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## **Remembering the Past: The Collective Memory and Historiographies of Cyprus**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to investigate the politics of memory and the transformations of memories of historiographies in the Cyprus Conflict. I focus on the collective memory conceptualization that invades Cyprus Conflict, and I investigate Cyprus history textbooks from Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot education system. In this regard, the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot memories are mostly based on the historiographies, negative memories of between 1958s and 1963s and the heroic partisan struggle strongly clash with negative counter-memories of 1974. The forced remembering of 1974, the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, which is promoted also by politically institutionalized top-down politics of memory, is created also in the popular, bottom-up memories of the today's negotiations. Such memory politics foster past narratives mostly based on historiographies, creates us and them dichotomy narratives. Moreover, it blurs the negotiation and forgiveness paradigm, when it suddenly becomes the certain point of collective memory of past and present.

**Keywords:** Memory politics, Cypriot memory landscape, Cyprus Conflict, Collective memory, Historiographies.

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## Introduction

In recent years, attention to the notion of collective memory has experienced a sharp increase in the literature. At its core, collective memory has attracted interest for its effect on not only maintaining, but also constructing social hegemonies, ideologies, and political agendas as well (LeGoff, 1996; Linenthal & Engelhardt, 1996; Macmillian, 2009; Olick, 1999; Olick & Robbins, 1998; Seixas, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). Moreover, it is essential to add socially derived memories to collective political and historical consciousness (Halbwachs, 1950, 1952; Lipsitz, 2001; Pennebaker & Basasik, 1997). In other words, collective memory, in general, is accepted as the process of how society collectively remembers, interprets and forgets their past, and in the case of this thesis how these differently interpreted memories influence the ways in which Cypriots see themselves, judge their circumstances, and at the same time significantly guide their decisions in the present situation of the Cyprus Conflict.

It becomes a central actor for both cultural and political discourse; the public attention to collective memory has raised its frequency at conflicting interpretations of the past events. Increasing conflicts over the validity and meaning of different interpretations of the historical past are common both in debates from different subjects, such as; the creation of public memorials, and the contemporary negotiation process (Garde-Hansen, 2012; Macmillian, 2009; Nash, et.al., 2000). On the other hand, apart from the frequency in which the past is used, several historians and researchers from different social science disciplines use collective memory as a rhetorical device in political debate in order to show how among different political forces, manipulation and distortion of collective memory is an exercise in propaganda (Cannedine, 2004; Le Goff, 1996; Linenthal & Engelhardt, 1996; Macmillian, 2009; Seixas, 2004; Wineburg, 2001).

This study uses narrative, framing theories and content-analysis to examine how collectively significant events become selectively incorporated into historiographical representations of the past to give a political perspective to the reconciliation process, shape the understanding of the others, and media attention to reference cultural symbols. The analysis finds that identifying long-lasting links between history-writing and political perspectives is essential for critically understanding the framing of current events in the Cyprus conflict and reconciliation process, which helps in perceiving how both communities view the relative stability and legitimacy of truth and knowledge – especially at a time of growing efforts on negotiation and reconciliation process.

Memory studies have devolved into a paradigm in the search of a meaning, therefore there is limited recent literature for how collective memories are made manifest in commemorating specific historical events and persons in order to effect present politics and public opinions (Hasian & Carlson, 2000; Kitch, 2002, 2003; Parry-Giles & Perry-Giles, 2000; Peri, 1999) and how collective memories appear in text and imagery (Bruner, 2002; Hasian & Carlson, 2000; Kitch, 2003; Schudson, 1993). In the process, the theoretical background of collective memory has been stretched to include a broad span of conceptualization from different theories. This study will be important since few scholars have focused on identifying collective memory as a cultural product which has led to the neglect of the process of collective memory construction and the main sources of these construction processes as well.

