

# Tourism for Peace?

## Reflections on a Village Tourism Project in Cyprus

*Julie Scott*

**ABSTRACT:** On 1 May 2004, the Republic of Cyprus entered the European Union, unaccompanied by the Turkish-Cypriot population in the northern third of the island. The Green Line – the militarized border marking the cessation of hostilities in 1974 – now defines the outer edge of the European Union, creating a fluid and uncertain borderland which has become the focus for ongoing attempts to construct both the new Cyprus and the new Europe. Tourism has a central and contradictory role to play in these processes. It offers an avenue for stimulating economic activity and raising income levels in the Turkish-Cypriot north, and presents an opportunity to develop complementary tourism products north and south which could widen the appeal of the island as a whole and promote collaborative ventures between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots. On the other hand, such developments face strong resistance from sections of the population north and south, who fear they will lead either to the legitimization and tacit recognition of the Turkish-Cypriot state in the north, or to a return to relations characterized by Greek-Cypriot dominance and Turkish-Cypriot dependence. The paper reflects on the author's involvement in a village tourism development project in Cyprus in 2005–2006 in order to explore what an anthropological approach to the use of tourism for political ends can tell us about conflict, and when, and under what conditions, tourism might be a force for peace and reconciliation.

**KEYWORDS:** anthropology of policy, applied anthropology, Cyprus, development, Greek-Cypriots, peace processes, tourism, Turkish-Cypriots

In this article, I reflect on the experience of working on a tourism project which was designed to have environmental, political and economic development benefits for villages in the divided island of Cyprus. The project's main aims were threefold: firstly, to promote an alternative to the environmentally unsustainable tourism development and uncontrolled construction in the unrecognized north of the island following the failure of the peace plan and political solution brokered by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2004; secondly, to raise incomes in the north, as part of the

effort to achieve a degree of economic parity between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot populations prior to an eventual political solution; and thirdly, to promote cooperation and dialogue between Turkish- and Greek-Cypriots by promoting opportunities for collaborative tourism and trade.

The project was funded by the Global Opportunities Fund of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office through its High Commission in Cyprus. The Fund targeted northern Cyprus, along with Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro (includ-

ing Kosovo), and Ukraine, under its 'Reuniting Europe' strand, which existed, according to the information provided in its website, to 'bolster and extend the success of EU enlargement by supporting countries through the EU integration process, particularly in the fields of improved governance and economic growth'.<sup>1</sup> In terms of European Union (EU) enlargement, northern Cyprus represents something of a special case. The Republic of Cyprus became a member of the EU in 2004 without a political resolution to the Cyprus conflict having been reached. Since then, the *acquis communautaire* remains suspended north of the Green Line dividing the island, and the north is subject to a special Protocol (Protocol 10) which has the aim of regulating the relationship of the unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), unilaterally declared in 1983, with the rest of Cyprus and with the European Union, and encouraging movement towards convergence and eventual unification.

Tourism is often perceived as the kind of activity that can encourage and support movement towards peace and reconciliation, and indeed the World Tourism Organisation Global Code of Ethics for Tourism promotes the industry as 'a vital force for peace and a factor of friendship and understanding among the peoples of the world'. Yet despite the widespread view that there is a substantial 'peace dividend' to be reaped from collaborative initiatives – as evidenced by examples from Northern Ireland (Simone-Charteris and Boyd 2010) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Causevic 2010; Causevic and Lynch 2011) – attempts to use tourism to build confidence and cooperation over the past two decades in Cyprus have proved largely unsuccessful (Scott 2012).

Tourism and conflict are both topics on which anthropology might be expected to have something to contribute; yet as Abram (2010) has pointed out, the role of the anthropologist is often restricted to that of narrow 'culture specialist', working to an agenda set by others (such as tourism developers, government min-

istries). Finlay has noted in the case of Northern Ireland, and Causevic for Bosnia-Herzegovina, that government bodies and international aid agencies have the tendency to frame the divisions and resource conflicts of post-war societies in primarily ethno-national terms, entrenching discourses of corporate identities and associated rights through the application of an outmoded model of culture as a way of life of a whole group or society (Finlay 2006; Causevic 2010). Anthropologists seldom have the opportunity to frame the agenda within an anthropological analysis of power, reciprocity and resource allocation issues. In the Cyprus case presented here, in contrast, the anthropologist had the opportunity to establish the parameters of the project within an analysis of the social and historic specificities of Cyprus, which turned, in particular, on the problems of broken reciprocity and trust, and the conditions under which they might be allowed to function.<sup>2</sup>

The author's role in the project was that of an active participant-observer, working with a small team under the coordination of a Turkish-Cypriot NGO, alongside a member of a Greek-Cypriot NGO and a British destination-marketing specialist. This involved taking part in formal and informal meetings and interviews, conducting scoping visits to villages north and south of the Green Line, and, finally, drawing up an implementation strategy and presenting it for agreement to project stakeholders in Cyprus. The experience of implementing the project over a period of eight months brought valuable insights not only into the nature of relations between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots following the failed reunification initiatives of 2004, but also into the changing position of, and attitudes towards, Turkish settlers in the north. Moreover, evidence from the project sheds interesting light on the significance of the conflict cycle in determining the outcomes of tourism-for-peace initiatives, raising the question: at what stage of a conflict might tourism be a useful mechanism for confidence building?

In order to understand the particular problems encountered by the project and the anthropological approaches taken to try to address them, I shall start by filling in some of the recent background to the current situation in Cyprus.

