



## CHAPTER 11

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# The Development of Prejudice in Children: The Case of Cyprus

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### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we discuss the concept of prejudice, broadly defined as a generalized antipathy toward a social group (Allport 1954), and how it develops in children through the lens of different developmental theories. We use these theoretical foundations to examine the case of Cyprus in relation to prejudice development among Greek and Turkish Cypriot children. In the first part of the chapter, we discuss concepts adjacent to prejudice such as category awareness, identification with one's own category, preference for one's own social group, and discrimination against other social groups, and we present the key social psychological theories of prejudice development in children. The second part of the chapter is devoted to presenting the case of Cyprus as a context of ethnic conflict and inter-ethnic prejudice. We review the main studies aiming to track the onset as well as the nature of prejudice among Greek and Turkish Cypriot children and critically discuss these studies while highlighting the specificities of the Cypriot sociopolitical context. In the last part of the

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chapter, we discuss how existing theories of prejudice development can not only inform the case of Cyprus but can also be informed by it. We conclude by offering a set of recommendations about addressing prejudice in childhood through research and education.

### *Development of Prejudice in Children*

Children begin to behave as social actors, meaning that they begin to be aware of social categories and to identify themselves as members of a social category, from as early as three to five years old (Clark and Clark 1947; Piaget and Weil 1951). Category awareness and identification with selected categories go hand in hand with the subsequent formation of concepts, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors toward groups outside one's own.

Brown (2010) in a comprehensive report on the development of prejudice in children, offers a distinction between (a) children's awareness of social categories; (b) their choice of categories with which they identify and express preference for; and (c) their full-blown intergroup attitudes and behavior. Even though these stages are, at least from a certain age onwards, interlinked, this distinction is helpful in terms of understanding how prejudice transforms from a mere preference for (or bias toward) one's own group, the ingroup (ingroup preference) to the outward discrimination against other, typically adversarial, groups, that are construed as outgroups (outgroup derogation).

Age, gender, and ethnicity are the most dominant categories during the first years of children's lives. In a classic study, Clark and Clark (1947) presented white and colored children with two or more dolls, one of them of white color and another one of brown color, and asked them to point to the one that looked more like a white or a colored child. The findings of their study showed that 75% of the children at the age of three correctly pointed at their own ethnicity's doll and this elevated to 90% at the age of five.

Studies show that ethnicity is the most prevalent source of categorization in young children, which speaks to the centrality of ethnicity as a category of reference. When Brown and Yee (1988) for example, presented pictures representing different ethnicity, gender, and age groups to children, they found that children at the age of three made no distinctions between these photographs but by the age of five, ethnicity emerged as a criterion for categorization. This illustrates that the

five-year-olds were better at grouping pictures based on ethnicity rather than based on gender and age.

Awareness of own country and knowledge about other countries are recorded at about 5 years of age, which is when children start to classify themselves as members of their own national group (Piaget and Weil 1951). By mid-childhood (ages eight to nine), children's knowledge of the people who belong to their own group expands considerably. By age ten, if not earlier, children have knowledge of the main stereotypical traits that are attributed to members of their own national group (Piaget and Weil 1951).

Apart from being aware of the existence of categories, young children also show a preference for their own group. In a study by Tajfel et al. (1972), for example, Scottish, English and Israeli children were asked to categorize a set of photographs into two categories (English and Scottish or Oriental and European) and rate how much they liked the look of the individuals portrayed in the photos. The results showed a clear preference for one's own nationality. Other studies conducted in Israel (Bar-Tal 1996; Teichman et al. 2007), Australia (Nesdale 1999) and Great Britain (Bennett et al. 1998), confirm that strong ingroup identification *and* ingroup preference emerge in early childhood.

Ingroup preference goes hand in hand with a liking of the ingroup (and its members), which, as will be discussed next, can give way to a comparison with outgroups and can culminate to intergroup bias and outgroup derogation. Intergroup bias refers to a clear preference of the ingroup in comparison to outgroups (Hewstone et al. 2002) and it typically takes the form of liking the ingroup more than the outgroup (Brewer 2001). Under some circumstances, ingroup liking can be accompanied by outgroup derogation, that is having negative attitudes and actively discriminating against an outgroup, as opposed to just liking it less than one's own group (Hewstone et al. 2002).

