

# *I*NTRODUCTION

*A Multidisciplinary and Multiperspectival Approach to Conflict*



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Conflict, while complex and multidimensional, is also always contextualized: its realization in specific settings and environments produces particular material and discursive outcomes. This edited volume is grounded in the idea that conflict needs to be studied in its environment, to allow for the incorporation of sufficient detail to do justice to its complexity and specificity. For this reason, this volume focuses on a particular setting: Cyprus, an island of enduring political, military and, more recently, economic conflict, which serves as a locus for the examination and analysis of aspects, dimensions and practices of (mediated) conflict and instances of overcoming conflictual situations. The investigation of a multitude of objects of study (print, broadcast and digital (social) media, public art, urban spaces), using mostly qualitative methods (textual analysis, interviews, ethnography) and adopting critical approaches (discourse theory, critical discourse analysis, cultural studies) allows for a multifaceted, multidisciplinary approach to conflict. Thus, with Cyprus as a geographical, cultural and political point of reference, this edited volume studies how conflict is mediated, represented, reconstructed, experienced, rearticulated and transformed, in specific contexts and environments, through a multi-perspectival approach.

Conflict, as a universal feature of human society, ‘takes its origins in economic differentiation, social change, cultural transformation, psychological development and political organization – all of which are inherently conflictual – and becomes overt through the formation of conflict parties, which come to have, or are perceived to have, mutually incompatible goals’ (Ramsbotham, Miall and Woodhouse 2014: 7–8). In this book, conflict is perceived within a broad perspective, rather than reduced to only its violent manifestations. It is defined in terms of incompatibilities and con-

traditions (Galtung 2009: 105), and is seen as (a moment of) rupture of consent, or as antagonism, which apart from the expressions of (physical) violence and confrontation (which cannot be ignored) includes aspects of division and crisis that can be discursive, material, or both. Crisis, another key concept in this book, is perceived as a dimension of conflict that can be described as a (highly) disruptive event or situation leading to disorder or even disaster, significantly disturbing the lives of people or the relations among individuals and groups. It is usually connected to negative change, or the threat thereof (see also Vecchi 2009; Coombs 2015: 3–4) and can be both the outcome and the generator of conflict. Finally, crisis usually has a different temporal dimension than conflict: it spans shorter periods of time and often features as a (more or less) delimited, condensed, intense conflictual moment that intensifies and/or transforms the conflict.

Conflict has many different expressions, in different fields of society, including politics and economy. As it is inherent to the social (Mouffe 2005), it is not perceived as always resolvable, but as ‘tameable’ through democratic practice (Mouffe 2005: 20–21). Nor is resolution seen as the utmost aim of every conflict. However, given conflict’s contingent character, its transformative potential is acknowledged. Whether military, political or economic, conflict is always socially and culturally embedded. Thus, as already mentioned, it can hardly be studied outside its environment, and both its discursive and material manifestations need to be examined to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the idiosyncrasy and intricacy of conflict.

The contextualized nature of conflict, whether the latter is highly antagonistic or it concerns tensions between political adversaries, also highlights the significance of its cultural dimension (Carpentier 2015). For instance, in regions and countries ridden by long-lasting, high-intensity, violently antagonistic conflict, indigenous cultures of conflict are developed that expand far beyond military or ethnic clashes to become embedded in the social tissue, impacting on identities and social practices (Alexander et al. 2004). Buelens, Durrant and Eaglestone’s (2014: 4) description of war trauma as a “knot” tying together representation, the past, the self, the political and suffering’, pertains also to conflict. The results of violent conflict tend to outlast the physical confrontation, continuing to feed antagonistic perceptions of social relations and the organization of the state. Mistrust, lack of solidarity, intolerance, vengeful attitudes, and practices of eradicating difference and dehumanizing the opponent are often seen in post-conflict societies (Nordstrom and Martin 1992). Also, the rhetorics and sometimes the practice of conflict tend to become the norm in the different power struggles, and in the struggles for (re)appropriation and (re)territorialization of the main societal discourses.

## **Dimensions of Conflict**

The seeds of this book are found in interactions and discussions among all different perspectives and disciplines, which sets the intellectual foundations of an ongoing conversation around issues of conflict. We are particularly pleased that this book managed to bring together scholars, studies and perspectives from both the south and the north (in their different dimensions and variations).

