Experiences of Interviewing Secondary Victims of Frozen Conflicts: Cyprus Case[1]

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Abstract

This article shares the experiences of interviewing the relatives of the missing persons whom are the secondary victims in the context of the decades long frozen conflict of Cyprus. Issues of identity of the interviewees and the researcher and ethics in interviewing the people living in divided societies will be examined. The Turkish and Greek Cypriots, continue to live with the agony of missing persons. They are anxious to find out the fate of their loved ones, waiting for Committee of Missing Persons to finalize all the cases of the missing persons. The irresolvable situation tends to block families' cognition, coping and stress management, and freeze the grief processes. Process of interviewing secondary victims still grieving is accompanied with the context specific challenges. In this research beside the challenges of interviewing secondary victims of divided Cyprus, the feelings and thoughts of the interviewees, findings and results of the interviews are shared.

Key Words: Interviews, missing persons, identity, Cyprus, conflict.

1. Introduction

This paper is based on the anecdotal experiences of interviewing the people in conflicted and ethnically divided societies. The focus will be on the interviews; the aim of the interviews in this research project is to analyze the stories of the missing persons through interviewing their relatives including politicians and officials who were related to missing persons. The objective of this study is to show the experiences of interviewing the secondary victims in the divided island where a frozen conflict is still going on, share the findings and results of the interviews done by the author and find out the impact of CMP on the reconciliation process in Cyprus. The author preferred to call secondary victims for the relatives of missing persons as they also are affected by the event. When one person is impacted by a major life event, all of their relationships are impacted. Loosing someone close brings a trauma which turns peoples' world upside down (Conroy 2016). The family's world of missing persons will change, even though he had no direct traumatic experience. It happened to someone they loved, therefore, it happened to them. It is valuable doing interviews because it offers researchers the opportunity to uncover information which is not reachable using questionnaires. The

interviewing is not only a data collection tool; it is rather a natural way of interaction which is needed in various situations. The author found out that with the presence of the interviewer, mutual understanding can be ensured, as the interviewer may rephrase or simplify questions that were not understood by his/her interviewees. As a result with the interviewing method more appropriate answers and, subsequently, more accurate data will be reached. Additionally, this data was recorded and reviewed quite a few times by the researcher and accurate interview report was produced. This relieved the researcher from any subsequent attempts to reconstruct what the interviewee has said.

2. Cyprus conflict and the issue of missing persons

In 1950's Greek Cypriots started rioting against the British presence on the island, and the Greek Cypriot nationalist underground organization, Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston (EOKA) was established with the aim of advancing *enosis* –unifying with Greece- through armed struggle. The Turkish Cypriots also created their own nationalist underground organization called Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı (TMT) and as co-inhabitants of the island, refused the annexation of the island to Greece and sought equal say over the future of Cyprus. In 1959, a compromise was reached by Turkey, Greece and Britain through the London and Zurich agreements, and the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960 as a bi-communal state based on partnership between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. The 1960 Republic of Cyprus recognized the political equality of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots as the co-founding partners of the new Republic, became a member of the United Nations and maintained one legal personality. The 1960 partnership, however, lasted only three years. Greek Cypriots in 1963 proposed amendments to the Constitution, known as the Thirteen Points that entailed usurping the rights of Turkish Cypriots and degrading their equal co-founder status to that of a minority on the island. The disagreements between the two communities consequently led to the tragic events of 1963-64 where many civilians became missing persons mostly on the Turkish Cypriot side.

As a result of the inter-communal conflict, UN Security Council, adopted the resolution 186, dated 4 March 1964, which called for the creation of a UN Peacekeeping Force (UNFICYP) in Cyprus which is still present (MFA 2018).

The issue of missing persons is always an important aspect of violent conflicts and it was for Cyprus during 1963 and 1974. Nothing serious was done until 2004 about the missing persons from both sides, but in recent years the authorities realize the humanitarian side of this issue and began to give it great importance with both sides agreeing, agreed both sides to act together and find out about the missing persons. When a dispute began it led to escalated violence between Turkish and Greek Cypriots at the end of 1963.About 30,000 Turkish

Cypriots (%20 of the population) were displaced, many people died and reports on missing persons started (MFA 2018). The Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) was involved with this issue until UN forces came to the island (Minority Rights Group International 2010). All efforts from the guarantor powers failed to prevent further casualties. It was reported by UN Secretary General on 10 September 1964 that 232 Turkish Cypriot and 38 Greek Cypriot were missing (UN.S/5950).

