since I didn't find anything else, I applied and was accepted. So, until then I didn't even bother doing anything related to the Cyprus issue. And yes, in the beginning I was really like what, where did I end up here? It was also the first time that I heard so much Turkish...and actually the language isn't as bad as I thought. I mean, I used to have problems with certain symbols, hated them...so the Turkish flag, Turkish as a language...and at the beginning of my internship I thought, ok, how do I deal with this now? But now, I'm cool.

Studies have shown that young people in Cyprus – especially Greek Cypriot youth – have inherited their parents' and grandparents' memories of the conflict and, to some extent, their traumas (Bryant 2012: 16; Hadjiyianni 2002: 209; see also Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 4). This was also the case with Melina. As mentioned in the introduction, she is a young Greek Cypriot woman whose parents are refugees from the Kyrenia area. She grew up listening to stories of her parents and grandparents having to leave their villages and homes in the north. After the checkpoints opened, her parents once visited the village of her father. But they did not like it back then, it was not what they had in mind, which is why they never went again, Melina tells me. She herself says that she could never fully understand her relatives' sentiments as Cyprus for her went only so far as the Green Line. When we met, Melina had just finished her internship at an NGO located in the buffer zone. She started the internship without knowing exactly what to expect. However, through succumbing to the experience of the internship and allowing herself to question the narratives that have been with her since childhood, Melina shows that though official discourse is powerful and authoritative – especially when coming from a refugee background – it is not more powerful than Melina's own experiences. While she feels comfortable being in the north and in the company of Turkish Cypriots now, she is unsure what is best for the future of Cyprus:

Ever since I was born, I have been living in this situation...change frightens me. I mean, I am totally fine with the people in the north, I like them, but I don't know if we can reunite. What, if we argue again? So, it might be that the best solution is the one we have now. And yes, I know it's also very tragic, but maybe it's the best. And somehow, I also like to go over there and feel like going abroad, going to another world, it's three minutes and you feel like you are in another country.

In the following, drawing on perceptions I gained from talking to a variety of young Cypriots, I elaborate on some of the dimensions Melina has mentioned in more detail, namely the detachment from persisting calls to remember the past, the divergence from official narratives, the strong influence of the peer group and the importance of quality contact.

Disremembering the past

The protracted nature of the Cyprus conflict and its intergenerational character give the impression of it being static and unchanging. During the past four decades, there have been only rare and isolated instances of violence between persons of the two main communities, in Cyprus, the conflict is primarily continued through history and narratives of the conflict (Bryant & Papadakis 2012: 1–2). The non-forgetting is a major theme in both communities and notions of the past as well as a shared ancestry with the respective ‘motherlands’ are extremely common in the self-narration of Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Hadjipavlou 2012: 371). The call to remember primarily targets the youth in each community who have no first-hand memories of the conflict. They have to remember in accordance with the memories of older generations. “Their parents’ homes have to become their homes; their parents’ suffering has to become their suffering and so on”, as Bryant and Papadakis (2012: 20) put it. Remembering is thus imposed by the old upon the young. I encountered this aspect in my interviews as well:

Kostas (22): Many in my family have witnessed the occupation, it was difficult, they have been through very bad times. I mean, it's different when I tell you or when someone who has lived through these times tells you. Women were raped, children were raped, everywhere dead people...bad, very bad times. We all, I mean all Cypriots have at least one relative who witnessed it, I think.

Kostas' description mirrors that young Cypriots' experiences and their process of early political socialisation are filled with what Vamik Volkan calls “chosen traumas” (2001: 79), a shared mental image of a massive trauma that the groups' ancestors suffered at the hand of the respective ‘other’. In Cyprus, these notions of the past are rooted in the

collective memory of the two main communities (Hadjipavlou 2012: 372). The interviews with young Cypriots, however, show that some individuals are ready to disassociate themselves from Cyprus' past. This was evidenced through expressions of living exclusively in the present and trying, as far as possible, to "dis-remember past trauma" (Mac Ginty 2014: 556) as well as disassociations from their parents' or grandparents' stances. This attitude is expressed in Melina's description, but has also been a topic of conversation in other interviews. Christos, a 17-year-old from Nicosia who grew up very close to the Green Line tells me that when it comes to Turkish Cypriots and Turkish people, his environment has mostly talked negatively about them, a behaviour he could never fully relate to:

Christos (17): Like my father, my father hates, ok maybe he doesn't hate, but he doesn't like the people over there very much. And I have always asked myself, why don't you like people you don't even know? [...] And also when I was in primary school, I noticed that most people don't like Turks at all because ok, it's their country, it's their villages, their relatives... they have a very bad relationship with Turkey. But I, I mean I was born here but I never felt hatred for the others. Because I believe that what happened in history is no longer true today. Because today is another time and we have to change, we have to look ahead.

Eleni expressed a similar opinion:

Eleni (24): I can't remember specific dates and events and I don't care. I mean, I don't want to remember them either. They don't change what is happening today. Why should I remember, who made this decision and who said that? I don't think that will help me finding a solution for tomorrow. That's my mindset, whatever happened in the past belongs in the past and we can't change it. It's not good if we just think about the past and don't look ahead. I believe, for example, that it is not so important what happened, but what happens now.

There is evidence from previous research highlighting young people – especially young Greek Cypriots – as less accepting due to ethnocentric history and citizenship discourses in Cyprus that present a "one-sided victimization narrative" (Psaltis et al. 2019: 15) to young people and make them carry on past trauma (Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 4; Sitas et al. 2007: 25). My interviews suggest yet another pattern which also runs through other sections, i.e. that youth who have not experienced war or violence directly are more easily able to forget the past and move forward and thus corresponds to Del Felice and Wisler's description of youth being an important peace resource as they think future oriented (2007: 24). The feeling of having to distance oneself from the narratives and memories of previous generations is not something I only witnessed in conversations with Greek Cypriot youth. Talking to Esra, who is daily crossing the divide to go to school in the

south, it becomes clear that although she, like many other Turkish Cypriots, grew up in a family supporting reconciliation, she feels restricted by the memories of the elders:

Esra (16): To like some people memories are given but to the majority it's not. I mean I or we're not brought up with that vendetta. [...] The older generation has the most to say but I think the newer generation is more open-minded and I think we can change things, but kind of the old generation and their memories are holding us back.

This is consistent with findings in the literature that older Turkish Cypriots are quite hesitant when it comes to cohabitation and reconciliation, as they may have had bad experiences of living with Greek Cypriots in the past – especially in the years 1963 to 1974 when many Turkish Cypriots were subjected to discrimination from their Greek Cypriot counterparts due to their smaller number (Yucel & Psaltis 2019: 13–14). Moreover, Emre tells me that while it is important to know what happened in the past, there are too many conflicts about it within Turkish Cypriot society. The constant blaming of being too close to the Greek Cypriots or too close to Turkey ultimately prevents other problems in the north from being tackled:

Emre (19): People fight here about Akıncı talks to Anastasiades in this or that way. But you know we have so many other problems, like our roads are broken and there is corruption and all that. I think we should talk more about this problems in our country.

Young people often associated the theme of distancing oneself from the past with a frustration over their educational system which as depicted in chapter two is heavily influenced by an ethno-nationalist ideology:

Yiorgos (24): In school, they always told us that the Turks are bad and that they took our land. But you know, I don't really know if the teachers in school and the books, if they tell the truth. I think it's all lies what the books say, our books and the books of the Turks, nobody knows the truth.

Hazar (21): Education is very manipulated...I mean I took history from the first grade and then I took it in high school. When I was going to English School in the south it was different, there we didn't really have Cypriot history. But if you look at the books you feel it's very manipulated. I think it's on both sides. They both play the victim and say the other side did everything and they did nothing wrong, I mean that's not possible.

Lefteris (20): Another thing that really bothered me was in school, our education. One teacher said this, the other one that, everything was bad, but what's the truth? In no book you could read what really happened.