The studies included in this edited volume allow not only for the contextualized examination of conflict in Cyprus, but also, through their multiple perspectives, for the investigation of the ways in which the culture of antagonistic conflict impacts on identities, signifying and material (bodily) practices, politics and civic engagement. To serve this purpose, this book is structured around three main dimensions (of conflict): the representations of conflict generated within Cyprus; the representations on Cyprus generated outside Cyprus; and the materialities of conflict. Furthermore, the book's content is built around two major conflicts that have both affected the island deeply, despite their very different nature. The first is the Cyprus Problem, as the 43-year division of the island is often described. This conflict is characterized by a multitude of crises, some of which were intensely violent. The second conflict involves the economic crisis that peaked in 2013, which affected more directly the Republic of Cyprus (RoC). This book comprises, of course, a far from exhaustive study on conflict in Cyprus, where many other types of conflict are manifest at the political-ideological, economic and social levels (in relation to ecology, labour, [im]migration, gender, etc.). However, the two conflicts that are more closely examined in this book are of particular importance because, apart from their historical, political and economic significance, they are connected with almost every other conflict on the island, directly or indirectly.

## **A Brief Account of the Cyprus Problem**

Even though the Cyprus Problem is not currently a high-intensity violent conflict, it is still ongoing. Over the years, it has been reconstructed and transformed, changing forms and configurations, and giving meaning to the many (other) contradictions and conflicts that characterize Cyprus. Furthermore, should a mutually accepted political agreement ever be reached, the outcomes and culture of conflict will linger and impact on the Cypriot society in multiple ways, long after any solution is implemented. To convey

the origins and the nature of the Cyprus Problem and facilitate an understanding of the other conflicts on the island, a very brief account of the Cypriot history is provided here.

Cyprus's strategic location in the Mediterranean Sea endowed the island with a turbulent history of successive rulers. Throughout the centuries, Cyprus went through Assyrian, Persian, Hellenic, Roman, Byzantine, Lusignan, Venetian, Ottoman and British periods (Mirbagheri 2010: xxi–xxx). More recently, the Ottomans replaced the Venetians by conquering Cyprus in 1570–71 (Jennings 1993: 5). In 1878 the island passed on to the British, and in 1925 it officially became a British Crown colony (Markides 2006: 32). The main communities living on the island at the time of the British rule were Turkish-speaking Muslims and Greek-speaking Christian Orthodox populations, registered as Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots respectively. This British policy of separation and control of the island's two main communities promoted in practice the distinct identities of Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots, over those of (Muslim and Christian Orthodox) Cypriots (Papadakis 2005; Mavratsas 2016). This policy also furthered the two main nationalist projects on the island, which eventually crystallized into two different claims: the demand for *enosis* – namely, the union of Cyprus with the 'motherland', Greece – which was raised early on within the Greek-Cypriot community; and the later counterdemand, that is, *taksim*, or division of the island, raised within the Turkish-Cypriot community (Lindley 2007). Even though these two claims did not appear synchronously, they both encapsulated the nationalist discourses of togetherness and homogeneity, of Greek-Cypriots with Greece on the one hand, and of Turkish-Cypriots with Turkey, on the other.

Following the war of independence (1955–1959) against the British colonial rule, led by the Greek-Cypriot, right-wing EOKA (Εθνική Οργάνωσις Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών, National Organization of Cypriot Fighters), Cyprus became an independent state. On 16 August 1960, the Republic of Cyprus proclaimed its independence (Faustmann 2006: 413–14) with the U.K., Greece and Turkey as guarantor countries. Neither the demand for *enosis* nor that for *taksim* was realized.

The tensions and violence between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities, fed by the nationalist projects on each side, did not disappear upon the island's independence. After a constitutional crisis soon followed by the withdrawal of the Turkish-Cypriot political representation from the Cypriot government, intercommunal violence erupted in December 1963, continued in 1964 and flared up again in 1967 (Cock-

burn 2004: 54–55), causing deaths on both sides and the displacement of approximately 1,500–2,000 Greek- (and Armenian-) Cypriots and 25,000 Turkish-Cypriots (Gürel, Hatay and Yakinthou 2012: 7; Patrick 1976: 343). On 15 July 1974, a coup d'état, initiated by the military junta in Greece and supported by the Greek-Cypriot ultra-nationalist paramilitary organization EOKA B, overthrew the Cypriot government headed by the Greek-Cypriot leader Archbishop Makarios (Cockburn 2004: 65–66). The coup was the climax of a series of confrontations within the Greek-Cypriot community between those attempting to find ways to coexist with the Turkish-Cypriot community in balanced terms, and those who opposed these efforts and opted for enosis with Greece (Bryant and Papadakis 2012: 5; Michael 2011: 31). Turkey realized its previously expressed threat a few days later, on 20 July 1974. Claiming to be protecting the Turkish-Cypriot population from the oppression of the Greek-Cypriots, Turkey invaded the north of Cyprus and, in an operation that concluded on 16 August, occupied approximately 38 per cent of the island. The invasion and the Cypriot in-fighting resulted in heavy casualties, several thousands of injuries and deaths (whose toll is difficult to calculate with precision),<sup>1</sup> and left approximately 1,500 Greek-Cypriots and 500 Turkish-Cypriots missing (<http://www.cmp-cyprus.org>).<sup>2</sup> The events of this period also forced 160,000–200,000 Greek-Cypriots to abandon their homes in the north and flee to the south, and 40,000–50,000 Turkish-Cypriots to flee the south and move to the north (Cockburn 2004: 65; Gürel, Hatay and Yakinthou 2012: 8–10; Tesser 2013: 114).