On 15 July 1974, the Greek military junta in Greece, in collaboration with EOKA, staged a *coup d'état* in Cyprus and Turkey militarily intervened on 20 July 1974 under Article IV of the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960 to protect Turkish Cypriots. Since 1968 under the umbrella of UN and EU negotiations are continuing between Turkish and Greek Cypriots to *find a peaceful, just and durable solution to Cyprus conflict.*

In 1982 Committee of Missing Persons (CMP) was established to deal with the missing persons of Turkish and Greek Cypriots, but more than 20 years the Committee remained ineffective except listing the missing persons and finding where they were buried (Gülden 2017). The CMP started its program for exhumations and identification of the missing persons of Cyprus in 2005 (CMP web site 2017). The Turkish and Greek Cypriot sides are still living with the agony of missing persons since 1963, they are anxious that Committee of Missing Persons (CMP) should finish its task and finalize all the cases of missing persons in Cyprus. All the families of missing persons want to know the fate of their loved ones, find and lay them to rest in their graves and be relieved from their agony caused by the uncertainty. Creating CMP was a positive step towards the peace process and reconciliation. CMP is playing a fundamental and critical role in identifying persons who went missing in Cyprus during 1963-1974 using the most advanced techniques. Since 2004, CMP has introduced DNA analysis with bone or tooth samples from the remains of missing persons and compared them to the DNA in blood samples of surviving family members. *CMP has 2002 missing persons on their list and 1,217 missing persons had exhumed on both sides and up till now 870 of missing persons were identified and they were given to their families (CMP web site 2018).*

3. Literature review

In the last decades researches started to pay a lot of attention toward the interviews because the researchers preferred to examine the respondent's manners more closely, face to face, interviews creates emphasis on understanding between the researchers and interviewees (Harvey 2010, 193-205). There are two broad groups of literature on interviewing methods: One of them is analyze the techniques of the preparing and conducting interviews and the

other focuses on the power relations between researchers and the interviewees and examines how power is rooted in social identities such as gender, ethnicity and class (Harvey).

Interviewing is quite important to learn about the feelings of the people in violently divided societies who have got a missing person in the family. Missing persons is a very sensitive issue therefore it is necessary to design correct form of questions prior of the interviews in order to get trustworthy results. According to (Aberbach&Rockman 2002, 673-676) conducting interviews are not always necessary, take written records might be more sufficient but if one needs to know what a set of people think, or how they interpret an event or series of events should prefer interviews. The author preferred to do both and in this research conducting interviews were done beside the written documents. As the missing persons issue also was a very painful issue, the author through the interviews listened to the stories and find opportunity to study the gestures, the body language and the feelings of the interviewers. The interviews can be in different forms depending on what one wants to learn and interviews must be shaped according to the intention of the work. (Aberbach&Rockman 2002, 673-676).

In the field of political science, interviewing is an important method of data collections; however there are not many articles that discuss the use of interviews in divided societies (McEvoy 2006). The focus of almost all the articles on interviewing; deal with dilemmas of elite interviewing (Fish 1995; McEvoy 2006; Rohrschneider 1999; Riviera, Kozyreva and Sarovskii 2002; Zimmerman and William 2002; Remington 2001; Hoffmann-Lange 1987; Higley, and Gyorgy 2000; Hahn 1993; Neal & McLaughlin 2009).

The literature on interviewing suggests a number of strategies for successful data collection. According to McEvoy (2006) in interviewing there is a clear authority gap between interviewer and interviewee that must be taken into consideration. Chaitin (2002) investigates an interview method which is based on life stories. Rivera et al (2002) analyze the techniques on interviewing and give some recommendation through lessons from Russian national elites and they argue that these recommendations are applicable to other post-communist countries (Rivera et al 2002, 683-688)

4. Interviewing secondary victims

The objective of this study is to share the experiences and show the challenges of interviewing the wounded people in divided Cyprus. The study has been structured based on the twelve interviews done by the author with Turkish and Greek Cypriots.

