Language and Identity in Cyprus

Martin Riegl

Abstract:
The following text deals with the role of language in the process of creating the collective Cyprus identity and possible reunification of the divided island. The article focuses mainly on main factors to division of Cyprus into two de facto independent states – external factors (interventions by Greece and Turkey), mass support of the enosis program by the communities and taksim and finally destructive influence of the elites. The second part of the article deals with basic shift in politics of identity in TRNC as well as in Republic of Cyprus.

Keywords:
Identity, Taksim, Enosis, Greek-Cypriot identity, Turkish-Cypriot Identity, Republic of Cyprus, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

Introduction
The aim of the following text is to analyze the role of language in the process of creating the collective Cyprus-wide identity. The concepts of the identity, territoriality and power sharing became the sources of a conflict soon after the declaration of the independent Cyprus, which was, traditionally, a multilingual space. There are three languages and two dialects used on Cyprus that play an important role in the intra-political development of Cyprus and in the formation of Greek-Cypriot identity, Turkish-Cypriot identity and Cypriot identity. Should we omit the minority languages such as Maronites etc., it is Greek, Greek-Cypriot dialect, Turkish, Turkish-Cypriot dialect and English that meet here. The interesting factor is that the influence of the language, which is a basic identity element in both Cypriot communities, on the formation of the identities of Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks develops rather dynamically in time. Whereas until 1974 the language difference between the communities was one of the fundamental sources of conflict that led to the disintegration of the state, after that year it seems as if the language ceases to be the factor strengthening the legitimacy of the North-Cypriot Turkish Republic (hereinafter referred to as TRNC) and the identity of Cypriot Turks.
Language and Identity on Cyprus by 1974

In the case of Cyprus, the language becomes the key element in formation of the identity of both communities mainly after the formation of the national states in Greece and Turkey. The formation of an independent Greece and Turkey projected markedly into the process of formation of the identity of both communities that co-exist within Cyprus for hundreds of years and strengthen the mutual negative demarcation of Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks.

That concerned mainly the request of the Greek community for enosis (the integration of Cyprus and Greece), which evoked negative historical cast-back within the Turkish community recalling the so-called „Cretan syndrome“.

[FIZILYÜREK, KIZILYÜREK, 2004: 40] Fearing the loss of social and political position, the Cypriot Turks started to identify themselves with Cemalic Turkey and applied similar reforms. The reforms concerned, among others, the change of writing to the Latin type, an emphasis on positive sciences, asserting secularization, westernization of the society, etc. [KIZILYÜREK,KIZILYÜREK, 2004: 41] Under these reforms, the basis of identity for the Turkish community became the rejection of Islamic traditions including the request to define the members of the Turkish community no longer as Muslims but as Cypriot Turks. [KAROULLA - VRIKKIS 2004: 22]

In reaction to the political program enosis, the Turkish community came up with its own political program - taksim (the division of the island according to an ethical and language key), which became decisive for further intra-political development. The long-term conflict over the position of Greek and Turkish, which lasted even after the administration takeover over the island by Great Britain in 1878, was the important element that determined the relations of both communities. In contrast with other colonies, the British administration did not lead to a spread of bilingualism. Paradoxically, most of the Cypriot Turks were bilingual anyway since they had a knowledge of both Turkish (Cypriot Turkish, as the case may be) and Greek-Cypriot dialect. [KAROULLA - VRIKKIS 2004: 22] However, the selection of language for the purposes of inter-ethnical communication depended on many more factors, such as education, purpose of communication, social class, profession or place of residence.

---

1 According to the population census from 1832, there were 198 Christian villages, 92 Muslim villages and 172 mixed villages on Cyprus. Under the Ottoman rule, the coexistence was unconfrontational despite the fact that non-Muslim citizens had to pay a special tax (cizye) [KIZILYÜREK, KIZILYÜREK, 2004: 39]

2 The request of Crete for unification with Greece in 1912 led to a deportation of Muslim inhabitants from the island. [KIZILYÜREK, KIZILYÜREK, 2004: 40]
It was in particular the working class and lower middle class with a lower level of education who used the Greek-Cypriot dialect for inter-ethnical communication. The higher and middle class in both communities used English as their lingua franca, which was obviously the language that enjoyed much higher prestige. [KARYOLEMOU 2002: 217].