## Tourism Background

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was unilaterally declared in 1983, following war, the division of the island, and exchange of populations between north and south in 1974–75. Before 1974, Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot populations had been distributed throughout the island in separate villages, and in (largely) spatially separate but contiguous neighbourhoods in mixed towns and villages. This pattern had started to change with the outbreak of intercommunal violence in 1963, three years after independence from Britain, which resulted in the loss of the Turkish-Cypriot population from more than 100 mixed villages (Keefe 1971; Patrick 1976), but was changed definitively with the war of 1974, which, according to different estimates, created between 150,000 to 200,000 Greek-Cypriot, and 32,000 to 80,000 Turkish-Cypriot refugees, who were parted from homes and land and resettled in ethnically homogenous territories.<sup>3</sup> Formally, Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot authorities have dealt with the issue of refugees' land and property (and, indeed, with the category of refugee, see Dikomitis 2012) in fundamentally opposing ways, based, in the north, on the permanence of division, and, in the south, on the promise of the ultimate return of refugees to the land and property they left behind. Greek-Cypriot property in the north has been expropriated and distributed, partly on the basis of compensation for Turkish-Cypriot property left behind in the south, or for other losses sustained during the conflict, and partly as a means of underpinning political patronage and power, and cementing the presence

of settlers who were encouraged to locate to northern Cyprus from Turkey after the war (Morvaridi 1993; Scott 1998; Navaro-Yashin 2012). Turkish-Cypriot property abandoned in the south has not officially been expropriated, and its use is formally restricted to the benefit of Greek-Cypriot refugees. In practice, however, expropriated Turkish-Cypriot property in the south has also found its way into a variety of developments and speculative markets and used to consolidate the wealth and political power of internal elites, whilst in numerous other cases it has been neglected or destroyed. As Ilican notes, the treatment, by both sides, of refugee land as 'enemy property' has driven the formation of two new parallel societies 'where the feeling of loss and gain [is] part and parcel of daily life especially regarding property ownership' (Ilican 2010: 207). The commonalities of the refugee experience have become subsumed within the divergent narratives of competing states.

Lack of recognition of the TRNC and the imposition of economic, political, cultural, and transport and communication embargoes, introduced a widening gap in conditions between north and south. The Greek-Cypriot economy made a rapid recovery, fuelled in large part by its highly successful mass tourism industry. The isolation of the north, on the other hand, brought a worsening economic situation and reinforced the pattern of dependence on Turkey. During the 1960s and 1970s, the development of Cyprus as a tourist destination had taken place against a backdrop of intermittent, low-level, inter-ethnic violence and the enclaving of the Turkish-Cypriot population, of which the tourists, concentrated in coastal resorts close to Kyrenia and Famagusta, were for the most part unaware. Turkish-Cypriots were excluded from participating in pre-1974 tourism development; post partition, they found themselves in control of most of the tourism infrastructure and the foreign and Greek-Cypriot-owned hotels, but lacked operational capacity.<sup>4</sup> The owners of the expropriated

hotels attempted to prevent the use of the remaining tourism infrastructure in the north by taking legal action in U.K. courts against British tourists for use of stolen property and criminal trespass (Matthews 1987). Additionally, an international civil aviation boycott on direct flights to northern Cyprus meant that all would-be tourists had to touch down first in Turkey, adding considerably to the length and cost of the journey. International tourism failed to take off, and the spectacular landscape, beaches and coastline remained largely undeveloped, which the tourism industry in the north attempted to turn to its advantage by marketing itself as the 'last unspoiled corner of the Mediterranean'.

During the 1980s and 1990s, numerous proposals for using tourism as a catalyst for peace and cooperation were put forward. The two parts of the island appeared to offer solutions to the problems of the other, for if northern Cyprus was suffering from too little tourism, then opinion was growing amongst Greek-Cypriots that the south was possibly suffering from too much, with the dominant sun, sea and sand model bringing environmental and social pressures and diminishing economic returns. The confidence-building measures for Cyprus proposed in 1993 by the then UN Secretary-General Boutros Gali identified tourism as a key area for building cooperation, and commentators suggested that the development and marketing of complementary tourism products throughout the island could be a vehicle for conflict resolution (Sönmez and Apostolopoulos 2000). On the other hand, achieving these aims required that Cyprus's most controversial and politically charged issues be confronted head-on. Control of movement over and within borders; access to the physical, economic and symbolic assets of land, landscape and property; the packaging and representation of cultural heritage for tourist consumption, environmental protection and the regulation of construction – all problematic areas in any tourism development context – are

the hot topics of the Cyprus dispute. Tourism development in Cyprus thus has enormous symbolic, as well as economic, social and political significance, and over the past decades has been an arena in which the conflict has been intensified, rather than solutions sought.

Preparations for the Republic of Cyprus' entry into the European Union offered the prospect at last of movement from what had become entrenched positions. Mass protests in the north forced the leadership to relax restrictions on the movement of Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots across the Green Line dividing north and south, and spring 2003 saw something of the emotionalism accompanying the fall of the Berlin Wall, as Cypriots revisited homes, villages and neighbours abandoned decades before (Demetriou 2007; Loizos 2008; Bryant 2010; Dikomitis 2012). In the atmosphere of euphoria, there were high hopes that the Annan peace plan would be accepted in a referendum of Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, enabling the island as a whole to enter the European Union in May 2004. However, whilst 65 per cent of Turkish-Cypriots voted yes in the referendum, 75 per cent of Greek-Cypriots voted no, important factors in the no vote being dissatisfaction or uncertainty over the resolution of property issues and the arrangements concerning Turkish settlers in the north (Loizos 2008).<sup>5</sup> On 1 May 2004, the Republic of Cyprus entered the EU without the north. The Green Line – the militarized border marking the cessation of hostilities in 1974, which runs across the island and continues to divide its capital, Nicosia – now defined the outer edge of the European Union, and the limits of the *acquis communautaire*.