Negotiations for a peaceful solution have been ongoing throughout the past decades, without however producing a mutually accepted plan for reunification. Therefore, the island remains geographically and ethnically divided, with its two main communities living apart from one another. The two communities came close to an agreement in 2004, at the same time when the RoC, (legally) representing the entire island, joined the European Union (EU) (on 1 May 2004). On 24 April 2004, after two years of official negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), the Annan Plan V – the fifth version of a plan for the reunification of the island, bearing the name of the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan – was presented to the two communities for approval by a referendum. The plan, which provided for establishing a federation of two constituent states on the island, was accepted by the Turkish-Cypriot community, but it was rejected by the Greek-Cypriot community and was thus not implemented (Charalambous 2014: 31; Michael 2011: 173–84). Lately there was, as many times before in the past, increased activity in the form of negotiations between the leaders

of the two communities, Nicos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akıncı, representing the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot communities respectively. The negotiations began in May 2015, once again inspiring new hopes of reaching a political solution, and were concluded in July 2017 but, again, no agreement was reached (Smith 2017).

In the absence of a political agreement, the Greek-Cypriots, the majority of whom are Greek Orthodox, continue to live in the south, in the Republic of Cyprus, recognized by the international community. The Turkish-Cypriots, most of them Muslims, live in the north, in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which was unilaterally declared in 1983 and is recognized only by Turkey. Before 2003 the two communities hardly interacted at all, but the first crossing points across the Green Line – the UN-controlled buffer zone that divides the island – opened that April (Demetriou 2007), allowing the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots to pass to the other side and to sometimes visit the homelands and homes they had been forced to abandon.

The population in the south was 847,000 in 2014 (Statistical Service of Cyprus 2015); that of the north was estimated at 295,165 in 2013 (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014: 143). The Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot communities are not the only ones that live on the island. Small domestic populations of Armenians, Maronites and Latins – religious groups recognized by the constitution of the RoC – live mostly in the south. The significant number of non-Cypriot citizens (20–25 per cent of the total population, according to moderate estimates) (Statistical Service of Cyprus 2013; Mullen 2015) comprise different categories: immigrants (mostly from Turkey, Greece, the U.K., Romania, Bulgaria, Philippines, and Russia), students, army personnel (chiefly Turkish and British, though the latter are usually not counted in demographic data), and pensioners of other nationalities living on the island. A part of the Turkish population living in the north is made up by ‘settlers’. A heterogeneous group, whose numbers are hard to estimate, they consist mostly of Turkish nationals from mainland Turkey who settled in the north during the 1970s, and ‘whose migration to the island formed part of a deliberate settlement policy pursued by both Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot authorities following the partition of the island in 1974’ (Hatay 2005: vii).

Looking at the reasons that triggered and fed the division of the island, it can be argued that they are intertwined with the discourses and ideologies of national identity. National identity can be seen as a specific form of collective identity that is sustained by a dual process: ‘one of inclusion that provides a boundary around “us” and one of exclusion that distinguishes

“us” from “them” (Schlesinger 1991: 300). It is, in other words, mainly built around hegemonic discourses of belonging and exclusion. These dominant discourses, articulated by the political and economic power elites but also accepted by many societal groups, justify the construction of the nation-states as natural and beneficial for the people by equating one homogeneous nation with one solitary state (Smith 1991; Anderson 2006). This ideology is not much compatible with heterogeneous, multicultural, multi-religious entities like in the case of Cyprus. The hegemonic nationalist ideologies articulated on the island were largely at odds with multiplicity and heterogeneity and (thus) sought national identities in the connection with the ‘motherlands’ (Greece and Turkey).

But even though these hegemonic discourses of national identity were reproduced, acknowledged and widely accepted as ‘common sense’ (Scott 2001: 89) and as ‘normal rather than as political and contestable’ (Deetz 1977: 62), they were, and still are, neither fixed nor free of contradictions (see Mouffe 2005: 18). The ‘myth of the unitary state’ (Ozgunes and Terzis 2000: 408), together with the notion of a solitary national identity on an island with multiple communities, have produced ceaseless tensions and contradictions that fed the conflict even as they have unintentionally left space for the possibility of alternative configurations. It should not be overlooked that voices supporting the idea of a Cypriot identity for all, over the distinct identities of the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot, already ‘coexisted uncomfortably with ethno-nationalism after independence’ (Michael 2011: 40), and that Cypriotism was effectively promoted by the Cypriot left after 1974 with the aim of denationalizing the Cyprus Problem (ibid.). Also, the idea of the establishment of one country where the communities of Cyprus would coexist peacefully was one of the foundations on which the RoC was initially built, in 1960 (ibid.: 27), even though at the time many saw this situation as only temporary.