The support of the enosis program by the Greek-Cypriot community was confirmed in the unofficial referendum on self-determination held in 1950 in which 96% of voters voted for integration with Greece. [ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages 2008] This nearly absolute support of the unification with Greece by Cypriot Greeks caused the fear of assimilation and jeopardy of losing identity within the Cypriot Turkish community. Since the 1950s, a political program started to be promoted within the Turkish community, which is accompanied by the creation of historical myths and based upon a fabricated thesis stating that the joint co-existence of both communities is impossible with regard to historical experience. During this period, the Cypriot Turks’ elites would come up with an organic conception of a nation according to which the national identity has a biological principle and is determined ever since birth. [KIZILYÜREK, KIZILYÜREK, 2004: 45]

A prominent accentuation of language distinctiveness of both communities becomes a part of the formation of the identity of Cypriot Turks. The „Citizen Speak Turkish“campaign launched in 1958 includes a targeted suppression of a relatively spread bilingualism within the Turkish community in an effort to strengthen the identity of Cypriot Turks. During the Ottoman empire’s rule over Cyprus, many Cypriot Turks were bilingual as a result of the existence of mixed areas. According the statistical data from 1881, 5,4% of Cypriot Turks even stated Greek as their mother tongue. [KIZILYÜREK, KIZILYÜREK, 2004: 46] In an effort to support the use of Turkish language, those Cypriot Turks who spoke Greek or used Greek words were systematically persecuted. Gradually, a fabricated thesis spreads out that the Cypriot Turks belonged to the big family of the Turkish nation and, therefore, the elites of Cypriot Turks started to glorify Turkey as the country of birth for all Turks including the Cypriot ones and dreams of a future attachment of the „lost children“ to Turkey.

The friction related to domestic politics was further strengthened by an attempt by President Makarios III., who, in 1963, proposed a change of thirteen chapters of the Constitution adopted in 1960 in an effort to make the political system more efficient. Factually, it concerned the removal of consensual elements from the Constitution and political system, which guaranteed the Turkish minority a share in power. It concerned, for
example, the abolishment of the presidential and vice-presidential veto, establishment of a unified quorum for passing bills, the change of numeric representation of both communities in public services and security units based on a share in population, etc. Cypriot Turks reacted to this process with great concern as they would lose their guaranteed 7:3 representation ratio in the state administration and the abolishment of the power-sharing concept would limit significantly their influence in the executive and legislative branch, judicial system, army, media, public administration, etc.

The proposed removal of the consensual elements from the political system led to a political crisis and to a loss of legitimacy of the newly formed state, which, according to the Turkish community, transformed as a consequence of pan-Hellenic nationalism purely to a state of Cypriot Greeks. Cypriot Turks reacted to the President Makarios’ action by withdrawal of his representatives from state institutions and the political friction soon broke out into ethnical conflicts, which showed that the co-existence in a joint state would not be easy. The outbreak of the ethnical conflict led in both communities to the accentuation of the significance of language with the aim to strengthen one’s own ethnical identity. During the period of November 1963 – August 1964, the riots claimed 191 casualties amongst the Cypriot Turks, 133 victims among the Cypriot Greeks, 25 thousand of Cypriot Turks and several hundreds of Cypriot Greeks fled into protected enclaves. [AKGÜN, GÜREL, HATAY, TIRYAKI 2005: 27] The domestic political development in Greece where, in 1967, a military junta came into power whose relations with President Makarios was not too good, also projected negatively in to the situation. In reaction to the development in Greece, the President changed the political strategy and turned away from the request for enosis to the request for development of an independent Unitarian Cyprus. He had this attitude confirmed by holding a presidential election, which he won in 1968 by 95,45% of votes within the Greek community. [AKGÜN, GÜREL, HATAY, TIRYAKI 2005: 30] Based on the strong mandate, President Makarios launched negotiations with the representatives of Cypriot Turks, which continued until 1974 with no positive result whatsoever. There are several factors to be analyzed in the development of Cyprus by 1974, which caused the disintegration of the state and confirmed the thesis stating that the concepts of sovereignty, collective identity, territoriality and power sharing may become a source of a conflict. [VURAL, PERISTIANIS 2008: 41 - 43]. These are in particular:

1. **external factors** – interventions by Greece and Turkey into internal affairs of Cyprus
2. *mass support of the enosis program by the communities (until 1968) and taksim*

3. *the destructive influence of the elites – political conflict over the preservation of consensual democracy and emphasizing the organic concept of a nation*

**Identity policy after 1974**

In 1974, the dissatisfaction of the right-wing nationalists bent on unification with Greece led to a political coup against President Makarios supported by the military junta in Greece. Turkey reacted to the coup in accordance with the treaties (London and Zurich Treaties) providing for the formation of an independent Cyprus and the army intervened on the north of the island. The factual division of the island in 1974 means a termination of the state-building process. Divided Cyprus thus became a typical example of a territory functioning as a source of identity, which was further stressed by the formation of ethnically homogenous areas leading to an absolute territorial separation of the members of both communities.