While education in Cyprus is a very important instrument of reproducing and promoting national narratives and aims at spreading “Greekness or Turkishness rather than Cypriotness” (Hadjipavlou 2012: 376–377), the above quotations show that some young people have a strong awareness that history is presented to them in selective and often not

consistent ways. Teachers have a variety of ideological beliefs about identity which they pass on to students directly or indirectly in the classroom (Spyrou 2001: 78). At the same time, Hazar's statement shows that young people are able to develop a more complex historical understanding of the Cyprus problem one that acknowledges the traumas suffered by both sides. According to Hadjipavlou (2012: 381), this is of outmost importance if peace is to be negotiated representing both sides narratives and concerns. Beyond that, in their day-to-day lives, children and youth are confronted with different narratives and possible interpretations, contradicting those they hear at school, leaving them at loss about what to believe (Spyrou 2001: 78). My interviews suggest that as a result, this can lead to them showing a disinterest in the Cyprus issue or distancing themselves from carrying on the task of remembering. And in most cases, this is accompanied by a growing distrust and alienation of institutions such as the education system or politics which tend to present only selective narratives but never the full picture. Yiorgos tells a similar story about his time at the military that, as described above, for young men is a formative experience. His account demonstrates that, similar to the education system, the military can also make young people distance themselves from certain discourses rather than leading them reproduce them:

Yiorgos (24): The military didn't change anything for me. It may even be that I have begun to be annoyed by Cypriots more than by Turks with all the stupid sayings and stuff. I mean in general I can't say that they fanaticized us. But then again it also depends where you go, I wasn't at the hardcore camp in Nicosia where you have the Turks right next to you.

Divergence from official narratives

Related to some young people breaking away from remembering the past is a divergence from official narratives in both communities. Officially, for Greek Cypriots, the best solution to the Cyprus issue is a unitary state. After 1974, the agreement was to establish some sort of federal arrangement which was accepted by Greek Cypriots as a compromise. A division or partition runs counter to official positions in the south (Fisher 2001: 314; Ker-Lindsey 2011: 106). In my interviews, however, many of the young people do not necessarily see this as the only and best solution. As the introductory statement of this section has demonstrated, Melina considers the *status quo* to be a good solution, also because it is the familiar option and deemed less risky than the leap into the dark in form of a federal arrangement. This corresponds to Peristianis and Faiz (2009: 137) arguing

that the political elites have done little to advance a federal arrangement and draw a clear picture of how such a system would work. In addition, Melina also likes the idea of having two different entities:

Melina (21): And somehow, I also like to go over there and feel like going abroad, going to another world, it's three minutes and you feel like you are in another country.

Christos expresses himself in a similar way:

Christos (17): Now, I think if things would remain the same way for a long time that wouldn't hurt neither us nor them, so in my opinion for now we keep everything the way it is and then in the future we try to find a way to live together.

On the other hand, an official Turkish Cypriot position is the importance of having a continued Turkish military presence on the island to protect the security of the Turkish Cypriot community, now and in the event of any future settlement (Ker-Lindsey 2011: 89). The young Turkish Cypriots in my research, however, do not necessarily share this perception:

Hazar (21): Turkey has to leave, for me that means peace and I speak on behalf of some of the Turkish Cypriots and also Greek Cypriots, they want Turkey to leave and I really want Turkey to leave as well. I feel that they're a threat. I just want to say that now, Turkey's presence on the Island is changing our culture on the Turkish side, it is changing everything. Now I am seeing more people from Turkey walking in the streets than Turkish Cypriots. And I mean, of course I don't want to sound racist or anything, but it doesn't make me feel good because our culture is being destroyed in a way. Like when we were walking midnight with my girlfriends, I wouldn't feel threatened, now I feel threatened. Because the people who come to Cyprus from Turkey, they are very conservative, uneducated, - like I am being honest with you - uneducated, conservative, they want to change it, like they say, you are walking with a mini-dress, like these are not the things we are used to hearing here in Cyprus, it disturbs us so much.

Bariş (22): Public schools are filled with immigrant kids and no one wants their kid to be at the same place with the immigrants. I mean, this has also a lot to do with how Turkish Cypriots view themselves in relation to Turkish people. It's a very tense topic and it's a conflict within our society.

Hazar's statement shows what Mac Ginty (2014: 557) describes as blame deferral, i.e. she blames other members of her community, here Turkish immigrants, for problems, while at the same time emphasizing the closeness and commonality with Greek Cypriots. Furthermore, Bariş' and Hazar's accounts show a grave concern about the influence of Turkish immigrants in the north and the fear of losing their Cypriot identity. This friction is also addressed by Hatay (2017) in his latest report on the population and politics of north Cyprus. He confirms that in recent years the polarisation between Turkish Cypriots and

Turkish immigrants, who align themselves more closely with the Turkish state, has increased (Hatay 2017: 3).

Power of the peer-group

For youth, their peer group is an important reference point influencing beliefs and behaviour (Sherif & Sherif 1964: 40); and young Cypriots are no exception to this. Melina tells me that after starting her internship, it took her a while until she eventually went to the north. The first time she then crossed was with a friend from Italy who was also doing an internship. Her friend was regularly in the north, about every other day, Melina says. She has told her a lot about what it is like there, about cafés and shops, which made her curious to go and see for herself. Simultaneously, Melina tells me that she felt safe going there with her friend whom she trusts. Young Cypriots, especially those who have not been crossing frequently since childhood, almost exclusively tell me that it was friends with whom they went across the divide for the first time:

Monika (19): The first time I went was right after I started studying in Nicosia. My girlfriends wanted to go. We just wanted to go and see how it is over there. Ok, and then since the first time I went, we are going very often now. Also, I mean, so many students are going to the katechòmena [the occupied areas], like that's also why my girlfriends told me to go, because so many go.

Yiorgos (24): Eh well, the first time I went with a friend and it was just out of curiosity, everyone goes...I mean, we didn't really go for a specific reason, just out of curiosity and because they have cheap stuff. I mean, everyone goes there to buy things.

Listening to what Monika and Yiorgos tell about how they started crossing for everyday activities such as shopping suggests that peers are important social referents in everyday life. If all your peers around you go about everyday activities across the divide, it becomes normal to do it as well, even if you have been socialised differently by your family or at school. This is consistent with my own experience in Nicosia where I observed the majority of young people crossing with mostly smaller groups of peers of two to three people. At the same time, some young people themselves appear to have an influence on their environment, when they regularly cross:

Monika (19): After I have been a couple of times, I also took my mother with me, my dad didn't come, he doesn't like to go, but yes, I took my mom and I also took my grandmother.

Quality of Contact

Before starting to work at the NGO, Melina did not know any Turkish Cypriots. In the course of the internship, she then met many Turkish Cypriots and has spent time with them at work but also in her free time. As already mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, this gave her a whole new perspective.:

Melina (21): After a while, you just realize that people talking in Turkish is something normal because those people have also been born here. I remember one day during my internship while I was doing a project with a Turkish Cypriot, I remember thinking, why do I believe Cyprus belongs to me more than to him? He doesn't know any other home country, so why do I have this feeling? It's wrong.

This brings me back to the contact hypothesis of Allport (1954), but this time with a focus on the quality aspect. As already noted, the hypothesis states that face-to-face contact (quality and quantity) between members of conflicting groups reduces prejudice and thus contributes to more harmonious relationships between members of different communities (Yucel & Psaltis 2019: 3). In a meta-analysis of 515 studies, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006: 766) found consistent support for this hypothesis. Additionally, some research has found quality of contact to be more important than quantity (Binder et al. 2009; McKeown & Psaltis: 2017; Pickett et al. 2014). McKeown and Psaltis suggest that contact of positive quality rather than contact frequency can lead to attitude change and promote cooperation primarily because "quality contact encourages individuals to make friends with those 'from the other side'" (2017: 2). Supporting this, Irini, who has Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot friends, describes her view on contact to me as follows:

Irini (24): I think having contact to people is so important. I mean, division has been going on for such a long time, you don't have a face of the other, you don't have a name. But if I introduce one of my Turkish Cypriot friends to my Greek Cypriot friends, and tell them their name and where they live, then this huge, vague group of people become individuals. And then they get to know them, and they get to like them. So, the 'us' against 'them' kind of breaks down.