Despite this setback, the European Commission has made considerable efforts to promote cooperation and rapprochement between the two sides, to create favourable conditions for settlement, and prepare the ground for the eventual entry of the north into the European Union as part of a united federal Cyprus. A crucial component in this effort was the adop-

tion of the Green Line Regulation, a special protocol recognizing the north's anomalous status as existing both inside and outside the EU. The Green Line Regulation controls the passage of goods and people across the line, offers special conditions for trade between northern Cyprus and the EU, and aims to foster trust and cooperation between the two communities through opportunities for joint commerce.<sup>6</sup> Although initially the value of goods traded across the Green Line was reported as disappointingly low, at around €100,000 per month, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn pronounced the Regulations a great success in terms of the flow of people making the crossing.<sup>7</sup> Many of these were Turkish-Cypriots crossing to work as mainly unskilled labour in the south; others were tourists, who were able for the first time to cross over to spend their holiday in the north, having flown direct to Larnaca airport in the south (Scott and Topcan 2006). Thus the *de facto* transformation in the political geography of Cyprus, combined with the demand from tourists to spend time in the north, finally provided the stimulus to collaborative tourism ventures between Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot partners. In many cases, however, this has produced asymmetrical relationships, forcing Turkish-Cypriot partners into positions of dependence on Greek-Cypriot gatekeepers, and in the process reviving old fears and resentments (Scott and Topcan 2006; Hatay et al. 2008).

### Reciprocity and Trust in Cyprus

For several years before the relaxation of the Green Line restrictions between north and south, numbers of Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, committed to the ideal of 'bi-communalism', had been finding ways to meet under the auspices of international agencies such as the UN, either in the buffer zone, or in third countries such as Britain and the United States. Bi-communal activities, including collaborations

between professional groups on island-wide issues and problems affecting both communities, conflict resolution, folkloric activities, and social encounters, permitted individuals to reacquaint themselves with the lost 'other', or, in the case of younger Cypriots, to become acquainted for the first time and explore their commonalities and differences. However, whilst it remains an important channel for committed activists, relatively few Cypriots, as a proportion of the society as a whole, have ever taken part in bi-communal activities (Civicus 2005) and indeed there has been a tendency for nationalists on both sides of the island to brand bi-communal activists as traitors, especially at times of particular political tension. Official measures to promote cooperation between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots in wider society must overcome significant problems of distrust with regard to the motivation and good faith of the 'other', and the potential unintended, as well as intended, consequences of collaborative ventures. Savvides (2006), for example, argues that business cooperation initiatives between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, particularly in the field of tourism, are a recipe for the normalization and management of division, which will simply entrench the status quo, and indefinitely postpone the political settlement of outstanding issues such as the fate of refugee property and the presence of Turkish settlers in the north, about which most Greek-Cypriots have very strong feelings.<sup>8</sup> In particular, consenting to tourism to the north is feared by many Greek-Cypriots to imply tacit recognition of the 'pseudo-state' of the TRNC, as it is commonly referred to by the state and media in the south (c.f. Navaro-Yashin 2012). Altinay and Bowen (2006) emphasize the role of divergent Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot nationalisms in shaping the tourism policy and planning priorities of each side in line with separate and distinct 'national interests'. Tourism has become associated with highly contested debates about governance and 'national interest' within a polarized public sphere, giv-

ing a ‘zero sum’ quality to collaborative initiatives in this field.

The sudden relaxation of the border restrictions in 2003, which permitted thousands of Cypriots to cross to the other side of the island and to revisit homes, neighbours and property in their old towns and villages,<sup>9</sup> led to hopes that a kind of alternative ‘diplomatic’ space might develop which could be different and removed from the polarizing nationalisms of the public sphere, and broader than the narrow confines of the bi-communal movement – a space for what Constantinou (2006) calls homo-diplomacy.<sup>10</sup> The visits – which in some cases were to be often repeated, whilst for others they remained a single event (Dikomitis 2005, 2009) – provided an opportunity, not only for renewing ties with the longed-for home, but also for reviving forms of reciprocity with neighbours and current occupants, many of whom were themselves refugees. Since much of Cypriot society became urban only relatively recently, many urban dwellers retain strong emotional, family and property ties to villages (Markides 1978; Attalides 1981) and the ancestral village was an important focus of these visits.

As Loizos (2008) points out, the village offers a particular perspective on life in Cyprus. Not exactly a microcosm of the state, village relations refract the affinities and fissions of the wider political sphere through the lived materiality of close proximity with others. Those others are rendered real, rather than abstractions of political rhetoric, through acts such as

a daily greeting (or its withholding), a cup of coffee formally offered, practical help catching a goat or hitching a tractor to a wagon, an informal loan, a love affair, a runaway marriage or, in a crisis, a threat, a gunshot, or an act of bravery which reassures or protects a frightened member of ‘the other side’. (Loizos 2008: 12)

The sharing of food, coffee, cigarettes, memories, news and stories of other neighbours and family members during visits to ‘the vil-

lage’ became an important ritual for many, whilst for others it concealed continuing resentment and pain (Bryant 2010). As Loizos has shown, memories of the majority Greek-Cypriot community of the former mixed village of Argaki are rather different from those of their Turkish-Cypriot co-villagers. Whilst the former remember village relations as being on the whole friendly and problem-free before 1974, they are largely unaware of, gloss over, or underestimate the degree of discomfort and fear experienced by the Turkish-Cypriot villagers throughout the same period. In other cases, Cypriots of both communities live with the knowledge of violent attacks, murders and disappearances of individuals and groups in the village, although these were usually carried out by strangers from other villages, and the record, on the whole, is of villagers protecting ‘their own’ against attacks by ‘outsiders’ (Loizos 1988; Dikomitis 2012).