The division of the island resulted in radical demographic changes. As a consequence of the Turkish invasion, 196 thousand Greek refugees left the territory of TRNC, 35 thousand Turkish soldiers stayed on long-term basis and there was a permanent influx of immigrants from poor Turkish Anatolia. [BAAR 2002: 234] The population census data in 2001 showed the total population of the Cypriot Republic as being 689,565 inhabitants, out of which 618,455 were Cypriot Greeks (89,7%), 0,2% Armenians, 0,04% Maronites and 0,05% Cypriot Turks. In Northern Cyprus, there were an estimated 80,000 to 89,000 inhabitants (without 35 thousand Turkish army members and 80,000 to 117,000 Turkish immigrants). 91,7% of Greek community members stated Greek as their mother tongue, 2,3% stated English, 2% stated Russian, 0,3% stated Bulgarian, etc. In general, the estimates are that approximately 71% of inhabitants speak Greek and 22% speak Turkish. [GOUTSOS, KARYOLEMOU 2004: 4]

In an effort to legitimize the Cyprus division retrospectively, an official identity policy was accepted within the Northern-Cypriot Turkish Republic rejecting the existence of the „Cypriot Turks“ and emphasizing the existence only of the Turks who live on Cyprus. The policy of the TRNC identity was based on the ethnical determinism and refusal to tolerate even the slightest difference between the identity of the Cypriot Turks and the mainland Turks. This statement of the TRNC president Rauf Denktash from 13 November, 1995, describes it best: „I am a child of Anatolia. I am a Turk from all my heart with my roots in Central Asia. I am a Turk by culture, language and I share our joint history. The terms like a
joint state, Cypriot culture, Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks are nothing but empty words.” [KIZILYÜREK, KIZILYÜREK, 2004: 48] Until 1974 and on, the essence of the Cypriot Turks’ identity have been the language (Turkish; after the formation of TRNC, the Cypriot dialect is asserted), secularism, ethnical nationalism and the taksim (separation) policy. Nevertheless, the factual division of Cyprus in 1974 paradoxically brings in a new dynamic into creation of a Turkish-Cypriot identity which is strongly linked to the concept of territoriality. In spite of the official policy stressing the unity and uniformity of the entire Turkish nation, a tendency among the Cypriot Turks increased upon the island’s division to stress the difference between them and the mainland Turks, which, in the recent years, has been increasingly stronger. The first real contact with the mainland Anatolian Turks actually showed cultural differences that were more than obvious and led to a rather distinctive friction.

The Cypriot Turks perceived the traditional and religious way of life of the immigrants coming from Turkey (mainly from Anatolia) as undeveloped, uncivilized and oriental, while the incoming Turks looked on the Cypriot Turks as impious and corrupt with westernization. The differences in the identity was even more accentuated by the language differences as the immigrants spoke standard Turkish or Anatolian dialect, while the Cypriot Turks spoke Cypriot dialect. During a very short time frame, this fact gained political dimension and the differences between the two communities became a division mark between them. The Cypriot Turks developed a language inferiority complex which led to an identity crisis arising from the language crisis. [KIZILYÜREK,KIZILYÜREK, 2004: 48 - 49] The Cypriot Turks reacted with political opposition based on the refusal of standard Turkish and insisted on the use of the dialect, which created a social border between the two communities. What is also interesting is the fact that the majority of Cypriot Turks who spoke the Greek-Cypriot dialect before 1963 kept on using it. [KIZILYÜREK, KIZILYÜREK, 2004: 50]

Open interventions of Turkey into TRNC affairs, fear of the arrival of immigrants (which is illegal according to the international law), potential marginalization of the original community of the Cypriot Turks (it is estimated that during 1975 through 1995, up to 35 thousand Cypriot Turks emigrated from TRNC), military influence over all of the aspects of life and both economical and political isolation actually led to a principal change of the process of formation of the Cypriot Turks’ identity. They stopped perceiving themselves primarily as a part of the Turkish nation and, on the contrary, started to link their identity to
the entire Cyprus territory. At the beginning of 21st century, we may identify several factors suggesting a dynamic development in the formation of the all-Cyprus identity.