Irini's descriptions support the idea that it is through good quality contact and friendships that intergroup trust is made possible which is essential in the pursuit of lasting harmonious relations, the abolition of division and the promotion of peace. This can be illustrated by Christos' and Maria's stories, who came into contact with Turkish Cypriots via their leisure activities or a school project:

Christos (17): I mean, I know very good people on that side, like, I met people from there that I haven't met here, talented, good, with a good heart, truly wonderful people. And so I

believe, ok, what if something happened in the past. We need to move on, we need to make a change. We need to truly look who those people are.

Maria (18): Last year in school I had a project, 'Imagine', where we met some people from the katechómena, we met, talked. At the beginning it was a bit weird and I felt bad because they also asked us why we are like that towards them, like why we are so nationalist. But then we had really nice conversation, we really got along and we didn't even want to part.

The last point that Maria addresses, how quickly young people connect in mixed groups, I witnessed during my research stay in Cyprus when I joined a lesson of the non-profit organization *Peace Players* that uses the game of basketball to unite children and youth from both communities. I observed how the young participants, who saw each other for the first time that day, exchanged their social network sites to stay in touch. This points to the potential of those sites to sustain existing acquaintances and develop friendships even in the absence of regular physical contact. In this regard, Monika also mentioned an interesting aspect in our interview. She told me that while she doesn't have any regular contact with Turkish Cypriots, she follows a Turkish Cypriot actress and several Turkish actors on Instagram that she got to know through being active on social media and then started following their work:

Monika (19): Actually, I follow many Turkish actors on Instagram. They are very famous. And it's also, they are like very modern. They are not like the image many have of Turks.

Monika's online activity has had a positive impact on her image of Turks and Turkish Cypriots and led her to see many commonalities between the two communities. This is demonstrated by how she sees Turkish Cypriots:

Monika (19): What happened with Turkey was bad, but now, the people over there, the Turkish people, the Turkish Cypriots, that's something different. They have no fault in what happened, they are not bad people. [...] I don't know, I would be happy to meet some Turkish Cypriots my age.

During my research stay in Cyprus I experienced the potential of positive quality of contact not only during my interviews but also during a trip to the north I took with two Greek Cypriots aged 24 from my immediate surroundings. I have known both of them for a long time and when I told them about my research, they asked me if we could take a trip to the north together. Both of them crossed before but only very few times. We chose the abbey of Bellapais, a famous site near Kyrenia, as our destination and were accompanied by a Turkish Cypriot friend of mine, Kemal. For my Greek Cypriot friends, it was the first time they met a Turkish Cypriot and the first time they spent time in the north outside the old town of Nicosia. On the day of our trip, we met Kemal at a café in

north Nicosia and started from there going by car to Kyrenia. After our trip, one friend of mine shared her thoughts with me:

When Kemal picked us up and we started driving through the new town of Nicosia, I thought: ‘What is this here? Where am I here? Is that Nicosia?’ You see shops like Guess, Gucci, Boss...the real ones and you ask yourself, where am I right now? That’s not the Nicosia I walked through five minutes ago. You see high, new buildings, universities, banks, no comparison at all to the old town. And also, even more beautiful than in the south, I find Nicosia in the north more beautiful than in the south.

And then in Bellapais, there were such beautiful houses...I was wondering like who owns them? The Russians or the Chinese that we have in the south as well? Cypriots? Turks, are those perhaps the holiday homes of the Turks? Because I really thought that everything in the north looks like in the old town of Nicosia...so everything is broken, neglected, everything is a bit impoverished, that’s what I was thinking. And then I had this feeling, I always imagined the other side not to be beautiful, but in the end, it is very beautiful. I really liked it a lot. And then, we also drove past a village and that reminded me so much of Choulou [a village near Paphos where her grandparents live]. This picture of the village was so familiar to me because it has this old structure of a village like Choulou and then I wondered, are there Cypriots living here who stayed after the war? Did Cypriots have to leave those homes and now they are empty? But then you see everything being written in Turkish and people walking around, so actually Turkish people are living here.

For my friends, the Cyprus issue never had a very prominent stance in their lives. They did not grow up in the Nicosia area and never stayed there for a longer period of time to experience the division directly. For a long time, they were reluctant when it came to crossing but having been abroad for their studies made them – in their own words – more ‘open-minded’. While my friends do not follow strong nationalist beliefs and attach great importance to being a Cypriot and having a Cypriot identity, their perceptions of Turkish Cypriots have been very strongly influenced by stereotypical ideas. About her first meeting with a Turkish Cypriot, one of my friends said:

Well, I really didn’t expect Kemal to think that way, I was very shocked with his way of thinking to be honest, I didn’t know what I was expecting but not that he would be so open; I don’t know. It’s different to see people and then to talk to them and hear what they say. And that was the first time we met. For sure, when we met him the second time, this awkwardness of the first meeting won’t be there and then we’ll have more time to talk because you know the other person and can also talk about different things.

Through having a profound conversation with a Turkish Cypriot for the first time, both my friends started questioning their “stereotypic homogenisation” (Hadjipavlou 2012: 380) of the ‘other’ (“they leave everything broke, they don’t care, they are uneducated”) and have developed a more differentiated image of Turkish Cypriots. For the first time,

they began to see Turkish Cypriots and Turkish people as separate, similar to their view of Greek Cypriots and Greeks. The experience of taking a day trip in the north and having a profound conversation with someone from the other community for the first time has led them to question certain images they had in their minds. They have begun to see ‘the other’ as someone being similar to them, again supporting the hypothesis of qualitative intergroup contact being a factor to increase acceptance for cohabitation.

5.3 Going beyond the ‘Cyprus Issue’: The changemaker

Bariş (22): Since 2012, when I first got involved in bi-communal programmes, I cross three or four days out of a week. I have been to Paphos so many times, I have friends from there, from Emba. I went there and stayed there. I have so many friends from all over the island. I continuously tell myself that this is my country. And I know that I don’t really live there, I don’t really live in the south. And I don’t really...I have limited knowledge about the politics, just standard daily life and all that but I have some knowledge, which is limited, and I am aware of it. But every time I go to the south, there is one thing always replaying in the back of my mind, and that’s like this is also my country and I need to know this. And this is when I am in the south how I approach things. When it comes to meeting new people, trying new things, going to places I have never been before. That’s the spirit, that’s what plays in my mind. And truly like, I mean think about it, for me right now, if I – and that is a very slight probability – come back to Cyprus after my studies, I am not going to be in the north because I am definitely not going to do my military service, I strongly reject that. So, if I, and that’s just one scenario in my mind, ever go back home, I am going to settle in the south and live there.

It’s frustrating that there is no progress...and politically I am very disappointed. But that would never affect my activism and my involvement because I already made peace in my mind, I already reunified the island in my mind, I don’t need people to do this in my behalf.