## Literature Review

Through the monuments and commemorations, Halbwachs (1952) recalls the form of the variety of ritual and ceremonial acts. Halbwachs (1952) clarifies the different types of rituals and activities are important not only to make recollections and representations of common past. Therefore, the representation of collectively experienced past *On Collective Memory* (1952) is rarely simple reflections of the past events. Halbwachs (1952) condemns that the reproduction of the collective past usually includes exaggerated tendencies, which plays as a key for functioning to reveal the emotional aspects of the memory.

Halbwachs's work *On Collective Memory* (1952) stresses that the reconstruction of the memory is shaped within the context of our social presence with the help of the images. In his important work on the formation of collective memory Halbwachs (1952) insists that events fundamentally recalled as a function of group endeavor. These reconstructed memories and different behaviours of people select sustenance which is associated with classes, religions, and families. In Halbwachs (1952) work, various frameworks are contended to express memory through by providing shared language and discourse. As such, all reconstructed pasts must draw on common conventions of beliefs and meanings, which needs stability in order to interpretation for the persistent strength of traditions. Beginning with family, Halbwachs (1952) examines the social contexts that determine collective memory within the individual experiences, which play a crucial role in forming memories through association with society in general. Looking at language as an actor allows the family unit to penetrate into the meanings the individual memory, which is composed by the narrative and logic derived and adapted from emotional connections of societal norms.

An alternative approach to the memory developed by Jan Assmann's work *Communicative and Cultural Memory* (2011). Writing in response to the collective memory to produce a convincing account of the role of culture in the reconstruction of the history, Assmann (2011) emphasizes the remembrance and political identity, which characterized in relation to culture. By introducing the distinction between communicative memory and collective memory, Assmann (2011) talks the cultural memory which is shared and conveyed within a social group defined by common memories of personal interaction through the means of verbal communication over a time span of only eighty to hundred years.

For Assmann (2011) explaining the existence of collective memories over individual memories can only be explained by looking at the interactive nature of it. Due to the interactive nature of this kind of memory, social emotions such as hate, love and shame play a central role, which the past is passes from one generation to another. Based on the linguistic paradigm of Saussure, which placed everyday communication and interaction, Assmann (2011) explains the importance of autobiographical memories that are being communicated. Taking into account the communicative memory, Assmann (2011) also adds the idea of unstructured and individual nature of communicative memory as a private interpretation of a people's own past.

All in the hand, Jan Assmann (2011) in his work focused mostly on the acquirements of the communication, socialization and acculturation, which comprises one's social and cultural relations in three dimensions: the personal, social and cultural. Significantly, as Assmann (2011) explained memory is embodied in living personal memories, which is embedded in social frames with regards to cultural symbols as texts, images and rituals. Thus, he (2011) points out that these social frames are related to the self-image or identity of national community, who commonly shares a given epoch by including normative knowledge and also archival apocryphal material in order to rediscover the cultural formation. Similar with Jan Assmann (2011), Aleida Assmann (2007) puts great efforts into creating a long-term memory on the basis of various frameworks by providing culture investment. Aleida Assmann (2007) offers an introduction to the functional cultural memory particularly by writing images, bodily practices, places and monuments to reveal the close association between cultural memory and society, which supports social and political identity construction.

As a set, these authors contribute four important types in memory studies domain. First, these authors are working to develop clear testable frameworks for collective memory phenomena, whether from societal, cultural or material perspectives. Second, they are contributing to a strong, empirical foundation of the recollection process of collective memory. Over time, the goal and conceptualization will be extended basic research across a full range of collective remembering among differentiated cases. Third, they are exploring the balance between positive and negative effects of recollections of past events, and relatively remembering with others especially depending on the social influences on collective memory. As I noted

above, in some contexts, such as conflict societies, it is entirely appropriate to focus on the potential contaminating influences of remembering with others.

Fourth, these authors are considering full effects of recollections, as well as the reconstructed past events, which will be increasingly relevant as I measure how media is a key in recollections and reconstructed process. Despite the differences which exist between all of the approaches discussed in this paper they share one assumption in common: collective memory and remembering the past collectively. The different dimensions of memory is differing in scope and range overlap and intersect within the individual not only who shares and incorporates the memories via lived experience, but also via interaction. These interactions acquire in various ways, which are communication, identification, learning and participation.