1. identification of the Turkish community with the Cyprus-wide territory - (as a consequence of the influx of immigrants from Turkey, intervention of Turkish army into TRNC affairs, economical stagnation and political isolation of TRNC)
2. refusal of the enosis program by the Cypriot Greeks
3. replacement of the hard-liners in both parts of Cyprus by constructive leftist elites
   (demise of the President and the opponent of the integration Mr. Papadopulos in 2008 and Mr. Denktas in 2005)

Language policies on Cyprus after 1974

There are three types of language policy identifiable within today's Cyprus. 1) **actual language policy of the Cypriot Republic** arising from the acceptance of the factual system in which both communities were divided geopolitically and the inter-ethnic communication was interrupted as a consequence of the events related to the domestic politics in 1974. Despite the continuing acceptance of the two official languages (Greek and Turkish), it is Greek that is used in practice nearly exclusively, which is supported by the fact that, after 1974, nearly 42 thousand Cypriot Turks left the south of the island and now there are only 361 Cypriot Turks living within the territory controlled by the internationally recognized government. [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages 2008]. After 1974, Turkish factually disappeared from all spheres of the society, e.g. public administration, the educational system, media, army and police, which not only reflects the departure of Cypriot Turks to the north of the island but also a rather negative relations of Cypriot Greeks to Turkish language. Most of the Cypriot Greeks of all ages have a negative feeling about the Turkish language. Only 10% of Cypriot Greeks also show any interest to learn Turkish as a second or third language. They prefer English, French and German. [KARYOLEMOU 2002: 220, Europeans and their languages: 2006]

Similarly, a negative attitude also dominates within the Turkish community towards the Greek language. However, the central government in Nicosia has a principally liberal attitude towards the use of the Turkish language. Turkish is continuously used in travel documents, identity cards, birth certificates, official documents, banknotes, etc. The southern part of Cyprus enables the broadcasting of the bi-communal radio Potamia (its significance is,
however, rather token) and the CBC television broadcasts in Turkish for 2.5 hours a week. Based on the government’s decision from 2001, Turkish is taught to Turkish pupils in private schools and, since the school year 2003/2004, Turkish is also lectured as a foreign language in high schools of teaching humanities for Greek students. Turkish is also lectured at the Department of Turkish Studies of the University of Cyprus. [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages 2008] Although the Cypriot Greeks do have a negative approach towards the Turkish language, they strongly respect the language diversity. [Europeans and their languages: 2006].

2) factual language policy of TRNC. As opposed to the southern part controlled by the internationally recognized government, the TRNC authorities do not respect the joint constitution from 1960 in terms of the language policy. The only official language within TRNC is Turkish, which obtained a dominant position, and thus, the Greek language became illegal. Turkish became the dominating language of all spheres of the society and after the departure of 196 thousand Greeks (it is estimated that 400 Cypriot Greeks remained living up north), the Greek language was entirely pushed out from the public sphere, educational system, media, traffic signs or trade. At the beginning of the 21st century, however, the TRNC attitude towards the position of the Greek language became rather liberal.

3) official language policy arising from the Constitution from 1960. This is the last model of the language policy (a historical relic of the joint state), which may be identified on Cyprus. It arises from the Constitution in 1960 (Amendment D, Article 3, paragraph 1) according to which Greek and Turkish are used as the official languages. The central government in Nicosia continues to respect the position of the Turkish language as an official language, which is also reflected, for example, in the fact that 24 legislative mandates reserved upon the Constitution from 1960 are permanently vacant. It is only a formal approach based on the refusal to accept any factual existence of TRNC in any way. Principles of this language policy were also a part of the overall solution for the island’s integration, i.e. the so-called Annan’s plan. Should the agreement be reached over the unification of the island, the language policy will be based on this model of language policy where English as a lingua franca will play an important role in inter-ethnical communication (especially in the younger generation).
Language Bridge