While category awareness and initial identification may be regarded as universal processes (taking place invariably across individuals and contexts), the degree to which children identify with their chosen categories and the extent to which mere ingroup preference is also accompanied by negative outgroup attitudes and discrimination, is more likely to be affected by contextual factors. Such factors include the presence of conflict between two social groups or being raised in an environment where one is exposed and thereby influenced by the attitudes held by family and peers, or communicated via formal schooling and the media.

Psychological theories of prejudice development in children differ in the emphasis they place on contextual factors affecting prejudice development. A presentation of the main social psychological theories of prejudice development in children follows.

## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF PREJUDICE DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN

### *Sociocognitive Theory of Development*

Until recently, the most influential theories of prejudice development adopted a social cognition approach to prejudice development, which largely draws from the cognitive-developmental theory of Jean Piaget. Inspired by Piaget's work, Aboud (1988) formulated the *Sociocognitive theory of development* via which she proposed that the stage of cognitive development is the main determinant of children's attitudes and behaviors toward outgroup members. According to this theory, at earlier cognitive stages younger children are more egocentric and tend to overestimate categorization. This leads them to conceptualize their social environment using distinct categories whose differences are exaggerated. Aboud (1988) contends that there is a decline in the expression of prejudice after the age of seven, which coincides with a shift to more advanced stages of cognitive development. At this age, children can understand that members of different social groups like Blacks [sic] and Whites can be both good and bad. In older ages, when their cognitive system matures, children are able to recognize similarities across groups and differences within their own group while being more capable to empathize and to take other people's and groups' perspectives into account. Additionally, older children stop to focus merely on group-differences, and they develop the ability to make social judgments also on the basis of individual characteristics.

While the findings of a number of studies provide support to the developmental predictions of this theory (e.g., Bar-Tal 1996; Doyle and Aboud 1995), the critiques of the Sociocognitive theory point out that it underestimates or does not take into account the role of the context in the formation and involvement of cognitive processes (Verkuyten 2004; Verkuyten and Thijs 2001). We present next approaches or theories that acknowledge the role of social context in prejudice development and attempted to factor it in their theorizing.

### *Social Learning Approach*

The *social learning approach*, influenced by Albert Bandura's social learning theory, contends that humans may come with a propensity to prejudge, stereotype, and discriminate, but they are also brought up in an environment which influences the content of their social images. According to this approach, children are influenced by their social surroundings (e.g., peers, family, media, and school) in forming an image about their own groups as well as about other groups. For example, Gordon Allport (1954) in his seminal book *The Nature of Prejudice* suggested that children first tend to copy and then internalize what they are exposed to in their environment. Along with this proposition comes the prediction that prejudice increases with age, when children start to internalize others' attitudes. This prediction is in direct opposition to the sociocognitive theory's prediction that prejudice declines in older ages because of cognitive maturity.

### *Social Identity Theory of Development (SIDT)*

The SIDT, developed by Nesdale (1999) draws primarily on the Social Identity Theory of Tajfel and Turner (1979). At the heart of the account of the Social Identity Theory is that intergroup attitudes that are a product of individuals' identification with a social category (ingroup) and that the *strength of identification* with their ingroup will dictate the nature of the relationship with other social groups (outgroups). Children, like adolescents and adults, have a fundamental need to belong that motivates them to become members of different social groups (Nesdale 1999). Belonging to a particular social group relates directly to children's sense of self-worth and therefore the ingroup's social standing largely determines their self-esteem. To maintain positive self-esteem or enhance self-esteem, children develop the need to belong to high-standing/successful social groups. To achieve a positive image for the ingroup, individuals either favor their ingroup and/or derogate against outgroups that are in direct competition with their own group. Nesdale (1999) and Nesdale and Brown (2004) argue that in more competitive contexts and when under threat (from outgroups), identification with ingroup is even stronger, and the likelihood of outward discrimination against outgroups, as opposed to mere ingroup preference, is even larger.

Finally, according to SIDT, the developmental course of prejudice in children can be divided into four stages: (a) the undifferentiated stage during which social category cues are not salient (two–three years of age); (b) the ethnic awareness stage during which children become aware of their ingroup and identify with it. Since ethnicity is one of the most salient markers of group categorization, awareness of and identification with own ethnic group is observed early on (three–five years of age); (c) the ethnic preference stage at which children demonstrate preference for their ingroup without any particular outgroup focus (six–seven years of age); (d) ethnic prejudice stage where a shift from ingroup preference to outgroup derogation can be observed (ages of seven and above). For outgroup derogation to occur in the latter stage, certain conditions need to be met, like for example ethnic constancy (the understanding that one’s identity is unchangeable) and presence of competition, confliction, and threat from other groups.