These conditions formed the dynamic context, full of ambiguities and tensions, in which the village tourism project set out to find partners willing to work together in a tourism collaboration in 2006. Building on the re-familiarization process occurring in Cyprus and the new opportunities it presented for establishing personal relationships and trust, the project aimed to connect two villages engaged in agri-tourism – one in the north, and one in the south – in order to generate reciprocal benefits with regard to joint marketing and the development of complementary products. In the next section I turn to the implementation of the project, and how relations worked out in practice.

## The Karpaz Peninsula

The area targeted by the project was the Karpaz peninsula, a long finger of land at the extreme north east of the island which, with its mountain and maquis landscape, its villages, archaeological remains, its flora and fauna, and its spectacular beaches frequented by nesting

turtles, is recognized as having high ecological and cultural value (Scott 2000). For many centuries the peninsula remained relatively cut off from the rest of the island. Land access was difficult, and the carob, which was one of the major products of the region, was transported by sea from stone warehouses built next to the little harbours which punctuate the long coastline. Despite its long coastline and immense sandy beaches, until recently its poor roads and communications prevented any large-scale tourism development, but new road construction and mobile network coverage are now opening the region up to the possibility of mass tourism exploitation. Parts of the Karpaz peninsula enjoy protected status, as a result of the national park established by the TRNC authorities at the tip of the peninsula. No development is allowed in the national park area, and the adjacent area has been designated a priority eco- and agritourism development area, subject to more restrictive planning and control. Nevertheless, the Karpaz area faces growing pressure from the construction of mass tourism resorts and holiday villas, with three casino resorts offering a bed capacity of 3,000 close to the protected eco/agritourism zone completed, and permission for more already granted.

The current population of the Karpaz peninsula numbers around 12,000 spread over 26 small, scattered settlements. Before 1974 it presented a mixed settlement pattern consisting of some entirely Turkish-Cypriot villages, such as Balalan, Kaleburnu and Galatia; some mixed villages, such as Ephtagomi and Komi Kebir; and a majority Greek-Cypriot population, spread over mixed and Greek-Cypriot villages, and living in the main town of Rizo Karpaso (see Gunnis 1936). The majority of the Greek-Cypriot population left Karpaz for resettlement in the south after 1974, and the area received a large influx of Turkish settlers, many of whom are themselves Greek-speakers from the Black Sea region of Turkey. Some Greek-Cypriots remain, concentrated in a few

centres such as Rizo Karpaso and the village of Sipahi, living in enclaved conditions, under difficult circumstances. In addition, numerous Turkish-Cypriot refugees from the south (in particular, the Paphos area) have been resettled in the small towns and villages of the peninsula.<sup>11</sup>

Problems of agricultural decline and low village incomes, due to lack of markets for local products, make large-scale tourism development an attractive option for many of the current inhabitants of Karpaz, and the threat of unsustainable development is exacerbated by the vacuum left in the wake of the failed Annan Plan, which, until the downturn in the property market brought about by the global financial crisis, was encouraging rapid land sales to speculative developers (Scott and Topcan 2006). This reportedly included the sale by post-1974 Turkish settlers of Greek-Cypriot property for which they had received deeds issued by the TRNC government.<sup>12</sup> One aim of the village tourism project was, therefore, to support initiatives already underway to diversify the rural economy, and to open up a viable alternative to selling up and moving on, which would have the effect of reinforcing dependence on large-scale tourism development (as well as further complicating the prospects for political settlement with regard to the land and property dispensation). This involved linking the provision of village home-stay and bed and breakfast accommodation to the conversion of some of the local agriculture to organic production – an initiative already underway, under the auspices of the UNDP-sponsored Bicomunal Cyprus Organic Advisory Group, which was bringing together Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot farmers in the exchange of knowledge and support over organic farming certification and methods.<sup>13</sup> The village tourism project also aimed at a ‘product development’ strategy for further village tourism activities, such as cycling and walking routes, which could be done from a village base, thus encouraging longer tourist stays and spending

in the villages, and providing a market for local agricultural produce and handicrafts.

The key approach of the project revolved, therefore, around the identification and development of a series of reciprocal relationships and linkages: between village accommodation providers; between farming and tourism; between travel agents and villagers; and all of the above between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot villages, farmers and travel agents across the Green Line. In this last respect, the project aimed to 'piggy back' on collaborative relationships already being formed in the context of international programmes; these included the organic farming partnership, already referred to, and USAID's support and capacity building for community based eco-tourism under its EDGE programme.<sup>14</sup> The convergence with these initiatives and the new collaborative relationships they engendered suggested that a basis already existed for creative engagement across the Green Line, and contributed to a sense of optimism and growing momentum with which, it was hoped, the proposed village tourism project could connect. Against this positive background, a number of problems presented themselves in the task of finding villages to join the project, and it is to these problems I now turn.<sup>15</sup>