Although many historians claim the history is composed of the past events without interpretations, many of the historical events transfer from the past to the present by representations. It is true to borderline that it is often not easy to clearly determine the formation of memory. Since many of the symbols, rituals and historical events which they use in collective memory repertoires, which are stored, reshaped collectively. Framing the collective memory, there is a different distinguishing dimension of memory, which is the extension in time and volatility and stability.

Each of the approaches has tended on one particular dimension of memory; collectivity, in terms of representation, language or images. The commemoration by monuments and cultural texts were to tear historical events and great characters alive yet by itself the past is remembering by repetitions. A critical role in this process was played by the collective memory, which promoted the clear division of the societies. Yet, the mobilization power of the collective memory counts as a bridge from the past to the future, which bonds individual to society by referencing the identity. As has been pointed out throughout, some of these approaches concentrate on the negative aspects of collective memory, whilst others are more successful in disclosing the binding aspects.

Finally, each of these approaches has provided insight into what is memory and how it is differentiated from collective memory and why collective memory is important. All of the points drawn out by the various scholars discussed in this paper possess a degree of relevance to the following discussion. How do societies remember? and When they speak out or keep silent, were the points, which has to be overcome and require formation of the collective memory approaches to the collective remembering and collective forgetting that is to say aphasia. The celebration of victories of national histories, the collective memory as a process of collective trauma has been highly problematic. Although the process of collective memory is overlapping by historical events remembered by individuals and generations, it must be emphasized that the step from individual to collective memory is the aid of memorial signs such as; monuments, museums, commemoration rites and ceremonies.

Significantly, Dayan and Katz (1992) in their work on the live broadcasting of historical events as funerals, Moon landings, royal weddings, coronations suggest that ceremonial participation occurs while the historic version of event is on television as a view (Dayan & Katz, 1992:22). Relatively, one might argue that personal memory is affected from the ideologies of the broadcasters in the private sphere, which Dayan and Katz (1992) pose that the famous persons' funerals like John F. Kennedy offer moments of mechanical solidarity as well as emphatic experience of indirect intimacy through media is memorialized (Dayan & Katz, 1992; Kitch, 2005). Both media practices are the mediation or mediatization of everyday life manipulate the understanding of the who we are and how we think about ourselves and issues together at specific points in time (Livingstone 2008; Lundby, 2009).

Together with such examples, societies construct the identity by symbolically and intentionally fashioned memory. The concept of collective remembering and collective forgetting built-up the apparatuses of the missing person issues in Cyprus. It was, however, an essentially repressive process, aimed at explaining the

process of how Cypriots transfer from amnesia to collective remembering. If Cypriots have the capacity to speak, which promotes a distinctive collective memory, as has been observed throughout this paper.

### **Archived Memory and Historical Time**

The archives open the door, which testimony enters. Considered in light of the myth, these are denoted the capacity of historiography to enlarge, correct and at the same time criticize memory. As Ricoeur (2004) emphasizes the historiographical operation needs celebrating the victory over the arbitrary as a glory of archival labor in order to be stronger. Here, he also highlights the crucial step point that everything starts not from the archive but from the testimony by saying that there is a lack of confidence in such testimony. In other words, in order to assure that something did happen in the past, people have nothing better than testimony, which attests having witnessed in person. In addition to that, Ricoeur (2004) supports that without testimonies, other types of documentation need confrontation.

Within the temporality of history, the geographical attention sets in parallel with the commemorations. Here, the suggestion of the phenomenology of 'place and site' will be understandable. Likewise, Hoelscher and Alderman (2004) talk about the Robben Island, which is located twelve miles from Cape Town at the entrance to Table Bay. The Robben Island is widely acknowledged to be the most symbolically charged site in South Africa. Similarly, in North Cyprus context, especially for the Missing Person Issues, Taşkent, Muratağa Sandallar and some other places are served as a place of mass graves for nearly 35 years, from the 1950s to 1974, as a metaphor for the inhumanity of apartheid.