### *Societal-Social-Cognitive-Motivational Theory (SSCMT)*

Barrett (2007) and Barrett and Davis (2008) developed a more comprehensive model that strives to take into account all the possible factors which impact children’s attitudes toward other groups. This led to the formation of the Societal-social-cognitive-motivational theory (SSCMT), which draws largely from all of the aforementioned theories. The SSCMT is in agreement with the social learning approach, as to the claim that all children grow up and socialize in unique societal environments, which are shaped by historical, geographical, economic, and other circumstances. These circumstances shape the relationships between the children’s ingroup and relevant outgroups. The children become aware, and in the long run they become bearers, of these intergroup norms as these are communicated to them primarily by their parents and by their teachers via a number of ways including oral histories, school textbooks, and mass media.

In agreement with the sociocognitive theory and the Social Identity Theory, Barrett (2007) and Barrett and Davis (2008) argue that which information the children are going to attend to will be influenced by the children’s personal characteristics, as for example the level of identification with their ingroup, level of cognitive development, and other motivational and affective processes like their ability for empathy and perspective taking.

### *The Case of Cyprus*

Years of turmoil between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities in Cyprus culminated in a coup d'état backed up by the Greek military in 1974 and a Turkish military operation days later. These interventions led to the geographical division of the island across ethnic lines. In practice, this meant a complete physical separation of the two communities and their social, emotional, and political alienation (Zembylas et al. 2011). The division prevented any form of contact between the two communities who became increasingly estranged. This non-communication provided fertile ground for the cultivation of different social representations within the two communities particularly with regards to *the Cyprus Question* and the country's history (Makriyianni and Psaltis 2007; Psaltis 2011). Education has been one of the mediums used to propagate each side's narrative (Mertan 2011).

According to the narrative that is promoted especially by formal education, in the Greek Cypriot community, Turks are the enemy for they invaded and occupied a section of the island and because they prevent peace from prevailing (Papadakis 2008). Spyrou (2002) conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Greek Cypriot schools where he asked primary school children to name a group of people who are very different from them. The vast majority of the children mentioned the Turks. When the researcher asked them to write down the opposites of a number of words, including the word "Turks", the most frequent responses were "Cypriots" (equated with "Greek Cypriots"), "Greeks", "[Christian] Orthodox", and "good" (p. 264). Furthermore, the children described Turks with the use of very negative adjectives such as "barbarians", "heartless", "dirty", "illiterate", "rapists", and "murderers" (p. 264).

Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, are perceived by most Greek Cypriot children as victims and sufferers, much like Greek Cypriots, because of Turkey's offensive policies (Spyrou 2002). As Spyrou concluded, children see Turkish Cypriots as "different kinds of people" (p. 266) in comparison to mainland Turks and they are not perceived as the real problem in Cyprus. Another set of findings of this study showed that the categories "Turks" and "Turkish Cypriots" were not in reality independent of each other and were rather fluid in terms of their content. For example, Greek Cypriot children classified Rauf Denktaş, the Turkish Cypriot leader at the time, as a Turk (even though he was Turkish Cypriot), precisely because he was seen as "evil" just like the

“Turkish occupiers” (Spyrou 2002, p. 266). As other studies showed, the distinction between “Turks” and “Turkish Cypriots” is, in fact, rarely made (Zembylas and Bekerman 2008). Often the word *they* is used by Greek Cypriots to describe everyone living on the other side of the divide (Zembylas and Bekerman 2008).

The mainstream historical narrative in the Turkish Cypriot side is one in which Turkish Cypriots are construed as victims who managed, however, with the help of motherland Turkey to endure the perpetual siege of Greek Cypriots (Lacher and Kaymak 2005). For Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots and not Greeks are the main enemy. Mertan (2011) describes that in school, Turkish Cypriot children are in various ways asked to show their allegiance to Turkey and its symbols while at the same time the derogation and alienation of the “other” is also put forward. She provides as an example of that the increase of the popularity of the Turkish word “Gavur” (infidel), a word used by Muslims to define the non-Muslim adversarial groups, to describe Greek Cypriots.

### *Ingroup Identification and Prejudice Development Among Greek and Turkish Cypriot Children*

The only systematic studies that tracked the development of prejudice in children in Cyprus, were conducted by Stavrinides and Georgiou (2011), in the Greek Cypriot community and Mertan (2011), in the Turkish Cypriot community. These studies were part of a multi-country project aiming at measuring the development of ethnic identification and prejudice in children aged between seven and eleven years.