### **Finding Village Partners**

Principal amongst the problems faced in locating a suitable Karpaz village was the issue of Greek-Cypriot property, abandoned in 1974. Avoiding the use of Greek-Cypriot property or participation by post-1974 Turkish settlers would be critical for securing Greek-Cypriot participation in the project, and could be most easily achieved by recruiting a village with no Greek-Cypriot property. This, however, presented further problems, since villages such as Kaleburnu, Galatia/Mehmetcik,<sup>16</sup> and Balalan, Turkish-Cypriot villages with no history of a mixed population, lacked basic accommoda-

tion and village tourism-oriented activities and infrastructure. Whilst offering much in terms of a broad 'Karpaz product', and with potential for village tourism development at a later date, they would not be able to enter into a meaningful partnership with the more advanced agritourism villages in the south, which had already benefited from major investment in accommodation and infrastructure (see Sharpley 2002).<sup>17</sup>

The most suitable candidate in this respect was the formerly mixed village of Buyukkonuk/Komi Kebir. The population of the village currently stands at around 800, with a population mix of approximately 40:60 Cypriot to Turkish settlers. Of the 40 per cent Cypriot, approximately half are original residents of the village, whilst half are refugees from the south, primarily from the Baf/Paphos area. Buyukkonuk/Komi Kebir is situated just outside the Karpaz protected area, a few kilometres from a new 3,000-bed resort development underway at the coastal village of Bafra. What made Buyukkonuk/Komi Kebir different from the other villages of the area was the presence of an active and committed core of villagers centred around a shop and craft cooperative, and an eco-tourism development committee of eight to ten people. Several villagers had already started to make self-catering accommodation available in their homes, and had successfully developed and run a number of eco-tourism products for small groups of tourists, including olive harvesting and making olive oil products; weaving; gastronomy-based tourism built around local food products and seasonal processes; and walks and cycle rides. The cooperative had received UNDP funding to adapt three rooms for disabled access and to furnish and equip an activity room for displays, events and activities for tourists, and the village also participated in the bi-communal group for developing organic farming, and had been used to working with, and hosting visits by, Greek-Cypriot counterparts. All of these elements made Buyukkonuk/Komi Kebir a possibility

for partnering an established agritourism village in the south, as well as a potential model for stimulating developments in other villages, and generating tourist visitation to the surrounding area. The cooperative, eco-tourism committee and mayor responded willingly to an invitation to join the project.

A number of reconnoitring trips were now undertaken to identify possible collaborating villages in the south. The search was concentrated on pre-1974 mixed villages, which might share a reciprocal heritage, in terms of memories of earlier co-habitation, the abandonment and rehabilitation of properties belonging to the 'other' community, and a post-1974 refugee presence. Led by the Greek-Cypriot team member, and accompanied by the Turkish-Cypriot project coordinator, several days were spent visiting agritourism villages meeting these criteria, which might be prepared to enter into a reciprocal arrangement with Buyukkonuk/Komi Kebir. It was hoped that relations of reciprocity could be established by proposing the non-contentious exchange of expertise, for example, in relation to the development and certification of organic farming, which was much more advanced in the south than in the north, and which had become an established channel for bi-communal cooperation. The potential benefit for Greek-Cypriot partners lay in the prospect of adding value to their agritourism product by making a marketing feature of the relationship between the participating villages, which was to include the sale and use of each other's products; and generating new niche markets by targeting the growing market for organic produce in Cyprus's key tourist-generating countries.

In Karpaz, the Turkish-Cypriot villagers made ready to receive visits from potential partners, preparing gift baskets of the village's produce, with labels bearing the Komi Kebir name (and not the post-1974 name of Buyukkonuk). An invitation to lunch in the village was extended to villagers from the south interested in taking the project forward. However,

despite the fact that acts such as gift-exchange and the sharing of food had been a common feature of relations with the Greek-Cypriot guests who had visited the village in the course of the UN's organic farming project, the villages in the south did not accept their invitations, and the Greek-Cypriot NGO withdrew abruptly from the project. What had gone wrong? In order to understand what went wrong, it is helpful to think back to the Karpaz village represented by the names of Komi Kebir and Buyukkonuk – two villages occupying the same physical space.

### **Komi Kebir**

Komi Kebir is a village located in the rolling hills where the land starts to narrow into the long pointing finger that is the Karpaz Peninsula. It is also a site on Facebook, populated by former residents, and descendents of former residents, who left the village in 1974 – some of whom now live in the southern part of Cyprus, and visit the village periodically, whilst others live outside of Cyprus, and know the village only through stories and photographs. Komi Kebir does not maintain a 'displaced municipality' or community council, unlike others which, since 1974, continue to function as legally constituted bodies, electing mayors and council members at the same time as other local governments in the south. It does, however, have a football team, which joined the Cypriot Football League in 1989, and has its headquarters in a community sports centre in Tottenham, London.<sup>18</sup>

The decision of the Greek-Cypriot team member to withdraw from the project came about after he had discussed the project with his sister-in-law, herself a refugee from Komi Kebir, living in the south of Cyprus. Although we had spent days together, in formal meetings and informally, over meals and drinks, discussing the modalities for building reciprocity and cooperation, it became apparent that he was