According to Hoelscher and Alderman (2004), although few places are as electrified with symbolic power and political contestation, some places are crucial in terms of bringing the central themes of special issue. The preservation of recollections rests on their place, which museums are the package of past. To illustrate this, in North Cyprus Barbarism Museum can be understood as dominant ideology shares in the efforts to utilize the past is the near present activity of anchoring the divergent memories in place.

In truth, with the architecture, there is a clear relation between the environment and public space. In this respect, Ricoeur (2004) talks about the displacements of the body and even its remaining in place by regarding the reference to points, lines, surfaces, volumes, distances. From these reference points, he argues that inherent to the lived body, architecture helps to make composition between geometric space and space, which unfolded by one's corporeal condition. As for this correlation between inhabiting and constructing Ricoeur (2004) states that there are two types of the configuration which are narrated time and constructed space.

According to him the constructed space in the level of apprehension might be not only as geometrical but also as measurable and calculable at the same time. No matter it is fixed, dwelling, traversed and constructed, space has power for the major interactions of life, that narrative and construction made a similar inscription. While narrative brings about the inscription in the endurance of time, construction has an inscription in the enduringness of materials.

As Wang (2008) clarified that the historical time is different from the chronology is diagnostic for explaining and understanding of representations and reconstruction of the past in cultural context. The meaningful timelines, on the other hand, makes the connection between autobiographical narratives and events of historical significance available. In the light of this information, Ricoeur (2004) makes clear explanations in order to serve theoretical bases of the notion of historical time, which also recall the single goal for the historians.

A double reduction is proceeded from the historiographical operation in twofold: the lived experience of memory and the multimillenary speculation on the order of time. Historical knowledge has to continue

with dealing with the visions of historical time regardless by whether it is linear, cyclical, stationary time or decline and progress. Critically, Steiner and Zelizer (1995) note the temporality of memory with regards to accommodate not only the needs of certain groups, but also need several mechanisms.

In this part the official historiographies of both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots will be discussed within the three important standpoints of history-writing. These are pre-1960 historiographies, 1960-1974 official historiographies and post-1974 historiographies. To begin with the period of pre-1960, the gradual rise of Greek nationalism and Turkish nationalism are the representative of the period of the nationalist struggle. The idea of *enosis* [the union of Cyprus with Greece] and the idea of *Taksim* the partition of Cyprus] brought about an outcome by frustrating the both communities' political goals. Together with the existing literature on historiographies, collective memory and Cyprus Conflict anthropological view was explained.

## Discussion and Conclusion

### Pre-1960s Historiographies

Significantly, two Greek Cypriot historians became as representative of the pre-1960 historiographies, who are Doros Alastos (1943; 1955) and Kleanthis Georgiades (1953; 1960). While in his history textbooks, Alastos presents a more academic and complex vision of the history, as being a headmaster, Georgiades introduce a more popular version of the history. However, it is also important to justify that the period that is mentioned above is before the establishment of the Cypriot state, which makes the explanation of the choice of these historians in terms of their closeness to official paradigm hard. While their work was published before National Organization of Cypriot Fighter (EOKA) struggle start and armed movement gaining ground, it can be said that both writers were sympathetic to these movements that can be found in their later works. "The main 'voice' Greek Cypriot historians were trying to oppose, as Given argues, was that of the British imperialists, who were engaged in an effort to counter Greek Cypriot claims by presenting Cyprus as a 'pedigree of subjection' (Hatay & Papadakis, 2012:29-30)". Similar with nationalism discussion among both communities, identity was another respect in the comparison of official historiographies. The term 'Greek Cypriot' was hardly ever used by these authors, who argues that Cyprus includes Greeks and Turks.