This paper is sharing the experiences of interviewing secondary victims of Turkish and Greek Cypriots of divided Cyprus which were used in the doctorate theses of the author that aims to

contribute the peace and conflict process in order to emphasize the consequences of any war is harmful and painful for everyone.

There are several factors that affect the way an interview is shaped. For instance, ethnic identity has an impact on the interviews because the interviewee can assume that the researcher is from the other side and might have a bias (McEvoy 2006, 184-191). Furthermore, when the researcher is from opposite side, the interviewee might answer the questions in a careful manner, trying not to hurt the researcher's feelings and the researcher has to be more careful about the interview. In such cases the researcher must choose the questions very thoughtfully and talk sincerely in order develop trust. According to Mc Envoy, (2006) sometimes the interviewees are even concerned about the personal history of the researcher and consider whether it will result in prejudice. Moreover, Hunt (1964) argues that cultural differences have significant effects for the success of the interviewees, therefore selection of the interviewers should be carefully considered in specially conflicted, divided countries. In addition, Morris (2009) indicates that there are three assumptions related to interview in literature: The first one is course of honesty, second is related with dishonesty of respondents and the last one is on experienced but ineffective researchers.

In this study there were also several challenges faced by author. Firstly it was very difficult to decide where to start exploring the missing persons issue in Cyprus as it is a very sensitive issue. The interviewees were selected from Turkish and Greek Cypriots who have a missing person in the family. Although the researcher knew many families in Turkish side of Cyprus who had lost loved ones during 1963 and 1974 conflicts there was lack of information about the Greek side. In Cyprus since the island was divided into two parts, it is difficult to reach people who live in other part therefore the only information researcher could find about Greek Cypriots was from her personal networks. Finding the names of the families of missing persons became very easy after the author reached a friend who works on the Greek Cypriot side and has many Greek friends. The author requested some names and one name were provided. In addition she visited the Committee on Missing Persons and the deputy of the Turkish Cypriot member gave her the name of another family. Then snowball effect happened as everyone during the visit recommended another name. During the interviews author was very careful not to judge any answers. According to Chaitin (2002) the information given by the interviewees should not be shared with anybody, especially with relatives unless it is approved. During this study there were no such problem encountered because only one relative from each of the missing person's families was interviewed.

Another difficulty faced during the interviews was related to their hope. The families who have lost their loved ones and have no information about them still have great hope in their

heart. Although it has been 45 years since the 1974 Peace Operation, the author discovered that the Greek Cypriot families who lost someone in their family still think that their relatives are alive and might be found either in Turkish side or Turkey. One of the sisters of a missing person asked the author putting a picture of her loved one in one of the Turkish Cypriots' newspapers, just in case he got married to a Turkish Cypriot and is afraid to inform his family. Another secondary victim asked for the same thing, reasoning that may be someone would recognize him and inform where he is living.

Sampling methods can be classified as probability and non-probability. Non-probability sampling is method which depends on the judgment of the researcher (Malhotra, Birks, Wills, 2012). The choice of a suitable sample is important that it influences the kind of closing stages that can be described while later through the data analysis (Rivera et al. 2002). However in this study there were not many choices to select people therefore non-probability samplings have been used as only available people have been interviewed.

The research was conducted with twelve persons. There search was never a project about the families of missing persons. It was rather interviewing secondary victims-those who had lost close family members. It is assumed that the interviewees gave honest explanations but the information given were cross-checked from the books published about missing persons in Cyprus and from CMP reports. The interview sessions were limited to a certain time ranging from 2-3 hours. In conducting the interviews with Greek Cypriots the author assumed that they had adequate English to express their thoughts and perceptions but some of them did not know enough English and invited a friend who did.