I met Bariş through another interviewee who suggested that he might be an interesting person to talk to. Bariş is a well-connected young man with high ambitions who has decided to pursue a Master's degree from an elite university abroad. He graduated from *Türk Maarif Koleji*, a selective secondary English school in Nicosia that is only open to students with top scores in a nationwide entrance exam. I knew the school not only from my conversation with Bariş, but because a vast majority of Turkish Cypriots I know graduated from this high school. Bariş tells me that since the public school system in the north is dominated by children from Turkish immigrants, Cypriot families whose children do not pass the exam to attend the English school in the north send them to private schools, either in the north, or even more common in the south as the education system there is considered to be of higher value. The school has a very progressive background and

encourages its students to take part in bi-communal programmes. Thus, when he was 15, he participated in the Cyprus Friendship Programme (CFP), a peace-building programme that sends young Greek and Turkish Cypriots aged 15 to the US for one month during the summer holidays. There, he has made many friendships he still cultivates today. Like Bariş, some young Cypriots attempt not to think in the rigid north-south binary but try to move fluently between both parts of the island which I would like to illustrate through the following patterns: overcoming the division, opposing dominant narratives and challenging negative attitudes.

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Overcoming the division

In Cyprus, the parameters of a peace agreement have long been laid out – the establishment of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation – and are accepted by the leaders of both communities (Bryant & Papadakis 2012: 6). The leadership north and south the Green Line, however, is failing to promote acceptance for future cohabitation. Nonetheless, this does not prevent Cypriot youth from challenging the norm that the status quo, i.e. the division, is currently the only mode of intergroup relation that is politically possible (Ma Ginty 2014: 560). On the contrary, young Cypriots at times operate in a realm of tactical resistance to their leaders' failure of finding a solution. Such as Bariş, who attaches great attention to not feeling restricted by the division and considers the whole island his home (“[...]there is one thing always replaying in the back of my mind, and that's like all of this is my country and I need to know this”). He is conscious about seeing the Green Line not as a barrier and thus does not let the fact that something happens on the ‘other side’ be an issue in determining whether he will be part of it or not. He spends his summers at the beaches of Paphos, goes out with his friends in Agia Napa or invites people residing in north and south over for a barbecue at his parent's place. In a similar way to Bariş, Irini also tells me that she is “over the Cyprus issue, like so over it” and does not want to be affected by the division. While it was a long way for her, she says that today she is able not to feel any difference when being in the south or in the north:

Irini (24): My first crossing was very intense, I was super hyper aware of everything. I was trying to stay open but also trying to remember everything you know I mean, I remember my hands were very itchy, my palms were very itchy. I was with my dad and when we crossed back to the south, I felt that relief and I was like rubbish, I don't want

to feel that, this is my hometown. So, from then, I started to cross as many times as I could so to not feel this relief when coming back, I wanted to feel no difference. A couple of weeks ago, I went on a road trip in the north, we went to Bellapais, we went to see the view with my sisters, we went on a family trip and I could see the view, the sea, and I forgot I was in the north and it felt really good. I managed to go past the divide.

Among Turkish Cypriots, refusing to cross for emotional reasons or for reasons of personal conviction is not as widespread as among Greek Cypriots, thus many of them cross with their families to the south from a very early age onwards (Hatay & Charalambous 2015: 9). Being a 'TRNC' citizen gives Turkish Cypriots no right to international recognition. After the checkpoints opened in 2003, many Turkish Cypriots acquired or renewed RoC passports so that they could travel more easily out of Cyprus (Constantinou 2007: 266). Today, children of Turkish Cypriot parents are usually registered in the south right after their birth and thus grow up having a RoC passport. The Turkish Cypriot interviewees all mentioned that a vast majority of young Turkish Cypriots attend private schools on either one of the sides because they do not want to enter the public school system in the north. Esra and Özge tell me that this number has risen significantly in the past few years, in their class there are as many Turkish Cypriots as they are Greek Cypriots. However, that does not really matter in their everyday school routine. The same applies to the fact that to get to school they have to pass the checkpoints. The two students tell me that they no longer realize this, it is simply part of everyday life, it's normality.

Esra (16): We were just born when the gates opened, so we don't remember that. So, when we tell others and they're in shock we realize again that it's a weird situation but because we do it daily it's not weird, but when we tell it to other's they're like 'what?'

Özge (15): I mean obviously it's weird to give passports when to cross to the other side of your country, but you get used to it if you do it every day.

Esra (16): It's inconvenient to obviously pass the border and then come back. And the fact that we don't have service on this side is inconvenient. That's the inconvenient thing but other than that I don't think it affects me. I mean it would be better if it wasn't there but yeah, that's how it is.

Özge (15): Yes, I mean, obviously we want the border to be removed and live together, you know, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, like we actually tend to forget sometimes when we are together, when we communicate with each other and have fun. We meet regularly after school. I would say like every week once or twice, we go shopping or cinema...like normal things.

Esra (16): Yes, we often go to Limassol with our friends, that's like our favourite city, so fun we really love it. We go there like every month.

LC: Do you also spend time with your friends in the north?

Özge (15): Yeah, we do. They come often, you know, they like this part a lot as well.

For young Cypriots who have been regularly on the ‘other side’ since childhood living daily life across the divide is a normality. The externally observed abnormality of having to pass armed soldiers and a checkpoint every day going to school, like Esra and Özge, is not a thought going through their minds. It does not bother or affect them – most of the time, they do not even realize it – as they have gotten so used to it. In reflecting on the normality of her crossing the Green Line every day to go to university Hazar mentions that this normality sometimes bothers her:

Hazar (21): Here, when I was crossing the border now in Ledras, there are flowers everywhere, you just show your ID, everything is cool...it’s so normalized in this island. Sometimes, I don’t like that it’s so normalized, I wish it was more serious. Then maybe people would care more.

Opposing dominant narratives

One distinct fact about being a Cypriot is that one can only be a Greek or a Turkish Cypriot. Looking at article 2 of the RoC constitution, it clearly states that every citizen has to choose between belonging to the Greek Cypriot or to the Turkish Cypriot community, “being simply and singly Cypriot is constitutionally impossible” (Constantinou 2007: 248). Individually, however, young Cypriots like Barış might transgress the boundaries set by the ethno-nationalist framework through resisting to choose a side and by breaking free of forms of domination that are being legitimated in the name of a rigid ethno-national identity:

Barış (22): One thing I come across this every single time, you know when I am flying from Larnaca. You know the police officers, like when they check your passport, you know you have to do military service and all that shit, and if you are a Turkish Cypriot then you don’t have to do your military service in the south, so in order to determine that, like the police officer ask you if you speak Greek, but they ask you this in Greek. Well, I know a good amount of Greek because I studied it in college and because of my friends, so the last time the guy asked me this, I was like ‘no, I don’t speak Greek’ but I replied in Greek to him. And he was very confused so then he started questioning me with all that stuff and I continued talking to him in Greek which confused him even more. And for me it was like very frustrating, so in the end I told him, I am a Turkish Cypriot, so then he let me go.

Barış’ account of the police officer not being able to bring together the Cypriot Greek language and the Turkish Cypriot person symbolizes how official and popular discourse – mostly being ethno-nationalist – has defined and fixed certain thinking patterns. For younger people in particular, however, it might be easier to move away from dominant narratives since, how Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 24) put it, they are more open to

change and thus, more willing to listen what others have to say and to experiment with new strategies. Coming now back to the notion of “chosen trauma”, Volkan specifies that while groups might not choose to be traumatized he still uses the expression ‘chosen’ as it is a group’s choice to let certain historical narratives and events become identity-defining (Volkan 2001: 88). While political elites often use selective narratives about the past for their own purposes, the role of local population in the development of such narratives should not be forgotten either. As such, elites do not have complete control over these narratives. This became visible in my interviews when some interviewees set out a more inclusive narrative than that propagated by political elites. Christos, for example, refers in our conversation to the potential return of land and property – which belongs to one of the most contested issues in Cyprus – as follows:

Christos (17): People always say, why does Turkey not return the katechómena [the occupied areas]? Then I always think, Turkey doesn't want the katechómena so much, it's the Turkish Cypriots who want them. But what happens when the Turkish Cypriots who live there, who are at least 100,000, have no place to live anymore, so when Cyprus gets the katechómena back? Then they'll lose their citizenship and have to turn to Turkey. And if they do that, they will have to get new passports and will go through difficult times until they have what they have here now. So, what I mean is, we cannot just leave the people there without a home. I also believe that we, the Cypriots, do not need the katechómena as much as they need them, because I think they have a house over there and have adapted to their life, and we are doing well here. We have our house, we have our jobs, we have everything we need. Now, I think it is wrong to take something away from them and leave them with nothing.