On the other hand, Philippou (2012) works on the debate of the official histories in Greek Cypriot Geography and civics curricula, which mostly address the stereotypes, prejudice, and xenophobia. These respects also shape the investigations of how nationalism and nationalistic historical narratives are constructed in the history of Cyprus conflict. In her work, Philippou draws upon three sets of data from geography, civic curricula, and textbook, which she supports official curriculum was a key forum wherein all parties sought to construct national identities. From Philippou (2012) work, these findings might be listed:

- Greek Cypriot textbooks have been imported from Greece.
- Greek Cypriot textbooks have a century-old practice in the subjects of language, religious studies and history.
- Greek Cypriot textbooks, which are supported by the political right have *Hellenocentrism* grounds, while with the ethno-cultural and legal-political identity in textbook supported by the political left based on *Cypriocentrism* tendencies.
- Greek Cypriot textbooks as a mono-cultural state citizens of Greek origin, Greek-Orthodox religion and non-political agenda for Union with Greece have *Helleno-Cypriocentrism* tendencies.

Halil Fikret Alasya's (1939) book may be accepted as the first history of Cyprus written by a Turkish Cypriot in pre-1960 period, although there is an earlier book of *Turks of Cyprus* written by İsmet Konur and

published in Turkey in 1938. As Hatay and Papadakis (2012) found that in their final book Alasya put his effort on confuting that Ottoman period in Cyprus was a 'dark age'. Different from the earlier Greek Cypriot historians, Alasya (1939) in his book provides a section called as *Main Antiquities* with photographs, and historical accounts of numerous movements from Ottoman period in order to prove his account.

The conquest of Famagusta is the vital argument, which is still used today in most of the nationalist history books that Alasya claimed Lala Mustafa Paşa killed and tortured the commander Bragadino as being responsible by breaking the agreement and killed Turkish prisoners. Similar to his earlier argument, Alasya found that throughout the Ottoman 'age of decline' in Cyprus, there are external powers which are attributed to the manipulation of foreign agents and the church of Cyprus. As Hatay and Papadakis (2012) point out in Alasya's history textbooks Christians had the freedom to communicate directly with the central government about their grievances as well as their own priests. Alasya (1939) demonstrates his secular Kemalist loyalty by keeping his distance from certain claims of Kemalist historiographies.

### **1960-1970 Official Historiographies**

The 1960 is crucial date because of the declaration of Cyprus as an independent state; as Republic of Cyprus, by continuation of the separate objectives of both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. As Hatay and Papadakis (2012) explained that the history-writing of this period three Greek Cypriot historians came into prominence who is expressing the official views of the Greek Cypriot side. Konstantinos Spyridakis, Theodoros Papadopoulos and Kostas Kyrris have mentioned their concerned with current political problems emerged in their texts. It is significant to clarify that these three historians written highly politicized history textbooks as Spyridakis was the Minister of Education and the spokesman for the Greek Cypriots of the House of Parliament of the Republic of Cyprus, Kyrris and Papadopoulos were the directors of the Cyprus Research Centre.

Among Turkish Cypriot historians, there is an apologetic history-writing tendencies, which has emphasis on the writing of the history. Generally speaking, Turkish Cypriots are always portrayed as passive and their victimization and 'innocence' was the central claim of the history-writing of this period. Turkish Cypriot history teacher Vergi Bedevi's history textbook (1966) was the one of the best example of which is repeating the earlier version of the Turkish Cypriot history-writing. Again, Bedevi is claimed the same argument that condition of the Orthodox was better after the Ottoman Empire's arrival on the island.

Contrary to Bedevi's book, Dr. Fazıl Küçük, (1966) as being vice president of the Republic of Cyprus, have attempted to emphasize Turkish Cypriots activities by convincing that Turkey plays active role in the conflict by helping Turkish Cypriots. According to both history-writing, there is a common agreement on the idea that the period between 1960 and 1963 was seen as Greek Cypriots were still planning and promoting the idea of *enosis*. As Hatay & Papadakis (2012) mentioned that although there is a numerous discussion on the EOKA and its activities through their ideological basis, Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) has no attention regarding the fact it has been established in 1958. Clearly, Küçük (1966) overemphasized the huge demonstration in Turkey, which will be accepted as a well-known symbol lately in the 1970s and afterwards, 'Taksim and Death'.