Main concern of this research is not to give a detailed picture of what has happened in terms of missing persons or summarize the occasions in a statistical way, however it is aimed to discuss interviewing the missing persons in a more humanistic and holistic perspective which in turn can help in establishing reconciliation and peace in Cyprus. In this research for data collection a multi method style was used. The texts and archives from the preparatory time of CMP until 2017 were examined and a series of interviews with the politicians and families of some of missing person were done.

In this study specifically auto-ethnography was performed and the study mainly focuses on capturing the oral history/recollections of family member/relatives of missing persons through interviews. Jenkins (1999), also have supported historical material by interviewing people who can fill in the detail, enliven the work, and provide different perspectives. In addition in this study interviewees' explanations were audio-taped, transcribed and then were studied through inductive content analysis and coded as themes similar to other studies in the literature (Strauss & Corbin 1990; Yıldırım&Şimşek 2008).

According to Custer (2014) auto-ethnography is a way of autobiographical writing that explores an individual's unique life experiences in relationship to social and cultural institutions. Auto-ethnography is not simply a way of knowing about the world; it has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, and reflexively. In the process, it seeks a story that is hopeful, where the interviewees ultimately consider themselves as survivors of the story they are living (Jones, 2013).

Almost all of the interviews took place at either their house or their offices, as it is especially preferred to make the interviewer feel more confident. Some of the interviews took only two hours but most of them went at least three hours. All of the missing persons' families showed the picture of their loved-lost ones, some of them even showed the picture of the remains of the missing person. The researcher realized that this makes them feel more relaxed as they share their pain. All the interviewers at the beginning were asked to tell the story of their missing person and other questions came up spontaneously during the talks. The questions were open ended because the researcher did not want the interviewer to feel like filling a questionnaire.

Guided interviewing is more influential than "structured" questionnaires with closed ended responses" in collecting the story and the researchers can explore the interviewee's scrutiny more deeply, the interviewees tell the stories in their own sayings and state their considerations and sensations. Alshenqeeti says that:

> As interviews are interactive, interviewers can press for complete, clear answers and can probe into any emerging topics. Hence, interviewing is expected to broaden the scope of understanding investigated phenomena, as it is a more naturalistic and less structured data collection tool (Alshenqeeti 2014, 201).

Alshenqeeti (2014) is suggesting that no one should use the interviews to perform the research as an easy technique, but especially the social science researchers have to deliberate the feature of interviewing before they plan, submit and examine interviews. The researchers have to listen instead of talking, they have to remain neutral, create a suitable ambiance so the interviewee feels free and comfortable to speak. Ambiguities, which are inherent in human language, could affect the analysis.

Through subjective, direct responses, we assume that we were able to gain first-hand knowledge about what participants experience through broad and open-ended inquiry. The copious amount of data that has to be analyzed could be a disadvantage. Findings cannot be extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analyses can.

5. **Findings and results**

Analysis relying heavily on the interviews conducted with the relatives (secondary victims) of the missing persons showed that they suffered a lot from the uncertainty about the fate of their loved ones who have disappeared from conflicts. The analysis also revealed that the interviewees from both sides did not perceive their governments as successful in taking initiative to resolve the missing persons issue especially before 2000's. Eight of the interviewees believed that the governments or authorities on both sides have used the issue as a political tool mostly in a negative way. For example, the former president of Turkish Cypriots who is also relative of a missing person stated *"Since 1974, the Greeks have been used as permanent political material by missing persons. And they always accused the soldiers from Turkey."*(Interview 2, 2018) On the other hand the Foreign Minister of Turkish Cypriots, who is the son of a missing person's stated *"The Greek side used to politicize missing persons issue 24 hours a day."(Interview 6, 2017)*

Especially the relatives of the missing persons who experienced their loved ones disappearance as an ambiguous loss felt hopeless which led many of them to depression and passivity. According to Boss:

> The ambiguous loss which is a situation of unclear loss resulting from not knowing whether a loved one is dead or alive, absent or present. Without proof of death, family members do not know what to do, or how to think, so they deny the loss and continue to hope. Family processes freeze. In other words a loved one is perceived as physically present but psychologically absent (Boss 1999)

All twelve interviewers told that after they lost their loved ones irresolvable situation blocked their cognition, coping and stress management, and freeze the grief process. This is parallel what Boss (1999) emphasized in writing about ambiguous losses.