Christos’ account relates to the notion of everyday diplomacy (Mac Ginty 2014: 560) described in chapter 3.2.3 in that his ideas about how to handle contested issues run counter to official Greek Cypriot positions. He signals that for him, narratives continuously depicting the ‘other’ as untrustworthy or illegitimate are unsustainable and that he opts for political leaders to investigate new avenues. At the same time, he is also frustrated with and disillusioned by political leaders trying to establish certain modes of thinking in society such as enemy images (in this case of the Turk) and a strong dichotomy of ‘us’ and ‘them’:

Christos (17): I think they tell us all the time, here and in Turkey, they describe each other as bad people, so that we learn it that way, so that the society learns it that way, because that’s what they want us to know, that’s how the politicians want it, they don’t want us to reunite. That’s why they tell us these things.

This corresponds to a theme that has been coming up in other sections within this analysis as well, namely a great fatigue of as well as a distrust in political leaders and certain institutions (education system, military) which I detail further in the discussion chapter.

Challenging negative attitudes

As demonstrated in the sections above, some young people in their everyday life challenge the norm that conflict and division are the normality in relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. They strive towards a peaceful, inclusive and tolerant existence and thus try to confront negative attitudes whenever coming across them. For example, Hazar recounts one encounter she had with a Greek Cypriot at university:

Hazar (21): In the first days I came to university, one Greek Cypriot told me, ‘the conflict is because of you’ all of a sudden. I was astonished first but then I started talking to him about what I think and I told him that I would bring him some books and stuff that I read and then we would talk again. And then one week later we met again and he really told me ‘I’m sorry’ and I was so happy because I made him think, so really, there is hope for everybody.

Hazar’s story signals that the “conflict is not destined to continue unchanged” (Mac Ginty 2014: 560), but that everyday life offers many opportunities to challenge division and conflict as a norm on the island. By interacting with her Greek Cypriot peer and by not shying away from a conversation – which could have been quite difficult given the way it began – Hazar showed significant bravery and made an important step towards stripping away certain narratives. At the same time, she signalled to the young man confronting her that his perception of Turkish Cypriots as untrustworthy, illegitimate or not worth talking to might be unsustainable. As a result of the way she approached the situation, he showed considerable openness to engage with her and respond to her offer.

In an earlier section, I already mentioned the role the peer-group can play in overcoming certain barriers. This can also take an enhanced form and that is when young people through their interactions with friends aim to break down barriers and the mystique of the ‘other’.

Panayiota (21): I have friends who are like not really open. My good friends, like my circle of friends they’ve come to know the north and Turkish Cypriots through me. Like I have maybe three friends of mine and we’ve been together since primary school, they haven’t crossed yet, but they are always asking me about it and about Turkish Cypriots. I think they’ve also met them once when I had a gathering at my place. So, I think over time my

friends will cross as well. I mean they know me and are close to me so if I tell them something, they know that it's true and they believe me.

Hazar (21): I mean for me, from kids age I went to the Greek side, had Greek Cypriot friends, went to their house, played with them. That's how I grew up feeling like they are one of them. And I always try to say this to my friends and to everyone I know. I want to spread the message. And I introduced some of my more stereotyped, prejudiced Turkish Cypriot friends to my Greek Cypriot friends and it also helped, so I try to do some things, you know.

Christos (17): Like in my friends group, I have Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot friends, and my friends group sometimes is annoyed because I am also friends with them [Turkish Cypriots], but when we are together they don't mind. They are just asking me things like, they came and took the villages of those people, they killed Cypriots, why do you love them? And I am telling them, because I love the people that love me. What happened in the past, many years ago is something else. When it was my birthday two months ago, I also invited them [Turkish Cypriots] and they came to my house, we had such a good time all of us together. It was all of my very good friends and it was nice that I had my Greek Cypriot and my Turkish Cypriot friends there together...we had no problem at all, we were all together...it was really nice.

This again illustrates the significant role of the peer group who can play a positive role in promoting rapprochement and dismantling prejudices within their group without losing credibility (Schell-Faucon 2001: 12).

6. Discussion and Implications

The three perspectives on young Cypriots' ways of navigating the division in Cyprus illustrate the core themes that emerged from my interview data and from my personal experiences during field work in Nicosia in March and April 2019. However, it is important to stress once again that young people and their responses cannot be clearly assigned to the various types and patterns presented. Rather, the same young people often expressed conflicting views, at times reproducing stereotypes and conflict patterns, at times challenging the long-lasting division and at times calling for abandoning entrenched views and moving forward (Leonard & McKnight 2011: 578). During the interviews, young Cypriots expressed views that represent mainstream ethno-nationalist narratives in which 'the other' is constructed in a derogatory way. At the same time, the young people I talked to also expressed post-nationalist viewpoints, such as 21-year-old Melina, who had been brought up in a family where Turkish Cypriots and Turks were solely depicted as the invaders that came to Cyprus and took away her parents' and grandparents' homes. Yet, following a more intense engagement with Turkish Cypriots, she critically admits

that she never considered their perspective and never really saw that they are Cypriots just like her. Or 22-year old Bariş who grew up with the narrative that a solution in form of a unitary state would undermine the Turkish Cypriots' autonomy and integrity but sees his own future in Cyprus only in the south. This view transcends societal boundaries and is contrary to what might be considered the norm in the Turkish Cypriot community.

Before discussing some insights that emerged from my analysis in chapter five in more detail, I would like to mention a number of caveats that I have already pointed to in the methodology section (chapter 4.3). By this I would like to show my awareness for a cautious handling of the analysed data and not overestimate them. Since the thesis is exploratory in nature and involves only a small sample size, it cannot be read under the aspect that the results are representative of Cypriot youth, generalisations are therefore only possible to a limited extent, if at all. Moreover, for obvious reasons – the location of the Green Line – the study is limited to Nicosia only. While this is necessary for the purpose of my research, I cannot rule out distortions arising from the fact that earlier research indicates that in Nicosia there is a higher percentage of people expressing reconciliatory attitudes than in other areas of the island (Psyllides & Kades 2015: n.p.). Additionally, while I have shed light on three different approaches of young people navigating the division in their everyday life, this is not to say that there are not more approaches and patterns. For example, since I have focused only on Cypriot youth crossing the divide, I have disregarded the considerable number of young people, especially among Greek Cypriots, that has not yet crossed to the 'other side'. However, I believe that through focusing on young Cypriots crossing the divide and through including a wide variety of backgrounds in my interviewees I managed to obtain a multiplicity of voices offering insights into youth strategies and creative practices of negotiating the division.

In the following I now link the results of my analysis to the aim of my research, highlighting youth agency, and to my research question, to what extent young Cypriots' everyday practices of crossing the divide provide insights for the negotiation of peace in Cyprus. At first glance the approaches of young Cypriots to the division and their navigation of everyday life across the divide seem incoherent and contradictory. Nevertheless, I hold that all approaches underline their significance as socio-political agents which is why in the first part of this discussion I will elaborate on the "agency and emotional intelligence" (Mac Ginty 2017: 20) visible in the everyday strategies of Cypriot youth,

thereby emphasising possible insights into young Cypriots' conflict reproducing but also into their transformative potential. In the second part of the discussion I would then like to shed light on another aspect that I have experienced in all interactions with young Cypriots and which I therefore consider to be a cross-cutting issue that needs to be expanded upon, namely the growing alienation from and disillusionment of youth with their political leaders and the way in which they deal with the Cyprus issue. Those two broad issues in mind, I introduce implications arising from my findings in the last part of this chapter.