In their history textbooks, they have documented the significant events of 1964 and 1965 mostly criticizing Greek Cypriots for attacks on Turkish Cypriots. Moreover, they are upgrading their argumentations by saying that these attacks are the reasons of the collapse of the republic in 1963, which was the exclusive fault of the Greek Cypriot leaders. In 1965, United Nations Security Council decided to recognize the Republic of Cyprus as the only government of the island, which is also remarked in Küçük's history-writings as a controversial point in conflict.

## Post- 1974 Historiography

Similar with 1960, 1974 is a controversial and unnegotiable date for both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, which has been differently explained and discussed by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. As Hatay and Papadakis (2012) supported that after 1974 Greek Cypriots have major aim to reunify divided island, while on the Turkish Cypriot side, the stabilizing the partition is an official policy. In this sense, the well-known sentence is starting to share repeatedly among Turkish Cypriots that is to say: 'these two peoples [Greeks and Turks] can never live together in the future, as the past shows the brutal victimization of Turkish Cypriots by Greek Cypriots'.

Contrary to Turkish Cypriots insist on the partition, Greek Cypriots stressed the long coexistence of Muslim and Christians and the recent emergence of the conflict. Here, the historiography of peaceful coexistence has supported by the two Greek Cypriot academics work during that period; Michel Attalides and Paschalis Kitromilides (1977). They treated nationalism on their work '*Cyprus Reviewed*' nationalism as a relatively novel historical phenomenon, which is accepted as a disruptive force deriving from Turkey and Greece. This tendency for historiographies and origin discussion allowed them to be different from the Greek Cypriot historians of the previous period. Rather, they supported that Cyprus is an independent entity, which nationalism among both Greek and Turkish Cypriots infiltrated from the outside.

On the other hand, Vehbi Zeki Serter (1979, 1999) is the most influential historians on Turkish Cypriot official historiography. In his history-writing, regarding the origins of Greek Cypriots, Serter (1979, 1999) does not make apologies for the Ottoman period, rather he criticizes Greek Cypriots as being ungrateful for the just rule of the Ottomans. In addition, Alasya in his later works, they portrayed Greek Cypriots as traitors and not to be trusted, which Serter (1979) also claimed that since the island has an unfair British administration, many Greeks and Turks left the island. Rather, lately in the history-writing as Hatay and Papadakis (2012) clarified that the books occasionally emotionalized the dead bodies or those to be saved as being the hero of their community by their great defense. In Serter's Cyprus History (1979) book 1974 as one leading Turkey's inevitable intervention, which in Alasya's (1988) book represented as the "Turkish Miracle" seen as "The Judgement Day", that is significant point in history-writing in Turkish Cypriots since his book was used as the standard high-school history textbook.

Among Turkish Cypriots, historiographies paradigm has changed related with the changing in the authorities in Turkish Cypriots. The Turkish Cypriots right radically rise to power in 2003 of the left-wing part Republican Turkish Party (CTP) with their declared aim of the reunification of Cyprus, has started to change the history textbooks to make difference in official claims of the History of Cyprus. As Papadakis (2008) mentioned that in CTP-sponsored books mainly the approaches to the nationalism and identity changed, such as the term 'motherland' and the word 'Turks' was never used in their period. Throughout the CTP historiographical paradigm, the terms 'our island' and 'our country' are used instead of 'motherland'. Similarly, the term 'Turkish Cypriots' has placed more semantic emphasis on the Cypriot part. Here, another party involved in the history-writing occurs in 2009, when the National Unity Party (UBP) had power, might be accepted as more dangerous by presenting nationalist history in an attractive form, which led older books history-writing paradigm remain the same.

The perspective of the desired future and contemporary issues can be found in the examination of the history-writing from a view of the political goal. Critically, it can be said that history plays an important role more in the desired future than in the past. The choice of the events and leaders from the history in order to begin writing the history mostly is shaped by the historian espouses. In other words, in the light of the above-mentioned information, not only the events but also the periods are selectively emphasized. Different historical characters signify the identity ascriptions that creates the boundaries between insiders and outsiders.

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