growing uncomfortable with the direction in which the project was moving, and wanted to find out how his sister-in-law felt about the proposals. His decision to withdraw came suddenly, in a text message which, due to the continued separation of telecommunications and mobile networks between north and south, took some time to arrive and reached me just as we were about to leave for lunch with the Turkish-Cypriot villagers. In a subsequent telephone conversation he explained that, following his conversation with his sister-in-law, he now felt it was not right to proceed. Although the tourism project was avoiding the use of property inhabited by Turkish settlers, his sister-in-law had argued (and he had agreed with her), that there were simply too many Turkish settlers in the village, at just over half the village population. In his view, the project was feasible only if the partner village in the north were historically and exclusively Turkish-Cypriot – even though the potential partner village in the south may be a historically mixed village, containing Turkish-Cypriot property occupied by Greek-Cypriot refugees. Over lunch with the Turkish-Cypriot villagers, which went ahead without the Greek-Cypriot guests, we discussed this development, why it had happened, and how to proceed. Our hosts professed themselves disappointed, though not surprised. They understood that the presence of Turkish settlers in the village was too much for many Greek-Cypriots to swallow, but wondered if there was not another, unspoken reason, specifically, the loss of fourteen of the village's (Greek-Cypriot) residents, who were arrested and subsequently disappeared, during August and September of 1974. According to one of our hosts – himself a Turkish-Cypriot refugee from the Baf /Paphos region – and in contrast to the usual narrative of co-villagers protecting each other against attacks from 'outsiders' – there were stories of a breakdown in relations, and harassment of Greek-Cypriot villagers by some of their Turkish-Cypriot neighbours, during the months of war in 1974.<sup>19</sup>

Following the withdrawal of the Greek-Cypriot NGO, a number of private individuals and groups of individuals offered to pursue the possibility of collaboration with villages in the south. In most cases, these were groups of people known to the villagers in the north because they had already met and built up a relationship with them on other environmental and agricultural projects. A number of promising leads came to nothing, however, when it came to formal discussion in village councils. In this context, the choice of the term 'twinning' to describe the kind of arrangement envisaged proved to be an unfortunate mistake, as the following extract from a letter from the community council of a village in the south, responding to the request of two villagers to take part in the project, makes clear:

Up to now we knew that twinning cities and communities is a practice applying to corresponding cities abroad. The proposed twinning constitutes an exception to the rule, as it is done without the participation of the displaced Community Council of Komi Kebir [sic].<sup>20</sup> Yet it gives the impression that the Turkish side will take advantage of it and will use it for its own political benefit, claiming that this twinning concerns communities which belong to separate states, which is not the case (translated from Greek original).

The letter also adds that issues related to tourism development are matters for the properly constituted official bodies of the Republic of Cyprus.

### **Buyukkonuk**

The village located in the rolling foothills of the Five Finger Mountains, which stretch away along the Karpaz Peninsula, was renamed Buyukkonuk after 1974. Despite the fact that its population – with the exception of some expatriate residents – is now all Turkish speaking, it is nevertheless composed of a number of different groups, whether defined by origin ('local' Cypriots, Cypriots from the south, im-

migrants from Turkey, British expatriate residents), or by occupation, education, political and ideological orientation, or links to other countries and parts of the island.

Members of the eco-tourism committee understood the equivocation of former residents of Komi Kebir, especially in terms of the fourteen who had disappeared during the hostilities of 1974 and were numbered amongst the missing of Cyprus. On the question of the Greek-Cypriot position on the Turkish settlers in the village, responses were more complex, and reflected a pragmatic approach to the immediate pressures arising from the lack of a political settlement. The main priority was considered to be the challenge of keeping the village economically viable, whilst resisting the effects of environmental damage and unsustainable development posed by the only other options on offer – mass tourism development and speculative construction. In the atmosphere of uncertainty created by the failure of the Annan Plan, the Turkish settlers, it was argued, were particularly susceptible to offers to sell up and go. Rumours abounded of individuals who had pocketed millions and headed back to Turkey to invest their windfall, opening the way for the strip development of holiday villages and second homes in Karpaz. From this perspective, a sustainable alternative is only realizable if the Turkish settler inhabitants of Buyukkonuk are incorporated into the village's plans.

This approach echoes a more widespread change in thinking on the part of Turkish-Cypriots, including several on the pan-Cypriot left who have traditionally been amongst those most hostile to the presence of Turkish settlers. After more than thirty-five years, which have seen different waves of settlement and migration, intermarriage, and the birth of children with Turkish and Turkish-Cypriot parents, a more nuanced awareness of the settlers, their motivations and trajectories, has started to emerge (Hatay 2005). Attention is now being drawn to the problem of poverty, which drives

Turkish migration to Cyprus, whilst the political opprobrium in which Turkish settlers/migrants are held becomes justification for lowering the standards of humanity to which they should be entitled. As the Turkish-Cypriot journalist Sevgül Uludag asks:

[H]ow do we 'break' these 'ghettos' to normalize life on this island so that what is called 'the settlers' would be treated like human beings, would not be used by the regime against the Cypriots and would 'find' themselves? How do we deal with this sensitive and humanistic issue within the boundaries of international law? How do we create space within our own identities and cultures to refuse ghettos but at the same time accept the differences? How do we combat racism and poverty?

Lots of question marks where there is no easy answer ... (Uludag 2004)

## Conclusions

Tourism's transformative potential, it has been suggested, lies in the fact that it is more than an industry – it is also a powerful social force (Higgins-Desbiolles 2006). In the context of conflict and post-conflict societies, however, these industrial credentials are themselves important for their capacity to 'normalize' relations by creating a different context for the construction of trust and reciprocity. Peace tours, of the sort that have been developed in Northern Ireland, have also emerged in Cyprus's divided capital of Nicosia. For example, the Tours for Peace organized by the Cypriot Teachers' Platform, with funding from the UNDP and USAID, take Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot history teachers around the sites of 'multicultural Nicosia' on both sides of the Green Line.<sup>21</sup> Such initiatives do not, however, reach much beyond the established bi-communal movement, with its roots in the professional, middle-class sections of Cypriot society. In attempting to expand the range of bi-communal engagement by bringing tourism industry and village residents into a collaborative partnership, the

village tourism project could be said to have run into the kind of obstacle that inevitably emerges from the encounter between committed bi-communalism and the 'jagged reality' of Cyprus outside the capital Nicosia (David Officer, personal communication).<sup>22</sup> I briefly discuss two of them here.

The first concerns the limitations on trust in the absence of social knowledge, as Causevic found in post-war Sarajevo, where adequate social knowledge to form a judgement about 'the other' as a potential partner simply was not available, as a result of the massive population movements produced by the war (Causevic 2010). This problem is amplified in Cyprus, where the dominance of the 'Cyprus issue', and uncertainty about the outcomes of potentially high-risk strategies (such as, for Greek-Cypriots, entering a tourism partnership with a village in the north), call for high levels of generalized trust, to which Cyprus's highly polarized 'zero sum' environment is antithetical.<sup>23</sup> Research carried out in Greek-Cypriot villages by Yiouli Taki<sup>24</sup> suggests that social trust may be as big a problem within communities on either side of the Green Line as it is across the Green Line.

The second concerns the presence of Turkish settlers in the village. Many Cypriots in the project showed consideration and a desire for reciprocity, demonstrated, for example, in the omission of the post-1974 Turkish village name from the basket of goods prepared for guests, and in the readiness of the Greek-Cypriot cultivators, who had visited the village as part of the organic farming project, to try and broker relations with partner villages in the south. Significantly, the reason given for the Greek-Cypriot withdrawal from the project was not the killing of fourteen Greek-Cypriots of the village in 1974, but the presence of Turkish settlers in the village now. With the intervention of figures such as the journalist Sevgül Uludag, who writes and publishes narratives of the dead and missing of Cyprus, a sense of shared loss is, in some senses, becoming the basis for

steps towards redemption and reconciliation.<sup>25</sup> A frequent lesson drawn from the sharing of these stories is to demonstrate that the desire for vengeance is not inevitable. In her account of an interview with Greek-Cypriot refugees from Komi Kebir, which describes the failure of Turkish-Cypriot co-villagers to come to their aid, Uludag reinforces the point:

And yet, both Christina and her mother do not carry the idea of 'vengeance'. Christina starts crying when she speaks of her childhood friends from the village, Sevim and Hatice ... Mrs. Panayota, when asking about her Turkish Cypriot villagers' lack of help during difficult times, says 'But perhaps they wanted to help but couldn't ...' (Uludag 2008)

Continuing pain and resentment concerning the actions of former neighbours are possibly hard to acknowledge openly because they are fraught with ambiguity and contradiction, and raise hard-to-answer questions about the nature and possibility of peace (although they remain an unspoken sub-text of visits to 'the other side', as recent ethnographies by Bryant (2010) and Dikomitis (2012) have shown). Greek-Cypriot attitudes to the Turkish settlers, in contrast, are unequivocal; however, their presence has become part of the complicated lived reality of the north, with which Turkish-Cypriots have had to find an accommodation.

The failure of the project to initiate tourism collaboration between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots derives, I suggest, not from entrenched ethno-national interests and hostilities, but from the inability to resolve these contradictory positions in the current phase of the conflict. Despite the fact that the 'Cyprus conflict' is now several decades old, the experience of this project suggests that the use of tourism for peace or confidence building is premature as yet. The answer to the question, 'at what stage of a conflict might tourism be a useful mechanism for confidence building?' lies in the specificities and the dynamic of the particular conflict. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where tourism-for-peace initiatives started rel-

actively soon after the cessation of hostilities, Causevic found that state-level cooperation helped to achieve cooperation at other levels: 'Lots of time, work and money is spent on the creation of the administrative conditions under which cooperation would be possible' (2010: 59). In Cyprus, efforts to mobilize tourism for peace are caught between the continuing lack of agreement and political will at the state level, and a profound sense of equivocation, contradiction and complex loyalties at the individual level, when weighing the competing demands of community, family and personal needs and desires.<sup>26</sup>

In the five years since the project, numerous tour operators have linked up for the purposes of arranging transfers and even two centre holidays in north and south.<sup>27</sup> Such partnerships generally come about at the behest of large foreign tour operators, and are not widely publicized within Cyprus. They often result in the kind of asymmetrical relations, referred to earlier, which can produce resentment and cynicism (see also Scott and Topcan 2006). Buyukkonuk has established itself as a successful eco-tourism village, and has become a model for other agritourism villages in the area, but has not been able to build relations with a Greek-Cypriot partner village. Although Greek-Cypriots have been numbered amongst the day visitors who attend the village's popular biannual 'eco day' festivals, none have so far stayed overnight.

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*Julie Scott is an anthropologist in London Metropolitan University's Business School. Her work, with its particular focus on Cyprus and the Mediterranean, explores intangible cultural heritage and sustainable livelihoods, and the role of tourism in conflict and post-conflict societies. She is currently carrying out research on gambling and casino tourism in Cyprus. Email: scojulie@gmail.com*

## Notes

1. The Global Opportunities Fund was succeeded in 2007 by the Strategic Programme Fund. See Foreign and Commonwealth Office (n.d.).
2. The analysis presented here is built on sustained spells of fieldwork in Cyprus, primarily in the north of the island, over a period of fifteen years, ranging from eighteen months in the early-1990s, to shorter periods of three to four weeks at intervals of one to two years.
3. See Wellenreuther (1993) for a discussion of the estimates of refugee numbers. Although largely 'ethnically homogeneous', both territories also number amongst their population a small number of Greek- or Turkish-Cypriots, as well as other minorities, such as Cypriot Maronites, who chose not to leave their homes.
4. For example, the district of Varosha next to the walled city of Famagusta contained 7,573 hotel beds in 1973 (48 per cent of the island's total at the time), and has remained closed and under Turkish military control since 1974, earning it the nickname of the 'ghost town'. See Andronicou (1979).