In the context of Cyprus and its peace process, research has mostly highlighted political leaders and international actors dealing with issues of sovereignty, governance and property through a lens of Greek and Turkish ethno-nationalism and ideology (Richmond 2016: 103). Within the framework of local peace formation research mostly focuses on women's groups and the intercommunal movement (*ibid.*: 96). The youth of the island has never played a major role and thus the less obvious features that for many of them make up everyday life have often been overlooked. However, my findings reveal that young Cypriots are not without agency, that they are not simply followers of their education, their families, political leaders and fixed ethno-nationalist narrative patterns but that they are handling the conflict in distinct, conscious and partly even diplomatic ways. The young interviewees demonstrate that they are aware of political processes strengthening the division within and between the communities. At the same time, they are aware that the political division of the island is preventing rapprochement and trust between the communities (Leonard 2013: 337). The types and patterns presented in this thesis also illustrate young Cypriots' complex relationship to the division of their country. They approach the conflict neither in fixed nor in natural ways and often simultaneously maintain, reinforce and reproduce the division but also modify, dismantle and contest it. This can be linked to McEvoy-Levy's (2006b) approach of seeing young people as dynamic actors, as actors continuously involved in both, conflict reproduction and conflict transformation (see chapter 3.1). Acknowledging that, I nevertheless hold that in all the approaches presented in the analysis there are indications of the transformative potential of young Cypriots, sometimes more subtle, sometimes more obvious. Seeing peace in the context of Cyprus as the possibility of leaving the past behind, my research indicates that young Cypriots regularly crossing the Green Line – whether for shopping, going to school or

meeting friends – to a certain extent oppose a policy of division and separation. By this I do not mean that they have completely let go of stereotypes and thinking in a dichotomy ‘us’ and ‘them’. However, those young Cypriots demonstrate with their actions that they do not want to let certain physical and mental barriers - in form of the Green Line or entrenched discourses on political recognition which have shaped the politics in Cyprus for a long time (see chapter 5.1) - prevent them from enjoying access to certain resources and subjectively perceived economic advantages. The same can be said for young Turkish Cypriots choosing to go to school or university in the south to have the same access to quality education as their Greek Cypriot peers. Or more specifically Bariş, who can only imagine staying in Cyprus after his studies if he gets the opportunity to live and work in the south because he has the feeling that the north has nothing to offer him. These examples indicate that for young people the satisfaction of their current (and future) needs, e.g. access to certain resources and opportunities in the other part of the island, is more important than existing thinking patterns and narratives that have surrounded them all their lives. As already mentioned in the previous chapters, this corresponds to the literature illustrating that the positive contributions of young people to peace processes result from them being possibly more open to change and more future oriented (Del Felice & Wisler 2007: 24). While in the above examples, this potential can be deduced only to a limited extent, my analysis shows that there are also youth showing more ambitious forms of negotiating peace in their everyday lives. This was the case when they expressed that the current dominance of ethno-nationalist discourses in their community has been partly responsible for the creation and perpetuation of the conflict and that there is a need to acknowledge all aspects of the past (Leonard 2013: 336). Or when they conveyed the firm commitment to part from past trauma and live exclusively in the present. Particularly noteworthy in this context are assessments that consider the own generation to be better equipped to bring about reunification than the generation currently in power. Or when young people in their everyday lives take a stand against ethno-nationalist positions. For me, a particularly impressive situation was when I attended a group session of the organization Peace Players where young Greek and Turkish Cypriots aged 14 to 16 came together to play basketball and I saw the young participants exchanging their social networking accounts after only knowing each other for an hour. On the one hand, this illustrates a point that I have already mentioned in the analysis, namely that contact, as Allport

(1954) stated decades ago, is a key to overcoming stereotypes and reservations and can lead to a feeling of closeness. On the other hand, it also suggests that young Cypriots sharing many similarities due to their stage in life - for example, trying to find themselves and their voice in society or the dominant role of social media such as Instagram – approach each other on the basis of these commonalities causing barriers to slowly fade away. Seeing the other as equal, as having the right to equal treatment and focusing on commonalities instead of differences is an important step given the context of Cyprus where the youth grows up with selective narratives, misperceptions and stereotypes.

At this point, a moment of self-reflection is required as in my endeavour to address the neglect of youth agency and their transformative potential in the everyday, I may instead overestimate it. The everyday social practices of young Cypriots I portray as transformative and agential may simply be individual, singular acts, too trivial to influence the protracted macro conflict in any way. Or they may be read solely as rational, self-serving acts that do not provide any indication of transformative potential. Looking at some of the approaches of young Cypriots to division in everyday life, it cannot be denied that these only hint to a peaceful agency to a certain extent and that their influence on the greater conflict dynamics is therefore limited, if at all. Other practices, however, have the potential of undercutting political elites and having a more qualitative impact on the nature of peace and conflict in Cyprus. Such as Christos (17), who has developed a perspective on the handling of the conflict, that strips away the dominant narrative promoted by the political leaders, passes that on to his environment, and within his group of friends engages in cooperation and accommodation (see chapter 5.3). In light of this, I suggest that the analysis shows that Cypriot youth can engage in actions that can be described as coping mechanisms and that maintain division or as moments that are consciously or unconsciously transformative (Mannergren Selimovic 2019: 143). Simultaneously accepting and challenging the division characterises young Cypriots' everyday life. It symbolizes the lack of progress the Cypriot people have been experiencing for decades, but also shows that there are dynamics that question this deadlocked situation. In this regard it is noteworthy that many young people are critical of the conflict shaping their lives to such an extent and are open to establishing a connection with peers from the other community. However, whether young Cypriots are given the opportunity and the space to explore

what connects and distinguishes them and to find a common way into the future remains questionable (Leonard & McKnight 2011: 580), which brings me to my second point.

A second point that I have often come across in my interviews is that among young Cypriots there seems to be a strong disillusionment with the political leadership and its handling of the Cyprus issue as well as the peace process associated with it. According to McEvoy-Levy, peace processes are powerful educational institutions because they are “artificial constructions extended in time that create expectations; restructure society, economy and politics; and utilize a variety of discourses aimed at influencing opinion and values” (2006b: 290). They are closely linked to the conflict history and thus shape the memory and narrative of the conflict as well as affect conflict reproduction and conflict transformation (ibid.: 291). In Cyprus, issues surrounding the conflict and its resolution are indispensable parts of media coverage and present in many popular discourses, and almost every aspect of politics is geared towards them. Judging by my interviews, however, this is part of the reason for youth disillusionment:

Yiorgos (24): I want the situation to change, but I know that nothing will ever happen the way our politics works at the moment. Nobody cares, they only care about their own things. And if something happens now, I think it will be something that doesn't benefit us.

Hazar (21): And also, politicians are extremely corrupt, especially in the Turkish side, they also profit from this conflict, so this also plays a big role in our lives because we constantly get manipulated because of their games they want to manipulate us. You know there is this issue of land owning and so like if conflict ends, they will lose all their land. And when they will lose it, they will lose their money. So, people don't want this to happen and they constantly brainwash, constantly.

Some Cypriot youth in my research indicated that while they were ready to take steps forward, towards reconciliation, the actions of their leaders and the inability of the latter to reach a solution discouraged youth from attempting to come closer to the other community. The peace process in Cyprus has for the most part been an elitist project with limited input from society (Richmond 2016: 111). The term ‘peace process’ in Cyprus has additionally become synonymous with zero-sum politics, geared to the advantage of the respective community and not with ideas of a transformed society. In this way, the peace process shapes Cypriot society as a whole, but has a particular influence on the attitudes of young Cypriots to the conflict situation. As the generation that will determine the fate of the country in the future, young people internalise and learn from everyday experiences in the conflict, from the political debates and central issues surrounding finding a peace agreement, and the values that will structure the agreement (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 291). In that sense, young Cypriots are not isolated from politics and the political

parties, they rather play a pervasive role in their lives (Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 154) which I witnessed during my interviews:

Georgia (23): I am not even registered to vote. I don't agree with our, this system. I don't see how trying to get people to vote for you through meso and with money and with jobs is right. If something changes then maybe I'll vote but right now, I know that even if I give them a white piece of paper this will benefit someone...I don't want that.