Although some of the interviewees showed traces of hatred to the other side at the beginning of the interview sessions, this later turned into empathy. Almost all of the interviewees appreciate the works and projects of CMP which they do great job on finding the remains of the missing persons, handing them to their families and arrange to put them into the graves. They stated that themselves and their friends who went through this process and have their loved ones put in their grave, relaxed and start feeling less pain than before. They believed that CMP may also contribute a lot to the establishment of peace and reconciliation in Cyprus. Interviews also showed that generally Greek Cypriots blame 1974 Peace operations of Turkey and Turkish Cypriots blame 1963-64 conflicts related to the losses of their loved ones.

In the light of the analysis done relying on the interviews several categories reflecting the perceptions and thoughts of the interviewees emerged. Findings of this study can be classified into two broad groups as relatives of missing persons in 1960s and 1974. Results have been divided into four main categories for the group who were interviewed about missing persons in 1960s: *"Hatred and hostility toward the people of other side, Traumatic Experience, Thoughts about the Turkish and Greek Authorities and Empathy"*

The first one is *Hatred-hostility* as the relatives of missing persons did not have a proper burial and had a long period of anguish and uncertainty they become so unhappy and be hateful toward the people on other side. In the current study a few interviewees from both sides expressed hatred due to witnessing violence or been victims of the conflicts during the 60's. For example daughter of a missing person (interview 9, 2017) said *"I was so depressed and because of my hostility feelings against Greek Cypriots after my father became a missing person in 1963, during 1974 war I thought and hope that all the Greek Cypriot would die"*

The second one is *Traumatic Experiences* that is a kind of loss results with a stressful and painful life (Boss 1999; Imber-Black 1993). Most of the Turkish and Greek interviewees talked about their traumatic experiences during the fighting and after the disappearance of their loved ones, Turkish Cypriots expressed their negative feelings about the terrorist side of EOKA and blamed EOKA for the conflict and for their missing persons. The following interview excerpt is related to this. The brother in law of a missing person stated:

> My brother in law's uncle started to make some plans on keeping the Greeks away from the Turkish part of the village. When Greek Cypriots heard about these plans, brother of the EOKA Leader gathered some people and captured him and killed him. While they were killing him, my brother in law was passing through there with his sheep. As he witnessed the whole thing, Greek Cypriots captured my nineteen years old brother in law and killed him also and took away the bodies. Some Turkish and Greek Cypriots from the village witnessed secretly through their windows in their house and told us afterwards. More than forty five years we did not know where they were thrown and after fifty years CMP found them in a well (interview 4, 2017)

The third one is *Thoughts about Turkish and Greek Cypriot/ Authorities.* It is important as how people suffered from disappearances or conflicting situations should clearly observe in order to establish a new peaceful life. In line with this analyzing how Greek Cypriots perceive Turkish Cypriots and vice versa is very important. Many of researches emphasize the importance of transformation of existing relationships as well as a creation of new relationships after the horrors of war and conflicts. Acknowledgement of one's own suffering as well as that of the others' suffering is crucial (Ericson 2001; Du Plessis 2004, 169-200).

Some Turkish interviewees blamed Greek Cypriots about the conflicts which had occurred especially in 1963-67. They generally think that Greek Cypriot authorities are biased. In the interview of a director who dealt with Turkish Cypriot missing persons said:

> We had very good Greek Cypriot friends but later on we realized that one of them was a member of EOKA-B. They took many people, killed and threw them to the wells." Son of a missing Turkish person, stated "Greek Cypriots have always escaped from the reality. They burned many of the files reflecting the horrors they are responsible for (Interview, 5, 2018)

The fourth one is *Empathy,* Ladisch (2007) stated the main emphasis should be on creating dialogue and mutual understanding about the past, acknowledging the harm done on both sides, and moving forward. That is why we tried to find out the interviewees' empathies which may help in a reconciliation process. Son of a Turkish missing person who is a former mayor of Lefkosa said