One of the main goals of the project was to test the contradicting predictions of the different theories of prejudice development in children, presented earlier in this chapter. Specifically, the project sought out to provide answers to questions such as: (1) are ethnic/national identification and prejudice increasing with age as the Social Identity Development Theory would predict or do they decrease with age as the sociocognitive theory would predict?; (2) is there an association between ethnic/national identification and ingroup preference and/or outgroup derogation as the Social Identity Development Theory would predict?; and (3) in high-conflict contexts where there is perceived threat from the outgroup, is ingroup preference coupled with outgroup derogation as the Social Identity Development Theory would predict?



The countries participating in the project were either countries that recently faced or are still facing armed intergroup conflict: Cyprus (Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots), Israel (Jews and Palestinians), Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosniaks and Serbs), Northern Ireland (Protestant and Catholics) and the Basque country (Basque and Spanish), or countries that did not experience violent conflict in the recent past: England and the Netherlands.

Stavriniades and Georgiou (2011) and Mertan (2011) used similar methodologies but utilized two different samples, Greek Cypriot children and Turkish Cypriot children, respectively. Their sample consisted of almost equal numbers of boys and girls and was divided into two age groups; the younger age group whose mean age was about seven years in both samples and the older age group whose mean age was about ten years for the Greek Cypriot sample and eleven years for the Turkish Cypriot sample. The sample size of each age group was for Greek Cypriots: younger group ( $n=18$ ), older group ( $n=57$ ), and for Turkish Cypriots: younger group ( $n=39$ ), older group ( $n=32$ ).

Both studies measured: (i) identification with national identity (i.e., Greek or Turkish Cypriot identity accordingly) (e.g., importance of identity, degree of identification, affect toward identity); (ii) attribution of positive (e.g., clean, friendly, clever, happy) and negative (e.g., dirty, unfriendly, lazy, dishonest) traits to the ingroup, the target outgroup (Turkish Cypriots for Greek Cypriots and Greek Cypriots for Turkish Cypriots), as well as to neutral outgroups (Irish and Dutch); and (iii) feelings of like/dislike toward the ingroup, the target outgroup, and the neutral groups.

*Ingroup favoritism* was operationalized as ascribing more positive traits to the ingroup than to the target or neutral outgroups and reporting more liking of the ingroup in comparison to the target and neutral outgroups. *Outgroup derogation* was operationalized as ascribing more negative traits to outgroups than to ingroup and reporting more feelings of dislike toward outgroups in comparison to ingroup. The two studies sought to investigate whether: (1) the degree of: (i) identification with Greek or Turkish Cypriot identity; (ii) ingroup favoritism; and (iii) outgroup derogation, differed by age and gender; and (2) identification with Greek or Turkish Cypriot identity correlated with ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation.

The results for Turkish Cypriot children showed clear evidence of ingroup favoritism as well as of outgroup derogation across age and gender categories. Turkish Cypriot children, regardless of their age or gender, exhibited ingroup favoritism by attributing more positive traits to their ingroup than to all outgroups (Greek Cypriots, Dutch and Irish), and they also attributed more negative traits to Greek Cypriots (but not to Dutch and Irish) than to their ingroup (outgroup derogation). Outgroup derogation, therefore, was only expressed toward the target outgroup: Greek Cypriots. Turkish Cypriot children also reported liking their own group more than the two neutral outgroups and Greek Cypriots. They furthermore ranked Greek Cypriots as the least liked group of all outgroups.

Identification with the Turkish Cypriot identity was at very high levels in the Turkish Cypriot sample, but it did not differ by age group. The degree of identification, however, differed by gender: girls reported higher identification with the Turkish Cypriot identity than boys. Finally, identification with the Turkish Cypriot identity was found to correlate with ingroup favoritism but not with outgroup derogation. Stronger identification with the Turkish Cypriot identity was linked to more liking of the ingroup but was not accompanied by a greater dislike for outgroups.