Eleni (24): If you are a student in Nicosia the political parties are always around you. There are people who say they help you to find a flat, to buy the books cheaper...in exchange for you to join their party. I think that's really wrong, the parties we have here in Cyprus are wrong. They have all the power and they only do what benefits them. I don't think the president has the power over what happens, the parties have the power.

I conducted my research shortly before the 2019 European elections and, similar to Georgia, several of the interviewees stated they would not go to the polls. This corresponds to studies that point to an alarmingly high number of young Cypriots abstaining in elections or choosing not to enlist in the electoral lists (Kanol 2013: 68; Katsourides 2019; n.p.). Additionally, the above statements illustrate that young Cypriots feel that the only way for them to be part of reconciliation efforts is through affiliation with a political party, something which many of them were not interested or willing to do. This feeling corresponds to one of the key elements of political culture on both sides of the divide, namely the way in which political parties and powerful party figures exert control all areas of society and thus have a tangible impact on the life of each individual citizen. In this context, social ties and kinship networks (in the south: *rousfeti/ meso*, in the north: *torpil*) play a dominant role in handling everyday situations (Faustmann 2008: 24–25; Navarro-Yashin 2012: 59). In combination, this all contributes to a growing alienation and frustration of the youth which is ultimately also reflected in their perception and handling of the conflict. McEvoy-Levy holds that a peace process that does not take into account young people's perspectives, skills and experiences and that young people perceive as fruitless is likely to result in them turning away from social and political activity. Consequently, an important element of any peace process would seem to be engaging young people as active participants and learning from them about their meaning of tangible benefits (2006b: 291–292).

Connecting the issues of seeing young Cypriots as competent actors of their own lived experience, recognizing their multidirectional contributions to the negotiation of peace in Cyprus as well as the growing alienation of youth from politics entails certain implications. The multiple ways in which young Cypriots navigate the division of their country should be seen as valuable contributions to a culture of peace in Cyprus and

taking them into account as a necessary condition for reaching a fair and most importantly lasting solution for the Cyprus issue in the long term. According to France, it is crucial for any society to recognise that “young people need a stake in the society and community in which they live”(1998: 109). He points out that by a political style ignoring and not engaging youth, “many young people will not feel any desire to undertake social responsibilities either to their local or national community” (ibid: 110). This can be observed in the perception of Cypriot youth as they are often accused of being apolitical and of not engaging enough in society (Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 174). However, regarding this from another angle it can also be an expression of the fact, that young Cypriots feel that their opinions and voices are not heard and not of value in their society. Instead of taking their voices seriously and seeing as an advantage the fact that they might have not yet fully internalised certain fixed thinking patterns, Cypriot youth have been relegated to the part of passive observers. And as a result, “they feel as though they are neither included nor valued by the rest of society” (Peristianis & Faiz 2009: 174). The interviews with young Cypriots brought out their ability to recognise the wider framework necessary for reconciliation and their ability to be constructive participants in the peace process. However, looking at the analysis, it also brought out young Cypriots' ambiguous behaviour. By that I mean Lefteris (20), for example, who feels uneasy walking past Turkish Cypriot officials, fearing that they might start arguing with him for no reason just because he is a Greek Cypriot but at the same time critically questions everything he learned at school and does not believe the way history is being told is truthful. Or Georgia (23), who acknowledges that both communities have made mistakes in the past and who is very critical of her government but is reserved when it comes to approaching Turkish Cypriots as she believes that they are indifferent to Cyprus and do not care about the island's cultural heritage. This indicates that solely relying on bottom-up processes and the everyday is not enough and highlights the need for institutional support structures such as peace education to give youth a platform and spaces for exchange and discussions about their fears, hopes and desires. Peace education can also foster the existing critical spirit and bring together young people from both communities who would like an exchange but need support to find each other, as the two communities are largely separate. Although I have only interviewed 17 young Cypriots, the research revealed that those who in one way or the other have been part of peace education programmes demonstrated a more

empathetic understanding for the ‘others’ needs and fears. It was furthermore striking that only those who grew up in Nicosia had come into contact with peace education. Consequently, an important consideration is how to extend peace education programmes across the island and how to facilitate access to peace education through informal channels, on the street and through places where young people live, work, learn and spend their free time (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 292).

In addition, the results illustrate the need to involve young Cypriots in formal structures. Youth political participation in situations of peace and conflict is thereby not simply a good deed but is actively demanded by the international community within the framework of a human rights discourse. In 2015, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, highlighting the significant role young people can play in achieving long-lasting peace and security and urging member states to support youth efforts and increase their participation (UN SCR 2250: 3). Built on and complementing UN SCR 2250, in 2018, Resolution UN SCR 2419, called for an increasing role of young people in negotiating and implementing peace agreements (UN SCR 2418 2018: 2). Furthermore, by involving young people in political power structures, important and authentic information about the needs of young people and the appropriate means to fulfil them move to the foreground. The alienation of young people from politics reinforces structural shortcomings of the peace process, which leads to a loss of important information (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 297). As the interviews show, young people are dealing with the division in their everyday life in one way or the other and are furthermore aware of the wider political processes surrounding the division. This alone equips them for an active role in shaping the future of their society and it should be harnessed in the official peace process. As Hazar (21) puts it: “We are not robots who just follow, we are emotional and we can find ways to get along with each other. I think we now realize this but politicians need to know that”. And lastly, youth political participation provides actual practice in power sharing that facilitates the sustainability of a culture of peace and peace agreements as it helps young people develop skills and values essential to a sustainable peace (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 294). During my research, it became obvious that the current handling of the process which is perceived as top-down and detached from the local population for the most part cements the division as it leads to a loss in credibility and youth feeling more and more disillusioned and alienated by their political

leaders. There is a risk that this will continue and spread until policies become more inclusive and involve not only the different communities but also a diversity of age, class and gender groups in the process, thus introducing power sharing into practice (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 300). Accordingly, if political participation is to be a mechanism for achieving sustainable peace, it requires the transfer of real power. This is associated with a genuine consultation of young people and their involvement in discussions with decision makers on areas of the peace process that affect them most such as education, human rights and the development of local space (ibid.: 301). In order to be more concrete, such a sincere step could be to include youth into the various bi-communal technical committees set up by the leaders of the two communities to discuss aspects of a settlement with the aim of improving the daily lives of all Cypriots. Currently the importance of having an age balance – similar to having a gender balance (Demetriou & Hadjipavlou 2016) – within the process is not yet sufficiently discussed and recognised as necessary. The committees are, however, discussing vital issues such as culture, environment and education, all topics which affect the younger generation to the same, if not to a greater extent than the people currently sitting at the committee tables. At a lower threshold level, this also includes finding youth in everyday life and thus, for example, developing online platforms where young Cypriots can engage on an everyday basis. Thereby, it is important that those are planned and worked out by youth as they know best what attracts their peers and on which channels they can be reached. In this sense, social networking sites such as Instagram may prove favourable in connecting youth and giving them the opportunity to comment or share their views. This should not only be used to solicit ideas on the peace process but also to get different perspectives on city improvements or neighbourhood renovation projects that have a direct impact on the lives of young Cypriots in the present. This could be an opportunity for Yiorgos (24) to express his wish to put up English signs in the north or for the future architect Georgia (23) to share her ideas for changes in the urban landscape of Nicosia's old town on both sides of the Green Line. However, this must be approached with caution and honesty as involving young people only half-heartedly could ultimately destabilise the peace process (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 301). Concluding, based on my analysis, it can be underlined that currently, young people are a “wasted resource” (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 301) and considering their disillusionment and

disappointment, political elites should be alarmed, take the danger of this development seriously and find ways to counteract it.