> I feel no hatred to Greek Cypriots. I know that they faced the same kind of violence. We did mistakes and gave pain to Greek Cypriots as same as they did to us. I understand them, both sides suffered a lot."(Interview 11, 2017).Similarly another Turkish interviewer blamed both sides."Turkish Cypriots also did many bad things to Greek Cypriots and I know how they feel, I understand their pain which is same as mine (Interview 3, 2018)

Results for the group who have been interviewed about missing persons in 1974 have divided into five main categories. The first one is *Traumatic Experiences* as it is known that the absence of someone is a very stressful and traumatic situation for family members and relatives thus the relatives or friends of missing persons in this current study gone through a traumatic period in 1974. The second one is *Thoughts about Turkish Cypriots/Authorities,* although most of the Greek Cypriot interviewees about 1974 were really depressed because of the loss of their loved ones, they did not show too much hatred to Turkish Cypriots and it seemed that they did not want revenge but they all blamed Turkey for making operations in Cyprus. The third one is *Empathy* and in this study the empathy of Turkish and Greek Cypriots was observed during the interview sessions. It is seen that opening of the borders in 2003 is a milestone which helped many of the Turkish and Greek Cypriots to understand what has really happened to the people of other side. The fourth one is *Thoughts and Perspectives of Politicians,* during the interview the ex-president of Greek side was more empathic and realistic compared to other Greek Cypriot. Generally he accepted the mistakes done by Greek Cypriots in terms of missing persons' issue. He also seemed to be eager for peace (Interview 1, 2017). The fifth one is *Thoughts and Perspectives of People about CMP*, all of the

interviewees believe that CPM have a positive contribution to the Cyprus problem. The foreign minister of North Cyprus stated that:

> After Committee on Missing Persons was established the Greek side has lost one of the six legs of their propaganda materials. They were using the missing persons issue at international platforms for propaganda and abusing the issue. Now they cannot do this (Interview 6, 2017).

Ex- president of Greek Cypriots (Interview 1, 2017) mentioned that "*Because of good works of CMP winds of hatred enormously reduced. Because people at both sides have seen mistakes were mutual.*" Two of the interviewees stated that after the remains of their loved ones were found and they were put in their grave all members of the families relaxed, they started feeling better and as uncertainty is finished, the depression, blocked cognition and stress ended (Interview 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 2017).

6. Conclusion and discussion

Culture and ethnicity alone should not be a justification for violence. The past should be questioned in order to have peace in future. To talk about the truth, to absorb what happened in the past are important things for gaining consciousness about the happenings. People should talk in democracies, if not, democracy will be in danger. The official truth is always different than the truth people who faced the happenings in the past. It could be much better if the people did not keep silence until recent years but CMP authorities are stating that many of them died who lived through 1963-1967 and even 1974, many truth stories left hidden.

Reconciliation is a basis for every attempt to peace building and there are many explanations about the meaning of reconciliation but no agreed definition (Brouneus 2003). One of the circumstances of reconciliation is forgiveness but it is better to divide forgiveness and reconciliation into two different procedures (Brouneus 2003). Forgiveness is done by one side but reconciliation is related to both executor and sufferer and calls attention to empathy (Bronueus 2003). There was perpetrators and victims on both sides. The media plays a very important role in influencing the way of thinking and actions through using the information, correlation, continuity, entertainment and mobilization. It can be used for either to aggravate the dislike of other side or encourage peace between them. The author acknowledged from the interviews that people from both sides give great importance to what is written about missing persons in media.

War and armed conflict lead to the collapse of government, community, and family support systems. Family security is essential for a child's survival and physical and psychological development. "War violates every right of a child — the right to life, the right to be with family and community, the right to health, the right to the development of the personality, and

the right to be nurtured and protected," states the UNICEF-report "Impact of war on children". In war, children lose their childhood. All the interviewers said that the missing persons issue affected the children badly in their family, some of them even witnessed violence during 1963 and 1974 and the consequences of the trauma they faced remained until they were grown. The author witnessed the trauma of a friend of her whose father is a missing person.