The results for Greek Cypriot children regarding ingroup preference and outgroup derogation were similar to the ones of Turkish Cypriot children. Greek Cypriot children showed clear ingroup preference as the ingroup was attributed the highest number of positive traits and was liked the most, whereas the outgroups (Dutch, Irish and Turkish Cypriots) were liked less and were attributed more negative traits. The discrepancy between ingroup and outgroup was even greater for the target outgroup (Turkish Cypriots). Contrary to Turkish Cypriot children for whom there was no age or gender difference in ingroup preference or outgroup derogation, older Greek Cypriot children reported less liking for all outgroups than younger children. Similarly to the results of the Turkish Cypriot sample, on the other hand, Greek Cypriot girls were found to identify with Greek Cypriot identity more strongly than boys. Lastly, there was no association between identification with Greek Cypriot identity and ingroup preference or outgroup derogation in the Greek Cypriot sample.

The results of the two studies combined showed that both Greek and Turkish Cypriot children exhibited a clear preference for their own

group which was also accompanied by active outgroup dislike toward the ingroup's target outgroup, namely Greek Cypriots for Turkish Cypriots, and Turkish Cypriots for Greek Cypriots. This finding suggests that prejudice, taking the form of both ingroup preference *and* outgroup derogation, is already present at the age of seven, in both Greek and Turkish Cypriot children. Children in both communities also distinguished between neutral groups and the target outgroup: whereas they demonstrated intergroup bias that took the form of ingroup preference between their ingroup and all other outgroups, when it came down to outgroup derogation, this was observed only for the target outgroups.

Another important finding is that neither ingroup preference nor outgroup derogation declined with age as the sociocognitive theory would predict. That means that the cognitive advancement, which comes with age and allows children to think in more refined and less reified terms about intergroup relations, does not affect the way children feel about outgroups in the Cypriot context. If anything, it was the younger and not the older children who showed more positive attitudes toward Turkish Cypriots in the Greek Cypriot community, by comparison to their older counterparts.

Possible explanations for this latter finding is that older Greek Cypriot children have had more exposure to negative ingroup norms toward the outgroup or that that older children spent more time in formal schooling, which means that they are also more likely to have been influenced by nationalistic education. Of course, these should also stand true for (older) Turkish Cypriot children as well. However, older Turkish Cypriot children were not found to be more prejudiced than their younger counterparts in the reported study.

The absence in the Turkish Cypriot sample of an age effect similar to the one observed in the Greek Cypriot sample could be attributed to the changes that took place in history textbooks since 2003 in the Turkish Cypriot community, which was three years before these data were collected. The new history textbooks, according to Mertan (2011) provide a more balanced account of historical events, and as such, they do not directly aim at strengthening the Turkish Cypriot identity and at nurturing hostility against the other community (Papadakis 2008). The absence of more studies akin to the ones of Mertan (2011) and Stavrinides and Georgiou (2011) does not allow us to further corroborate or reject any of these potential explanations of the findings. Furthermore, there is no published study known to us that tracked the changes in the attitudes of

Turkish Cypriot students toward the Greek Cypriot community before and after the adoption of the new textbooks.

The results of the two studies also showed that, contrary to the main prediction of the Social Identity Development Theory, identification with the Greek and Turkish Cypriot identities was not found to be associated with more dislike toward the outgroup. There was only some evidence in the Turkish Cypriot community that identification with the Turkish Cypriot identity was correlated positively with positive ingroup attitudes, but not with outgroup derogation. The absence of a relationship between national identification and outgroup derogation is surprising, particularly in a context like Cyprus where intergroup conflict is predominantly based on ethnic memberships.

A problem of the two studies in our view is that they measure identification with the identities “Greek Cypriots” and “Turkish Cypriots” without really knowing what the content of each of these two identities is for the children who participated in the studies. The mere fact that these identities are compound, consisting of two different identities, the subgroup or ethnic identity: “Greek”; “Turkish” and the civic identity “Cypriot”, raises the question of which part of the identity each child is mostly identified with.

Finally, an interesting finding of Georgiou and Stavrinides’ and Mertan’s (2011) studies that was true for both communities was that girls attributed more importance to their Greek or Turkish Cypriot identity than boys of the two communities. Even though higher identification with their national identity, did not lead to a gender effect on ingroup preference and outgroup derogation, this discrepancy between boys and girls in both communities is interesting. When discussing this finding, Mertan contended that girls are more exposed to family narratives from female family members, thus implying that female family members are more likely to reproduce the dominant narrative of their communities, which could lead to a stronger sense of belonging to the community. This contention is backed up by recent findings from nation-wide surveys showing women in both communities to be less ready and willing to reconcile with the other community. Greek Cypriot women and to a lesser extent Turkish Cypriot women in comparison to men of their respective communities, report that they feel more threatened by the other community, that they are more anxious to meet with members of the other community and that they are more likely to want to keep their distances from the other community (UNDP-ACT and

SeeD 2015). This fearful response to the other community that is more prevalent in women than men, is likely to be conveyed to children of the same gender. Stronger identification with the community's identity could be seen as a way to buffer oneself against a feared "other".