7. Conclusion

My point of departure for this thesis was the need to better grasp young Cypriots' everyday ways of navigating and negotiating the division in Cyprus and to see these as an important contribution to the negotiation of peace in Cyprus. Currently, the literature on youth in Cyprus mostly depicts them as passive actors, strongly influenced by their socialization into the conflict culture through schooling, their families and the media and as subjects that need to be moulded in order to find their voice. As a result, young Cypriots have so far not appeared as an important variable in the literature on the Cyprus conflict and its resolution. I have argued that this falls short of the many ways in which young people contribute to ongoing processes of reproducing and transforming the conflict in their everyday lives and endorsed the need to see Cypriot youth as active, independent actors in discussions about peace and conflict in Cyprus. In approaching this, I built on critical IR literature that calls for a complex, interdisciplinary reading of peace that is constructed of diverse voices and narratives. Associated scholars theorise young people as important actors in peace and conflict processes and recognise the everyday and the local as important realms for the negotiation of peace (Berents & McEvoy-Levy 2015: 115; see also Berents 2018; Matyók 2011; McEvoy-Levy 2006, 2011; Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013; Richmond 2008, 2011; Watson 2006).

By talking to young Cypriots about their lives, about their way of dealing with the division of their country and what they considered important in terms of growing up in divided Cyprus, my goal was to emphasise the importance of direct consultation with young people and listening to their voices. While young Cypriots are frequently characterised in fixed categories and not regarded as independent, agential actors, this thesis has demonstrated that their activities often contradict and complicate such narratives. The young Cypriots in this thesis demonstrate that they are affected and restricted by the division but also find ways to negotiate around it. For one thing, my research shows that young people are influenced in their everyday lives by ethno-nationalist discourses that propagate the difference of the 'other' and the impossibility of living together. This is illustrated by some young Cypriots who despite going about everyday activities across

the divide and thus making the ‘other’ part of everyday life, can hardly imagine having profound intercommunal contact and avoid anything that goes beyond superficial exchange. However, my research also reveals that this approach is not fixed but fluid and is constantly being negotiated. Thus, the interviews with young Cypriots reveal that the realisation of personal interests through acts such as purchasing cheaper products, products which aren’t available to them on ‘their side’ or taking advantage of better educational opportunities are more important to them than a certain behavioural conduct based on a dichotomy of ‘us’ and ‘them’. As demonstrated above, this does not mean that young people are necessarily taking a stand contesting the dominant stereotypical narratives within their communities. However, it illustrates that for young Cypriots it is more important to satisfy their own interests and needs in the present – through economic exchange for example – than living according to what is considered appropriate by formal politics propagating a nationalism based on past traumas. This offers potential to lead to an opening of space for interaction with other, more inclusive perspectives such as an openness for recognizing the other as equal and for exploring commonalities.

Connected to this aspect of living in the present is young people expressing frustration over the fact that their lives are still determined and influenced by narratives of the past which have an overwhelmingly dominant influence in their lives. Through connecting with the ‘other side’ in one way or another (through shopping, going to school or more activist forms of interaction) some young people try to make their own experiences, try not to feel restricted anymore by the memories of the older generations and try to somehow find a way of dealing with the conflict in the present which, as a result, relegates the narrative of historical enmity to the background. Again, this does not automatically mean reunification or co-habitation as the way for the future. For example, some Greek Cypriot youth express preference for a two-state-solution, for keeping the two sides apart but enjoying the benefits the north has to offer – something that is not acceptable in the official discourse in the south. For others, everyday activities across the Green Line reduce the irritability of division, the unease of being on the ‘other side’ and hearing a language that is not their own. This was all the more evident among young people who have regular contact with members of the other community in their daily lives. They showed a strong empathy towards the other community and focused on commonalities rather than differences, in turn leading them to support reunification and co-habitation. This again

illustrates the importance of quality contact regularly highlighted in the literature (Psaltis et al. 2019; Yucel & Psaltis 2019). Talking to Cypriot youth they also revealed their frustration with living according to prior stances; they expressed that they don't want to let their parents' and grandparents' memories of the past, the selective narratives presented to them in school and the constant media reporting on every angle of the Cyprus problem define the way they approach life in divided Cyprus in the present. Through everyday interactions and profound contact with members of the other community, they confront dominant images of the 'other side' and develop narratives that are more inclusive than those that are dominant in wider society. This in some cases takes the form of youth taking an active stance against prejudices and stereotypes in everyday life or trying initiate a rethinking within their environment and community.

Considering that young Cypriots for the most part are exposed to a social milieu that consolidates the barriers separating the two communities, all the approaches mentioned illustrate agency in their everyday approach of navigating and negotiating the division. I thereby do not want to argue that young Cypriots are inherently more peaceful. Rather, the young people in this research illustrate that they are involved in creating and reproducing politics through replicating conflict values or ideological reproduction, but also through expanding and dispersing the narratives of their surroundings and transmitting those to peers and adults. While, for instance, the multiple roles of women and their contribution to conflict and culture in Cyprus have been extensively discussed in recent years (Demetriou & Hadjipavlou 2016; Hadjipavlou & Demetriou 2018; Koukkides-Procopiou 2017; Papastavrou & Zenon 2017), this thesis illustrates that youth based on their life stage and experiences with the conflict situation contribute to conflict reproduction and conflict transformation in some of the same ways as other groups in society as well as in their own ways. The latter result from their orientation towards the future (Del Felice & Wisler 2007: 24), as they – having more time ahead – are willing to try alternatives and are more prone to 'forget' the past than previous generations who were directly involved in traumatic events. However, the most significant challenge for Cypriot youth today is to express themselves and be heard. Currently, they are not considered an important variable in the negotiation of peace in Cyprus. Adding to that, the narrow parameters of the Cypriot peace process only capture the interests of the local elites and leave no room for various societal groups and voices. This in turn entails the risk of overlooking an

enormous evidential trail from everyday interactions of vital groups in society such as youth who in their everyday are contributing to promoting peace through challenging dominant narratives of historical enmity and developing more inclusive narratives but also have the power of being “conflict reproducers and peace wreckers” (McEvoy-Levy 2006b: 301).

After the failure of the Annan Plan in 2004, all sides agreed that the peace agreement to be negotiated would have to relate to fears and hopes of all Cypriots and would have to be worked out by Cypriots. The youth of Cyprus currently does not feel as if they have a place and are taken into account in this process which has led to disillusionment and their alienation from politics. Achieving sustainable peace in Cyprus thus requires a shift in the culture of the peace process so that it reaches all parts of the community. Considering that young Cypriots are the generation that will continue to steer the destiny of Cyprus for a long time to come, they must play a key role in the further development of the peace process. This necessitates facilitating their inclusion into debates and policies concerning the negotiation of peace in Cyprus. It implies including youth in the current structures of the peace process but more importantly opening up these structures and allowing more diverse voices to be heard and to contribute. The latter is all the more important as the integration of just a few young people into the current structures would entail the danger of including those that have either already profited from peace education programmes or have contacts into the political elites. A genuine participation, however, includes all, not just easily accessible young people. A crucial undertaking for future research is therefore to carry out much more work on the micropolitical everyday activities of children and youth to understand how they negotiate the division and how that is affected, restricted and conditioned by the peace process. This should also include a closer look at possible gendered differences or other differences in attitudes among young Cypriots, especially among Greek and Turkish Cypriots, that within in this thesis I was only able to touch upon. Based on this, concrete and appropriate participation structures need to be worked out so that the peace process gets more inclusive, reaches the everyday and thus genuinely becomes a project of all Cypriots.

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