5. The term 'Turkish settlers' refers to immigrants from Turkey who were brought to the north of Cyprus as part of a deliberate settlement policy after 1974, although it is commonly also used (wrongly, according to Hatay) to describe immigrants from Turkey in general. See Hatay (2005) and Navaro-Yashin (2012).
6. Council Regulation (EC) No. 866/2004 of 29 April 2004 on a regime under Art. 2 of Protocol No. 10 of the Act of Accession as amended by Council Resolution (EC) No. 293/2005 of 17 February 2005.
7. Whilst the value of goods traded and the numbers of people crossing the Green Line increased substantially in the years up to 2009 (when the value of goods traded jumped by 36 per cent over the previous year), the European Commission's latest reports on the operation of the Green Line Regulation show a decline in both goods traded and numbers of people crossing (including Cypriot residents and non-Cypriot tourists). See the Seventh Report on the Implementation of Council Regulation (EC) 866/2004 of 29 April 2004 and the situation resulting from its application covering the period 1 May until December 2010 COM (2011) 284 final, Brussels, 30 May 2011.
8. Turkish-Cypriots also have strong feelings, but are subject to different discourses of legitimacy and belonging. See Dikomitis (2012), Hatay (2005) and Navaro-Yashin (2006, 2012).
9. Many also chose not to. See Dikomitis (2005, 2009) for a nuanced analysis.
10. 'Homo-diplomacy' in Constantinou's formulation refers to an 'alternative' culture of diplomacy based on the 'experimental and experiential diplomacy of everyday life' and has spiritual and transformative potential (Constantinou 2006: 351).
11. See [www.prio-cyprus-displacement.net](http://www.prio-cyprus-displacement.net) for detailed information on these and other displaced communities.
12. As reported to me by Turkish-Cypriot villagers in Karpaz. The TRNC authorities issued their own deeds for refugee property abandoned in the north, and allocated them to Turkish-Cypriot refugees from the south, in exchange for the deeds to the property they had left behind, and to settlers from Turkey who were encouraged to come to the island after 1974. Various markets have now developed for land and property in the north, based on the status of the deeds attached to them. For a detailed discussion, see Scott (1998) and Ilıcan (2010).
13. The Bi-communal Cyprus Organic Advisory Group was formed in December 2003 to 'share expertise, information and guidance on matters related to the production and consumption of organic products in Cyprus'. See United Nations Development Programme (n.d.).
14. Economic Development and Growth for Enterprises. See United States Agency for International Development (n.d.). Assistance for eco-tourism development in the north included money for the furnishing and fitting of guest accommodation – but not structural work on property owned by Greek-Cypriot or foreign owners – which is in any case precluded by the Green Line Regulation.
15. The recruitment of Cypriot tour operators for the project presented fewer difficulties, and indeed the issues with regard to tour operator collaboration are rather different, principally because the property issue can be more readily circumvented. For a more detailed discussion of tour operator collaboration, see Scott (2012) and Scott and Topcan (2006).
16. Many towns and villages in Cyprus have two or three names: a Greek-Cypriot name, a Turkish-Cypriot name, and a Turkish name given after 1974. The village of Galatia has always been a Turkish-Cypriot village, and is commonly referred to by Turkish-Cypriots by its Turkish-Cypriot name, and also as Mehmetcik. For a discussion of the name-changing policy see King and Ladbury (1988) and Navaro-Yashin (2012).
17. Despite the fact that the village accommodation sector is quite well developed in the south, with a stock of about 780 beds in 'traditional housing' available to the tourist market, arguably many local development benefits are missed through the lack of integration between the tourist and agricultural sectors.
18. See Cypriot Football League (n.d.).
19. This appears to be corroborated by Sevgül Uludag's account of this particular episode – see Uludag (2008). Some 2,000 Cypriots (Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot) disappeared in Cyprus between 1963 and 1974. See Sant Cassia (2005).
20. Komi Kebir is not named as a displaced municipality or community council in the lists maintained by the Union of Cyprus Municipalities (n.d.) or the Union of Cyprus Communities (n.d.).
21. For film of the inaugural tour in January 2011, see Tours for Peace (2011).

22. I am indebted to David Officer for his insights on issues of civil society, bi-communal engagement and generalized trust in Cyprus, on which I draw heavily in this section.
23. As testified by numerous comparative surveys, such as the World Values Survey, Eurobarometer, and the European Values Survey, which suggest that generalized trust across both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities is lower than for the Mediterranean in general. I am indebted to David Officer for this insight. His analysis of the evidence on social capital and generalized trust from these large-scale surveys is in preparation.
24. In preparation.
25. Also being explored by other writers and filmmakers, such as Neokleus' collection of memories of everyday conflict, published in Greek, and in Turkish as 'Tarihe Isik Tutan Anilar 1955–1974 Kibris' (Neokleus 2011), and Evripodou and Nugent's film 'Birds of a Feather' (2011), which brings together villagers from former mixed villages to discuss incidents from the past.
26. See, for example, Loizos (2008) and Bryant (2010) on individual and family conflicts opened up by the possibility of returning 'home'.
27. International tour operators offer packages combining, for example, several nights in the northern resorts of Kyrenia and Famagusta with Limassol, Ayia Napa, Protaras, Pissouri or Larnaca in the south.

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