This latter point about the possibility of children adopting their parents' attitudes raises the discussion of how the schooling system (and particularly school teachers) can, and in our view do, play a role in shaping children's attitudes. In earlier parts of this chapter, we alluded to the role of formal education in generating and sustaining intergroup prejudice in Cyprus. Schoolteachers are the ones responsible for implementing national educational strategies and the national curriculum, and they are the representatives of the educational system with whom the children have the most frequent contact.

There are studies with Greek Cypriot teachers showing that in their majority they have rather negative feelings toward Turkish Cypriots, and even more importantly, that they find it hard to overcome the fears and anxieties they have toward the other community (Zembylas 2010; Zembylas et al. 2011). In an ethnographic study, Zembylas (2010) evaluated the perception of Turkish-speaking children within Greek Cypriot teachers' discourses. He found that Greek Cypriot teachers espouse ethnocentric views when it comes to Turkish-speaking children. One of the teachers in the study, for example, mentioned that Turkish-speaking children "are children but they are also of Turkish origin" (p. 14). Greek Cypriot teachers furthermore rationalized their negative views using the political situation in Cyprus thus defending the "right" of Greek Cypriots to be racists.

Greek Cypriot teachers were also found to be unprepared and unwilling to adopt reconciliatory policies. Zembylas et al. (2011) examined the reactions of Greek Cypriot teachers to the government's initiative to set the promotion of a culture of peaceful coexistence between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, as its central educational objective for the year 2008–2009 (Ministry of Education and Culture 2008, as cited by Zembylas et al. 2011). The initiative emphasized that education should highlight the elements that unite Greek and Turkish Cypriots and that characterize them as one people. Toward that end, teachers were encouraged to "get closer and become acquainted with the cultural expression of the two communities, so that they can transfer it to the students" (Ministry of Education and Culture 2008 as cited by Zembylas et al. 2011, p. 332). There was also a direction for the values of peaceful

coexistence to be diffused in all aspects of school life and exchange of visits to and from Turkish Cypriot schools came up as an idea. The latter suggestion was heavily criticized by the main trade union of teachers who issued a formal statement expressing their “strong disagreement regarding the suggestion for visit exchanges between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots” (Zembylas et al. 2011, p. 332).

In the same study, Zembylas et al. asked participants questions about their attitudes toward reconciliation and their perceptions toward the educational objective. The findings showed that teachers appreciated the importance of cultivating peaceful coexistence but that they felt that they lacked the readiness to implement the new objective while they also had their reservations with regards to its feasibility. More importantly, younger teachers (aged 36 and under; born after the division of the island) were significantly less positive toward the new objective in comparison to the older cohort.

Contrary to Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots have made some decisive steps of progress in eradicating nationalism from education with the most prominent step being the change of history textbooks in 2003 (Mertan 2011; Papadakis 2008). Academics and teachers themselves were key actors in the conception and the implementation of this initiative. Turkish Cypriot teachers often stand in the forefront of reconciliation via their main trade union (KTOS). This goes to say that the dominant views in the schoolteacher communities of the two sides differ and that this too may play a moderating role in whether initial prejudicial beliefs of children in the two communities are sustained through late childhood and adolescence or whether they are mitigated to give room for more reconciliatory views.

## DISCUSSION

Our goal in this chapter was twofold: (i) to discuss how prejudice develops in children and the factors determining its course as these were identified by theories of prejudice development, and (ii) to critically examine the studies tracking prejudice among Greek and Turkish Cypriot children and to discuss their findings in light of key characteristics of the Cypriot context. As an outcome of addressing these two subgoals, we develop a set of assertions as well as recommendations as follows: (i) gender vis-a-vis prejudice development, (ii) measuring national identification among Greek and Turkish Cypriot children, and (iii) the role of teachers and ways forward.

### *Gender and Prejudice Development*

There is at least some evidence from studies in Cyprus presented in this chapter suggesting that gender might play a role in prejudice development. In these studies, girls were found to identify more strongly with their ingroup than boys, and this was the case in both communities. While stronger ingroup identification was not found to correlate with higher ingroup preference and/or outgroup derogation in these studies, this could have merely been a result of small sample sizes. There is overwhelming literature in social psychology showing that stronger ingroup identification correlates with stronger ingroup preference and a greater propensity to derogate against outgroups, especially in contexts of conflict (e.g., Nesdale 1999). Gender differences were also detected in older ages in both communities in nation-wide survey. Women by comparison to men were found to be more prejudiced toward the other community and more resistant to the idea of coexistence (UNDP-ACT and SeeD 2015).

These findings suggest that gender is a factor worth taking into account when examining the development of prejudice in children and the differing expressions of prejudice in adults. Yet, gender, as a construct, is absent from theories of prejudice development in children. The developmental processes described by these theories are considered to be invariant across genders; thus no predictions were formulated in the past as to whether gender can moderate the onset as well as the development and the nature of prejudice in children.

There are grounds to believe, however, that boys and girls do develop differently as social actors, especially due to differing environmental influences. To name one example, gendered toys, like guns and soldiers for boys, as opposed to dolls for girls, encourage boys to be more pre-occupied with conflict, combat and war, which could render them more sensitive to the existence of outgroups while also encouraging them to adopt a more offensive (militant) attitude toward them. Girls, on the other hand, are often brought up in an environment where men of their ingroup are there to protect them from threatening outgroupers, namely other men who are “barbarians”, “rapists” and “murderers” (Spyrou 2002). Hence, boys are braised for a fight, while girls are more prone to fear the enemy. These differences should be even more prevalent in countries where the threatening outgroup is part of children’s everyday reality.

We argue that it is important for theories of prejudice development to pay attention to the factor of gender in order to examine what causes boys and girls, and men and women, to develop different ingroup identification and outgroup behavior patterns. We simultaneously want to flag the importance of attending to the gender divide in Cyprus, so as to both understand the origins of it and to address it.

### *National Identification of Children*

As we discussed earlier, measuring identification with the identity “Greek Cypriot” or “Turkish Cypriot” comes with the challenge of not knowing what the content of each of these two identities is for the children under study. Studies by Christou and Spyrou (2012) and Makriyianni (2006) have shown that while Greek Cypriot children categorize themselves as Cypriots when asked who are included in the category “Cypriot” they respond Greek Cypriots and exclude Turkish Cypriots. These findings suggest that the meaning children attribute to the category “Cypriot” does not correspond to the official use of this category label, that is, an umbrella category which is inclusive of all communities living on the island.

We argue that there are more nuanced ways of measuring strength of identification without ignoring the identity’s content. For example, Psaltis (2011), instead of measuring identification with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot identities, he measured individuals’ attitudes toward *motherlands* (Greece and Turkey) and toward the current practice of use of their symbols (i.e., flag, national anthem). Psaltis labeled the adherence to Hellenic/Turkish ideals and symbols and the attachment to the corresponding motherlands as *Helleno/Turco-centrism* and the preference for Cypriot national symbols and the detachment from the motherlands as *Cypriocentrism*. Psaltis (2011), clustered his Greek Cypriot participants based on their responses to these two dimensions. The clustering produced three groups, individuals who were high in Cypriocentrism and low in Hellenocentrism, individuals who were moderate on both dimensions, and individuals who were low on Cypriocentrism and high on Hellenocentrism. He found the latter group to be less trusting toward Turkish Cypriots, less willing to forgive or to take the perspective of the other community, and to have less positive feelings toward them. It was therefore the identification with the Hellenic part of the Greek



Cypriot identity that was found to lead to a negative perception of the outgroup. To our knowledge, studies using this methodology for measuring identity in the two communities with children as participants, have not yet been done.

### *The Role of Teachers and Ways Forward*

Schoolteachers are influential figures in children's lives and are often a primary source of knowledge about a number of topics including the nature and the history of intergroup (bi-communal) relations in Cyprus. Teachers function within the formal schooling system, which, in Cyprus, has traditionally been devoted to preserving and communicating the self-serving official narrative of each community. Yet, while in the Turkish Cypriot community's teachers have played a pivotal role in instigating a revolt against indoctrination and in influencing the decision to produce new, more balanced, history textbooks, Greek Cypriot teachers remained loyal safeguards of an ethnocentric education system. Even when the otherwise nationalistic agenda of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Cyprus, encouraged teachers to initiate bi-communal contact, for example through school visits, teachers did not comply with the request. On the contrary, they vehemently opposed it (Zembylas et al. 2011).