As mentioned above, after the state’s division into two parts, according to the ethnical border, the language policy was also changed in both parts of Cyprus. The TRNC elites thus attempted to have confirmed the fundamental changes related to domestic politics and, at the same time, the process culminated in creating an identity based on the language and negative delimitation towards the Greek community. Right-wing and nationalistic parties in the Greek part put a similarly strong emphasis on the position of a language. The rise of the nationalistic movements attempting to renew the traditional values, such as the language or religion, was confirmed by the establishment of a right-wing government in 1992. [KARYOLEMOU 2002: 220] The issue of language thus became the center of interest of the nationalists who were not too keen on using English at a newly originating university, which was the topic of discussion through the entire eighties (the issue of teaching English at a university was introduced for the first time in 1968). The right-centrists preferred the establishment of a one and only official language (Greek), while the left- and right-wing parties supported a so-called constitutional solution (i.e., the introduction of two tuitional languages – Greek and Turkish). Factually, it was just the communists who supported the introduction of English as a one of the tuitional languages. On the other hand, Cypriot Turks established several universities in the north part of the island that lectured in English. [KARYOLEMOU 2002: 215 - 222] These were, e.g., the Eastern Mediterranean University, Near East University, Middle East Technical University and Cyprus International University.

The geopolitical division of communities deepened the language isolation and the lack of mutual contacts limited the knowledge of Turkish and Greek among the Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks to a minimum. [KARYOLEMOU 2002: 217]. A long period of separation created a great communication gap which may only be overcome by using the lingua franca, which would not be bringing along any negative values associated with two ethnical languages and identity of neither one of the communities. It is unreal to expect that the communication gap between the two communities could be overcome by a majority (Greek) or minority (Turkish) language. The use of a third language could thus serve as a neutral language bridge enabling communication on both the elite and mass levels.

Given its colonial past, it is English that could serve as a potential lingua franca, which is supported also by its expansion within Cyprus, however not as prominent as in other British ex-colonies. The British administration did not lead to an enforcement of bilingualism
despite the fact that the knowledge of English meant an opportunity to find an employment in government positions and contact with the colonial elite. [KAROULLA - VRIKKIS 2004: 22] English is not only an imported colonial language, the language of the British community and of military personnel on a sovereign military basis but also a lingua franc of a large number of foreigners coming not only from the English-speaking countries, such as India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan but also from many Eastern-European countries. [GOUTSOS, KARYOLEMOU 2004: 9] English is also widely used for various purposes (in science, tourism, media, business and, in fact, within the entire public sector), although it is not being officially recognized. [MCENTEE - ATALIANIS 2004: 81] The advantage of English is also its acceptability by minority Maronites who came from Syria and Lebanon in the 12th century.

The question is whether or not English may be implemented as a neutral language given the colonial history of Cyprus. One of the main objections is, above all, the often mentioned negative relation of Cypriot Greeks to an imperial language. A more positive approach to English as the language of colonial administration was traditionally expressed by the Turkish community who did not perceive English but Greek as a source of a threat to its own identity. Paradoxically, however, a majority of Cypriot Turks were bilingual as it demonstrated the knowledge of Greek (or Cypriot Turkish, respectively) and Cypriot-Greek dialect. [KAROULLA -VRIKKIS 2004: 22] As opposed to the fear of Cypriot Turks to the dominance of Greek (or Cypriot-Greek dialect, respectively), the Greek community did fear Turkish as it could be expected but potentially the growing role of English.

Historically, English was perceived as the main source of threat to the Greek identity, which was in connection with the evermore Turkism and strongly anti-Christian perception of British administration. Also the fact that Turkish was the only official language had a negative effect to which the Greek community reacted with two requests for the introduction of Greek as an official language in the administrative and judicial systems during the first four years of British administration. [KAROULLA - VRIKKIS 2004: 24] The Turkish community showed a much more favorable attitude towards English. In 1946, Dr. Fadil Kutchuk, secretary general of the Turkish National Peoples’Party, stated that the Turkish community welcomes the introduction of the official correspondence in English and no longer in Greek. [KAROULLA - VRIKKIS 2004: 28] However, the colonial language was not in fact adopted by any of the two communities as a lingua franca for apprehension of cultural, ethnical and language assimilation.
The question is, however, to what extent this is an attitude spread within the society and how far this is only an attitude of a part of the cultural and political elite. The assertions of jeopardy of the Cypriot-Greek identity resulting from the use of English are often empirically unfounded\(^3\); however, the empirical data prove the contrary. Compared to the EU member states, the Cypriot-Greeks’ approach to the knowledge of foreign languages is very positive. 98% of inhabitants believe that, besides their mother tongue, one should also speak another language. Surveys show that, except for the mother tongue, the most preferred languages are English (94%), French (35%), German (19%), Turkish (10%), Italian (7%) and Russian (5%). It follows from the aforesaid data that the Greek community has a very positive approach towards English as opposed to Turkey, which is the fourth preferred language with a very prominent distance behind English and French. [Europeans and their languages: 2006] Monolingualism in the younger generation is particularly a clear argument for the thesis of English potentially becoming a lingua franca with regard to its relatively neutral nature and global significance, which is attractive mainly to the younger generation.