## **The Media in Cyprus and Their Representations of the Cyprus Problem**

This volume does not limit itself only to the mediated aspects of conflict. It devotes particular attention to how both discursive and material practices contribute to the articulation of antagonisms, nationalisms and national identities, and to how these practices sometimes allow these antagonisms to be overcome. Nonetheless, a brief account of the media environment in Cyprus is useful for understanding the discursive context of Cyprus and

how the representations of the conflicts on the island are constructed, mediated, perceived and rearticulated through the key signifying machines that (mainstream) media are. This is especially relevant for the Cyprus Problem, since, as a result of the decades-long division of the island and the lack of interaction between the two communities, the images of the ‘other’ were, and up to a point still are, heavily (re)constructed and mediated by each side’s mainstream media. Over the years this process has ‘transformed the experiences, perceptions, and interpretations rooted in the history of the conflict, from scattered suggestive tendencies, from implicit and individual references, to collectivized, crystallized stereotypes and explicit meanings that in turn have come to integrate and condition public culture’ (Anastasiou 2002: 589).

Unsurprisingly, the Cypriot mainstream media both reflect the Cyprus Problem and are intertwined with it. First, they mirror the island’s division, as both parts of the island have their own press and broadcasters (Vassiliadou 2007). Also, as is often the case in Southern European and Mediterranean countries (Hallin and Mancini 2004), in Cyprus too ‘there is a strong focus of the media on political life and a tradition in commentary-oriented or advocacy journalism, combined with close ties between the media (especially the newspapers) and the political parties’ (Carpentier and Doudaki 2014: 420), with the media largely acting as ‘propagators of power or elite group views’ (Christophorou 2010: 243). The media in Cyprus are often grouped around the left-right ideological polarization and the unionist-nationalist ideological positions (even though demarcations in the political parties’ and the media’s positions on the Cyprus Problem are not always stable or clear) (Charalambous 2014). Alternative media are operative in Cyprus and offer different perspectives of the Cypriot society and its conflicts, but they do not reach a large part of the Cypriot public (Voniati, Doudaki and Carpentier, under review).

Mainstream media coverage on both parts of the island has been dominated by the Cyprus Problem, sometimes at the expense of other societal problems and conflicts, even though for a while the attention in the south shifted, at least partly, towards the economic crisis while the Cyprus Problem took ‘a backseat’ (Charalambous 2014: 84). Safeguarding the ‘unitary’ nation-state idea, many of the mainstream media in Cyprus have largely served the binary opposition of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ in national identity building, ‘[t]hrough the demonization of the other and the restriction of the possibilities of recognizing internal complexity and plurality’ (Tsagarousianou 1997: 278). As for the coverage of the Cyprus Problem, ‘there is little or no differentiation on either side; stereotypical phrases, expressions, and the



position that “our” side is the good one who strives for a solution, it’s the “others” who are negative’, thrive (Christophorou, Şahin and Pavlou 2010: 7). Also, as Bailie and Azgin (2008: 57) note, ‘the Cypriot media embrace a conflict-centered approach to peace efforts by shaping news that contributes to the increased mystification of the conflict and to a retrenching of divisive attitudes, sympathetic to a cementing of division’; however, we should add that there are many exceptions to this rule (as this book will also show).

The domestic media’s coverage of the Cyprus Problem is not a straightforward task and sometimes proves challenging for journalists when the professional values of fairness and objectivity are juxtaposed to those of ‘serving the national interest’ (Carpentier and Doudaki 2014: 420). According to a study that Christophorou et al. (2010: 7) conducted on the way the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot media presented the Annan Plan, ‘[a]ny view diverging from the official line was sometimes seen as damaging and undermining the community’s cause to the benefit of the “enemies”’; also, responsibility for unfavourable developments in one’s own community was attributed to those with views different from the official view.’ In these cases, conflict is manifested not only as antagonism with the external ‘other’, but also with internal ‘others’ within one’s ‘own’ community.

## **The Economic Crisis in Cyprus**

A much more recent but still traumatizing conflict involves the economic crisis that hit the island (mainly the RoC), in the early 2010s. Crisis, as introduced earlier, is seen as a particular moment of conflict, a disruptive incident or set of incidents that significantly disturbs people’s lives or the relations among individuals and groups. The economic crisis in Cyprus, apart from the repercussions it had for the lives of Cypriots, brought to the fore a set of social tensions regarding the (re)distribution of resources and the struggle over the endorsed models of social, political and economic organization.