Zembylas et al.'s (2011) study examining the reasons for which Greek Cypriot teachers opposed the idea of rapprochement at the school level, revealed that their negative stance was partly attributed to low self-efficacy in their abilities to initiate intergroup contact and to become the gateway to the other community for their students. Interestingly, a study carried out in years 2014–2015 by the Research Institute Promitheas, showed that approximately 70% of Greek Cypriot children ( $n=80$ ) aged twelve to fifteen, reported feeling insecure or uncomfortable with the idea of interacting with members of the Turkish Cypriot community (results reported in Ioannou 2016). The similarity between students' and teachers' results on the dimension of contact self-efficacy is noteworthy and it provides support to the social learning approach to prejudice development, according to which children copy and internalize the attitudes and behaviors of their most influential others.

Overcoming personal and systemic barriers in order to adopt a more open, empathetic, and dialectic stance toward the "other", is by

no means an easy task for teachers. To the extent though, that barriers are not crossed due to a lack of knowledge around bi-communal issues and lack of confidence to establish connections with the other side, as Zembylas et al.'s (2011) study suggests, there are ways forward. Fortunately, there are organizations in Cyprus, such as the inter-communal Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR), which aim at supporting teachers through different professional development programs in developing knowledge needed to address issues revolving around bi-communal relations in Cyprus. As a matter of fact, one of the main goals of AHDR is to provide teachers as well as children with the opportunity to advance their knowledge on how to teach and how to learn history. As history is probably the most contented (by being politically-loaded) subject in Greek and Turkish Cypriot schools, AHDR provides teachers (and pupils) the chance to openly address it. We argue that such initiatives are instrumental in supporting teachers in developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to address sensitive matters around bi-communal relations.

#### INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

We believe it would be an omission to end this chapter on prejudice and its development without at least briefly mentioning the most widely studied and most promising “antidote” to prejudice: intergroup contact. Intergroup contact, defined as the positive interaction between members of different social groups (Allport 1954), has been tested and found to reduce prejudice in a number of contexts (see Pettigrew and Tropp’s 2006, meta-analysis), including Cyprus (e.g., Ioannou et al. 2017a; McKewon and Psaltis 2017). Despite the fact that face-to-face contact became possible after the partial lift of the travel restrictions on the island in 2003, study results show that this opportunity was not utilized particularly by Greek Cypriot youth who report consistently very low levels of direct contact (UNDP-ACT and SeeD 2015). According to knowledge from social psychology, face-to-face contact may not be pursued because of psychological barriers, as for example, anxiety for interacting with the outgroup (Stephan and Stephan 1985), that make individuals apprehensive about intergroup encounters. The studies presented earlier in the chapter suggest that the latter is the case at least for Greek Cypriots.

Researchers have proposed that indirect contact, which does not require face-to-face interactions between members of different groups, may provide a means to reap some of the benefits of contact in low-contact settings (Dovidio et al. 2011; Hewstone and Swart 2011). There is evidence supporting the effectiveness of indirect contact in the Cypriot context. Merely witnessing a friend having contact with a Turkish Cypriot procured more positive attitudes and less intergroup anxiety for female Greek Cypriot students (Ioannou et al. 2017a); imagining having a positive interaction with a member of the other community led to more positive attitudes, a reduction of intergroup anxiety, and a greater desire to approach the other community for both Greek and Turkish Cypriot students (e.g., Husnu and Crisp 2010; Ioannou et al. 2017b), positive family story-telling and reading literature portraying friendships between Turkish and Greek Cypriot children led to more positive attitudes and behavioral intentions, more outgroup trust, more forgiveness and a greater support for peace, in Turkish Cypriot children (Husnu et al. 2018).

Intergroup contact is, of course, not panacea; understanding prejudice in children or in adults requires a multi-dimensional and comprehensive approach and addressing prejudice cannot boil down to a single intervention. There is, however, strong evidence that intergroup contact, even in its indirect forms, can be beneficial for intergroup relations in Cyprus. We argue that this evidence should be taken into account by relevant stakeholders including teachers themselves. Given that mixed settings, such as mixed schools, are largely absent in Cyprus, and contact cannot naturally occur, adults, often teachers, are called to be the ones to initiate and facilitate contact. Unless adults, and teachers in particular, become comfortable with the idea of approaching the other community, children in Cyprus will continue to grow up, get educated and socialize in their side of the divide, indifferent to, or intimidated by, the idea of the “other” and therefore unlikely to cross the mental and physical boundaries that nurture prejudice.

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