> My friend's father got lost when we were eight years old in the year of 1964, for many years every Friday her family and me went to the president's office for the exchange of the prisoners of Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Every time they were disappointed and crying loudly all the way back home. Now she is 65 years old but still she cries sometime and wonders about her father's fate (Şahoğlu, 2017).

In the light of the findings of this research it seems that generally political discourses of Greek Cypriots is that the Cyprus problem begins in 1974 with Turkish Operation and according to Turkish Cypriots' political discourses the Cyprus problem relies heavily on ENOSIS in the early 60's. A similar finding was also observed by many other researchers (Faustmann&Kaymak 2008; Ladisch 2007, 916-928). Most of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot interviewees talked about the inefficacy of the authorities or government at both sides in taking initiative to reduce their pain. They stated that nearly 30 years the authorities did almost nothing in relation to missing persons. They criticized the authorities as they look at the issue from a political point of view, denied the reality or hide what happened. We can conclude that usually in conflict situations authorities or government might have some faults which lead them to hide the reality. Researchers like De Alwis (2009) and Cassia (2005) find similar findings.

The literature suggests that meticulous worry has been carefully considered while interviewing families from different ethnics (McEvoy 2006). Belonging to an opposed ethnic group with the interviewee might create assumptions about the researcher and this might lead to tailoring the answers. On the other hand if the interviewee knows that the researcher belongs to the same ethnic group feels free to say anything they want. In this study Greek Cypriots are leery at the beginning but later they started to act more freely. On the other side the Turkish Cypriots were showing their reactions and anger without restraint. These kinds of researchers have to be very careful not to get trapped in discourse citations (McEvoy 2006).

The researchers have to be very careful not to mix up the interviewing with a therapist's therapy (Chaitin 2002). The interviewing is not for releasing the pain of the relative of missing person, if feel like needed the researcher can provide them with the name of a consultation service (Chaitin 2002). During these interviews there was no such problem

because since the first conflict 54 years, and since the peace operation 43 years had passed after the disappearance of their relatives, but as time does not heal traumatic loss, specially, when it is ambiguous loss, all the interviewers like to share their pain as much as they can. They explained the feelings, the hopes and the expectations alongside the story of the missing person.

Researchers interviewing relatives of missing persons in a 'peace process' must be careful about the challenging stories of the conflict itself (McEvoy 2006). The interviewee past events can also be clouded by the other stories of the conflict and some untruth parts can be included in the original story. When the researcher is from the other side can be caught in these kinds of traps as he/she does not know the true stories of other side. The author focused on finding out about the story of the missing person before the visit of family to eliminate the misinterpretations during the interview. If the information about the story was not reachable about the missing person the investigation has been done after the visit to ensure the reliability.

All the interviewers stated that after they experienced their loved ones disappearance as an ambiguous loss felt hopeless which led many of them to depression and passivity and the irresolvable situation blocked their cognition, coping and stress management, and freeze their grief process. This is parallel to what Boss (1999) emphasized in writing about ambiguous losses. Although some of the interviewees showed traces of hatred at the beginning of the interview sessions; this later turned into empathy. In this study almost all of the interviewees appreciated the works of CMP and they believed that this work may also contribute a lot to the establishment of peace and reconciliation in Cyprus.

LIST OF INTERVIEWS BY AUTHOR

1. Former President of Greek Cypriots- brother-in law of a missing persons, 2017

2. Former President of Turkish Cypriots, brother-in law of a missing persons, 2017

3. Son of a missing M.P, Turkish Cypriot, 2017

4. Brother in law of a missing person, Turkish Cypriot, 2017

5. Retired director of Technology at BRT Radio, A board member of a Union, Worked at Telecommunication Department, Turkish Cypriot, 2018

6. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkish Cypriots and son of a missing person, 2017

7. Daughter of a missing couple, Greek Cypriot, 2017

8. Son of a missing couple, Greek Cypriot, 2017

9. Daughter of a missing person, Greek Cypriot2017

10. Sisters of a missing person, Greek Cypriot, 2018

11. Turkish Former Mayor of Lefkosa, son of a missing person, 2017

12. Daughter of a missing person, close friend of the author, 2017

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