The economic crisis peaked in 2013, but the problems in the Cypriot economy had appeared earlier, becoming visible in 2011. From 1974 until 2011, the economy of the RoC experienced steady growth with only minor fluctuations and very low levels of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty (Charalambous 2014: 5). During the years of continuous growth, and especially during the 2000s, the country’s economy gradually became heavily dependent on services, especially banking and financial services,

and on attracting offshore capital by operating as a tax haven. According to Pegasiou (2013: 344), who refers to data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to explain the degree of expansion of the banking sector in the RoC, the total bank assets in the country reached ‘an alarming 835 per cent of GDP in 2011’. Even though the Cypriot economy initially did not feel the shock of the global economic crisis of 2007–2008, in 2011 it started underperforming and was downgraded by the major credit-rating agencies, losing its creditworthiness. As the European Parliament (2014) noted, ‘[i]n May 2011, Cyprus lost access to international [money] markets due to the significant deterioration in public finances as well as the heavy exposure of the Cypriot banking sector to the Greek economy [which was engulfed in an even deeper economic crisis] and the restructuring of public debt in Greece’.<sup>3</sup> The RoC’s losses from the exposure to the Greek bonds were estimated at €4.5bn, equal approximately to 25 per cent of the country’s GDP (Pegasiou 2013: 344).

Failing to deal with its accumulating economic problems (mainly the contraction of the economy, the rise of unemployment and the surge of its public debt), and unable on its own to support the recapitalization of the Cypriot banks, in June 2012 the RoC requested financial assistance from the EU. Following protracted negotiations, a final agreement between the troika (the EU, IMF and European Central Bank [ECB]) and the RoC was reached in March 2013. The agreement included financial aid (loans) of €10bn, conditional upon the implementation of austerity measures and a later-finalized 47.5 per cent ‘haircut’ (slash) of all cash deposits above €100,000 in the country’s banks, together with the shutdown of the Popular Bank of Cyprus, the second largest bank on the island (Charalambous 2014: 12, 13). The haircut imposed on deposits was a highly controversial decision. No such measure had been taken previously in the EU, directly using depositors’ savings to ‘bail-in’ a country’s economy and its banks.

As mentioned earlier, the country’s economy deteriorated significantly during the years of the crisis. Unemployment rose spectacularly: whereas in 2010 it had been 6.3 per cent, it reached 15.9 per cent in 2013 and 16.1 per cent in 2014, with particularly high levels of youth unemployment. In 2015, joblessness dropped slightly to 15 per cent and further to 13.1 per cent in 2016 (European Commission 2017). The RoC’s GDP growth turned negative, with 2.5 per cent recession in 2012, 6 per cent recession in 2013 and 1.5 per cent recession in 2014. The country’s GDP once again grew, in 2015, by 1.7 per cent, and in 2016, by 2.8 per cent. In 2017, GDP growth is forecast at 2.5% (*ibid.*). The RoC’s public debt surged from 79.3 per cent of GDP in 2012 to 107.1 per cent in 2014, 107.5 per cent in 2015 and an

estimated 107.4 per cent in 2016 (*ibid.*). Although the economic conditions have improved and the country managed to exit the bailout programme in March 2016, the economy is still considered fragile due to its high private, public and external debt; its high levels of non-performing loans (European Commission 2016); its difficulties in refinancing itself (Stamouli 2016); and persistent unemployment. Furthermore, poverty surged in the RoC during the years of the crisis, with unprecedented repercussions for the Cypriot society. According to a study by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research (IW), poverty rose by 28.2 per cent during the period 2008–2015 – the second highest in Europe, after Greece’s dramatic surge of 40 per cent (‘Cyprus Poverty’ 2017).

The studies included in this book are concerned with the economic crisis in the south, but a short note is still merited on the specificities and challenges of the economy in the north, which has always been considerably smaller and weaker than that in the south. According to Mullen, Apostolides and Besim (2014: 7), in 2012, the GDP in the south was €17.7bn (at current prices), and around €2.6bn in the north, rendering the Greek-Cypriot economy approximately seven times larger than the Turkish-Cypriot economy, though the former’s population was only around three times the size of the latter’s. At the same time, the per capita income in the north was estimated at around 70 per cent of that in the south. The problems and challenges afflicting the economy in the north are mostly related to its status. Since the international community, excepting Turkey, does not recognize the TRNC as a state, the north is highly isolated, largely dependent on the Turkish economy, hampered by serious restrictions on international trade and deprived of direct access to international markets (*ibid.*: 12). Its non-recognized status keeps the north in a constant state of uncertainty in most sectors of social activity, including the economic sector.

As for the RoC, the economic crisis that hit the country and its outcomes are seen here as a conflict operative on several levels. One level concerns the conflict between the RoC and the troika, which combines a struggle over very material resources with particular representations of the country as weak, guilty or irresponsible (Doudaki, Boubouka and Tzalavras 2016). In turn, the troika’s identity oscillates between that of a saviour and a new colonizer. This dimension of the conflict also concerns the imposition of a specific model of organizing the economy (and the state), reliant on neoliberal principles and the use of austerity measures based on these principles. This neoliberal turn has heavily impacted on all sectors of activity, triggering many small-scale conflicts in households, organizations and state agencies. The Cypriot public broadcaster discussed in this book is

one example. Another level of conflict within the RoC involves political struggles over the desirability and nature of the bailout, fed by competing ideas about the organization of the economy and the optimal policies of dealing with the economic deadlock (Charalambous 2014: 68–83). A third area of conflict is related to the implementation of the bailout agreement, which pitted the state and the people against each other when depositors' savings were 'sacrificed' for the sake of the banking system's viability and the country's economy (*ibid.*).

Although the economic crisis had a high degree of autonomy in relation to the Cyprus Problem, a number of connections merit notice. First, and more generally, the culture of conflict developed in relation to the Cyprus Problem unavoidably affects the handling of any other conflict – in this case, the economic crisis. At the political level, some members of the Cypriot political elite are concerned that the economic crisis may have weakened the RoC's negotiating position, in relation to both the Cyprus Problem and the handling of the economic crisis (Charalambous 2014: 83). At the material level, any economic dimension of the Cyprus Problem (and its solution) is tied to the two communities' economic conditions and capacity. For example, the recent exploration of gas reserves off Cyprus,<sup>4</sup> which could strengthen the Cypriot economy, has been seen also as a vehicle that could speed up the negotiation process towards a common solution. At the same time, though, it has become a source of renewed tensions with Turkey. Meanwhile, analyses of the Cyprus Problem (Lordos 2004; Eichengreen et al. 2004) have argued that either approach – continuing the division or reunifying the island – would have major economic implications, and have viewed the island's reunification as a tool for boosting the economic fortunes of both parts of Cyprus (Mullen, Apostolides and Besim 2014).

## **Book Structure and Contents**

The book has three main parts. In its first part, 'The Materiality of Conflict in Cyprus', the collection of chapters focuses on the material component of the interconnected material and discursive dimensions of conflict. This entanglement consists of, for instance, the material practices that feed into and support discourses of conflict, and the materialization of discourses of conflict into cultural products. Since conflict has a series of implications for political, cultural, social and economic life, its material expressions, together with the interactions with the discourses of conflict and the contradictions arising from these interactions, need to be examined. These material struc-

tures and affordances cannot be ignored, as they often invite the articulation of particular discourses of conflict (Carpentier 2017). It should not be forgotten that conflict is often about resources, as the most recent economic crisis shows (and as is examined in Chapter 4). Also, material structures have affordances, qualities that allow for actions creating conditions of possibility (Norman 2002) or agency (Latour 2005) – in the case of Cyprus, of rapprochement and coexistence (as shown in the example of alternative media bridges in Chapter 3) – or permit ideological and political discourses of division to be ignored (as in the example of the sounds in the centre of Nicosia that traverse the line of division, in Chapter 2). Reversely, material expressions of conflict can present alignments and dislocations that affect how conflict is represented and thought about (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) (as in the commemorative public art example in Chapter 1).

The chapters in this part, despite not studying all aspects of material expression, deal with a variety of materialities (and their interactions with representations) that have not attracted much scholarly attention; the aim is to emphasize the significance of the material, also in its relationship to the discursive-representational. The discussion in this book focuses on the manifestations of materiality encountered in public spaces, public art, the urban environment and public media. In their everyday lives, Cypriots are confronted with multiple contradictions related to the unresolved political conflict that have practical and material ramifications. Foremost among these is the border, the Green Line that divides the capital of Nicosia and the whole island, which has both physical and psychological implications for Cypriots' lives. Furthermore, material artefacts and signifiers of division abound in the public spaces on the island and can occasionally work to disrupt the divide.

Within this context, the first part of the book starts with Nico Carpentier's Chapter 1, which, after providing a more developed account of the Cypriot history, examines how public art is used to construct national identity, which most often is opposed to the identity of the 'other', and how nationalistic discourse is materialized in commemorative public art. At the same time, commemorative public art becomes a relevant case study of how the still dominant discourses of the other as 'other' are materially disrupted and dislocated, despite attempts to protect the hegemonies. This part of the book furthermore examines different manifestations of the need to materially and discursively demarcate one's community in the urban environment, and of practices through which these aims sometimes fail. In Yiannis Christidis and Angeliki Gazi's analysis in Chapter 2, the existence of one sound community that spans the island's divided capital, Nicosia, with sound crossing – and ignoring – the Green Line, points to the failure

of such demarcations. Also, Susan Drucker and Gary Gumpert's examination of the materiality (and discursivity) of three types of Cypriot bridges in Chapter 3 shows how these bridges create possibilities for new spaces of communication and simultaneously highlight the constraints in, and sometimes the impossibility of, bridging the divide.

This first part of the book also investigates the materiality of economic conflict, which concerns struggles over both resources and the organization of the state, its sectors and services. Chapter 4, by Lia-Paschalia Spyridou and Dimitra L. Milioni, focuses on how the Greek-Cypriot public service media organization (Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation, CyBC) deals with a set of conflicts resulting from the economic crisis, the questioning of the role and necessity of public service media in times of scarce economic resources, and the broader crisis in the journalistic profession, manifested through an internal tension between innovation and established ideas about journalism. This chapter elaborates on how the economic crisis exacerbated those conflicts in a media organization that serves as an example of how financial tensions both impel changes in material conditions and create opportunities for rearticulation of the main discourses about the organization of the state and its institutions (including public-service media). In this case, one level of conflict concerns a struggle for hegemony between the statist culture that until recently dominated the Cypriot state, and the neoliberal logics that actively emerged in Cyprus during the economic crisis.

The second part of the book, 'Conflict Representations of Cyprus from Within (north and south)' concentrates on the discursive and representational aspects of the material/discursive dimensions of conflict. This part's analyses concern representations constructed from *within* Cyprus, rather than deriving from the media and communication practices of historical and cultural allies and 'motherlands' (e.g. Turkey or Greece). The ways conflict is (re)presented through cultural products and practices, political discourses and the media, are crucial in the social construction of conflict (see Jabri 1996; Wilmer 1998; Hall et al. 1978; Berger and Luckmann 1967). Domestic dominant representations of conflict instructed by the ideologies of a 'unified national identity' and of the 'national interest' usually lead to the prominence of divisive media discourses on the 'self' and the 'other' (often seen as the enemy) through the construction of elementary dichotomies – good/evil, just/unjust, innocent/guilty, rational/irrational, civilized/barbaric, heroic/cowardly – that demonize the other whilst heroizing and exonerating the self (Carpentier 2015; Wolfsfeld 2004; Galtung 2002; Bailie and Azgin 2008). Also, in the case of economic conflict we can find appeals to 'save the country' from 'economic disaster' by accepting the dominant

neoliberal policies (and the troika's austerity politics) (Doudaki 2015; Doudaki et al. 2016; Mylonas 2014). In addition, discursive coping strategies are articulated to protect the identities and legitimate the roles of all parties involved, presented as benevolent helpers or victims of economic misfortune.

The analyses in this second part concern print and broadcast Cypriot mainstream media, as well as digital and social media outside the mainstream media market, on both sides of the island. Important moments in contemporary Cypriot history serve as examples to study how conflict is represented, mediated, reconstructed and reappropriated, and whether citizen initiatives are taken to offer different interpretations or to overcome the conflict, the division and the economic crisis. As mentioned earlier, the media have a crucial role in national identity building and protection of a dominant (political and economic) order. This part of the book first addresses issues of reconstructed and mediated national identity on both parts of the island. In Chapter 5, analysing the Cypriot press coverage of the two communities leaders' meetings in 2008 and 2014, Christophoros Christophorou and Sanem Şahin examine the discourses, strategies and practices that mainstream media use to articulate the national identity through the construction of 'us' in relation to the 'other'. In addition, 'otherness' is examined in a broader perspective that includes third parties to the conflict, as well as groups within communities.

Chapter 6, written by Vaia Doudaki, looks at the signing of the bailout agreement between the RoC and the troika as an example of how the Greek-Cypriot mainstream media promote and legitimate hegemonic discourses, even when these discourses are about highly contested issues like the 'haircut' of bank deposits. Furthermore, in moments of crisis or in extraordinary incidents, the mainstream media find themselves anxiously uncertain about how to cover the events, since established norms and routinized patterns may be unsuitable. One instance, the opening of the crossing points in 2003 that for the first time since 1974 allowed members of the two communities to 'pass to the other side', permits examination of how conflict is represented and framed in moments where not only the sociopolitical reality but also media practices and routines are disrupted. In Chapter 7, Christiana Karayianni takes this opportunity to study how the Greek-Cypriot media, after failing to maintain their previously well-established discourse on bicomunal relations in Cyprus, tried to re-territorialize the new event within the established hegemonic discourse in order to maintain their privileged right to represent the major issues of the Greek-Cypriot society. Finally, in Chapter 8, using the example of the Occupy the Buffer Zone (OBZ) movement, Venetia Papa and Peter Dahlgren examine whether

the participatory potential within the digital media channels creates opportunities to transform or overcome conflict by creating spaces for the free expression, self-representation and engagement of civil society actors. This chapter also addresses the limitations of such endeavours in cultures of rigid ideological positions entrenched by division.

The collection of chapters in the third part of the book, 'Conflict Representations of Cyprus from the Outside', adds a level of multi-perspectivity to this volume by examining how conflict in relation to Cyprus is represented from an external standpoint. Such portrayals of conflict are particularly relevant, as they not only complement the domestically driven and produced depictions and reconstruction of conflict, but also allow for the re-examination of a set of issues connected to conflict representation in a broader perspective, such as the processes and practices of domestication of foreign news (Clausen 2004; Alasuutari, Qadir and Creutz 2013), or the often tense relationship between journalistic professional values and 'national loyalty' (Nossek 2004; Christophorou, Şahin and Pavlou 2010; Bläsi 2004). Moreover, as violent conflict and crisis are considered highly newsworthy, according to numerous studies on news values and newsroom practices, specific events and actions are favoured over processes for simplicity's sake, a practice that often conveniently reduces long-term policies and complex issues to a two-sided dispute (Harcup and O'Neill 2001; Lengauer, Esser and Berganza 2012; Milioni et al. 2015). Such routines have considerable implications for how political, military and economic conflict is presented to, and perceived by, audiences with no personal experience of the conflict.

The cases selected in this third part serve as examples of conflict representations from the different perspectives of three parties that still have a special affiliation with the island, as they are Cyprus's three 'guarantor' countries (see above). More specifically, these essays include the perspective of a country that is defined by the Greek-Cypriot community as the 'other' and the enemy, and by the official elite of the Turkish-Cypriot community as its main ally (Turkey); the perspective of a country that is defined, reversely, as the Greek-Cypriot community's major ally, and faces economic problems like those of the RoC (Greece); and the perspective of a third party that is closely related by its colonial history (the U.K.). In Chapter 9, within the first perspective, a football match between a Greek-Cypriot and a Turkish team, and its coverage by Turkish online news media, provides Beybin Kejanlioglu and Serhat Güney with an opportunity to study issues of banal nationalism and the role of media in reconstructing the conflict through nationalist discourses. Within the same perspective, but from an audience (and user-generated content) standpoint, Aysu Arsoy investigates,



in Chapter 10, how myths are used to narrate and re-historicize the Cyprus Problem, legitimating the Turkish hegemonic nationalist narrative.

Chapter 11, by Giulia Airaghi and Maria Avraamidou, uses the 2013 troika ‘rescue’ plan for Cyprus to analyse the conflict between the hegemonic powers (troika and Germany) and a weak actor (Cyprus) from the perspective of a third, strong international actor (the U.K.). The examination of the crisis from a U.K. perspective reveals both support for the hegemony of capitalism and criticism of the troika’s and Germany’s hegemonic practices, but in ways that reaffirm British Euroskepticism (before the Brexit) and promote consensus with the domestic hegemonic discourses. Finally, the Greek mainstream media’s coverage of the Cypriot economic crisis provides Yiannis Mylonas with an example by which to examine, in Chapter 12, how the Greek media use the crisis in Cyprus and its outcomes to articulate the hegemonic and counterhegemonic discourses on the terms and conditions of the domestic economic crisis in Greece.

In the conclusion, Nico Carpentier provides a theoretically informed reflection on how the lessons learned pertain to conflict studies. Based on the examination of conflict from a discursive-material and internal-external perspective, his considerations are informed by the interconnections among the authors’ findings and analyses. This conclusion touches on several problematics that are deemed relevant for conflict studies. One cluster of problematics deals with the political, emphasizing the importance of the politics of history and memory, including the process of amnesia. A second cluster relates to the cultural, highlighting the need for a stronger presence of the cultural dimension, together with an argument for better theorizing the interactions of the discursive and the material in what is called the ‘discursive-material knot’.

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## Notes

1. It is not easy to provide an accurate account of the military and civilian losses caused by the prolonged conflict and the Turkish invasion. The website of the Press and Information Office of the RoC mentions that ‘over 3,000 persons were killed’ as a result of the Turkish invasion. Source: <http://www.moi.gov.cy/>.
2. By 30 June 2017, the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus had managed to recover, identify and return to their families the remains of 582 Greek-Cypriots and 184 Turkish-Cypriots, out of the 2,001 persons (493 Turkish-Cypriots and 1,508 Greek-Cypriots) ‘who went missing during the inter-communal fighting of 1963 to 1964 and the events of 1974’ (<http://www.cmp-cyprus.org>).
3. In March 2012, as part of Greece’s second bailout agreement, Greek sovereign bonds owned by private investors lost 53.5 per cent of their face value (equal to overall losses of around 75 per cent).
4. The gas fields discovered in the region are the Aphrodite (Cyprus), Zohr (Egypt), Leviathan and Tamar (Israel) deposits. <http://in-cyprus.com/hope-yet-for-a-cyprus-gas-hub/>.

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