73% of Cypriot Greeks declare communication knowledge of English (out of which 28% uses English nearly on a daily basis), which is significantly above the EU average (35%). [Europeans and their languages: 2006] On the other hand, the position of English in legislation, administration and the public sector has been very much weakened in the past thirty years. [GOUTSOS, KARYOLEMOU 2004: 10] The role of English, which served in the past as an official language of British administration and a lingua franca, was targetedly reduced. In 1989, it ceased to be used in court proceedings and in 1996 in legislation. [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages 2008] After all, English has been strongly enforcing itself within both communities as a second language mainly in younger generations for the reasons that entirely transcend the issues of national identity. The reasons for expansion of English concern mainly the motivation to find skilled work, opportunities to work abroad, communicate during travels abroad, global role of English, etc.

\(^3\) For example Karoulla – Vrikkis maintains that by the use of English, the Cypriot-Greek identity is being subconsciously refused [MCENTEE – ATALIANIS: 2004: 83].
Conclusion

The development on Cyprus after 1960 proved that the sovereignty, territoriality, power-sharing and collective identity may easily become a source of conflict related to domestic politics. In the case of Cyprus, it concerned the dispute between the Greek community asserting the *enosis* program and the Turkish community asserting the *taksim* program. In connection with internal development on Cyprus, in Greece and in Turkey, the latter was actually implemented in 1974 and formally confirmed in 1983 by declaration of the TRNC. Political dispute over the concept of power-sharing resulted in the state’s division to two ethnically homogenous parts, in termination of the state-building process and in building a Cypriot-wide identity.

Gaining exclusive control over the TRNC territory, which was the long-term target of the Cypriot-Turkish community, resulted in a paradoxical disruption in the building of the Cypriot-wide identity. The international political and economical isolation, Turkish interventions into TRNC affairs, presence of the Turkish military and, above all, the influx of immigrants from Turkey was in sharp contrast with the idealized image of Turkey. Cypriot Turks started to realize the fundamental differences in the identity of the mainland and Cypriot Turks demonstrated paradoxically in language difference, in culture, role of the religion in society, but also in a way of dressing. Immigrants from Anatolia (or all Turks, respectively) started to be perceived as retarded, uncivilized and religious. The fear of the loss of the traditionally secular character of the society was further supported by building mosques and renaming public areas, i.e. the processes that have nothing in common with the identity of Cypriot Turks. It was paradoxically only after the achievement of their political goal (i.e., division of the island and a creation of an ethnically homogenic territory they control exclusively) when the Cypriot Turks started to link their national identity to the entire island. This process culminated in a referendum in 2004 when 64,9% Cypriot Turks agreed with the unification of the island according to the Annan’s plan. Although the unification was refused by the Cypriot-Greek community (75,83% voted against it), the reasons for the refusal were mainly pragmatistical (dissatisfaction with the proposal for property restitutions).

Since 1974, the perception of a Cypriot-wide identity has been developing dynamically within both communities (mainly in the Turkish one). In the context of changes in the highest political positions, where political elites supporting the islands’ unification came to power
within both communities\textsuperscript{4}, suitable conditions for the island’s unification were created on both the mass and political elite level. In a prospective process leading to the unification of the island and renewal of the state-building process interrupted in 1974 (or already in 1963, respectively), there are several sensitive issues to be resolved that may evoke another conflict between the two communities. It concerns particularly the solution of the issue of illegal immigrants from Turkey, property restitutions, departure of the Turkish army and the determination of power-sharing principles.

\textbf{Literature:}


\textsuperscript{4}In 2005, the long-term President of TRNC R. Denktash was replaced by leftist Mehmet Ali Talat, who maintained long-term party contacts with leftist representative Dimitris Christofias, who, in 2008, replaced President Tassos Papadopoulos known as a strong opponent of the island’s unification.
Internet sources: