

Building Community in a Protracted Conflict Situation: Applications of Interactive Design Methodologies with Citizen Peace-building Efforts in Cyprus

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Abstract

In spite of its critical importance to the Aglobal village,= international inter-ethnic conflict is one of the areas of social action in which the voice of communication scholars has been strangely silent. We have given more attention to improving dating relationships of college sophomores than to helping societies torn by war to rebuild an infrastructure for peace. Since the demise of the Cold War that pitted Western Europe and the United States against the Soviet Union, the world's attention has been dominated by smaller interstate and intrastate conflicts often centered on ethnic differences but with roots in superpower rivalries. An instructive example of such conflicts exists in Cyprus, which arose during the height of cold war politics and has outlasted both the cold war and many of the disputes that have consumed the majority of the world's attention in recent years Bosnia, Ireland, South Africa, and many of the Israeli-Arab disputes. One of the reasons that little movement has been made in bringing the Cyprus conflict to a successful resolution is that until recently, there did not exist a citizen pace-building movement on the island. I resided in Cyprus from 1994-1996 as a Fulbright Scholar in conflict resolution, where I had the privilege of working with citizen groups of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots as they struggled together to form a broad-based peace movement. My role was to help the two groups develop a heightened mutual understanding of the situation in Cyprus, to develop a collective vision for the future, and to design an integrated set of activities for moving forward together effectively. To accomplish these tasks, we used a set of interactive design methodologies that were developed to help participants co-create mutual understanding, shared views of the future, and joint strategies for action. In this workshop, I will describe the activities involved in these efforts, showing how they exemplify a practical theory at work in a protracted conflict situation that has defied for 35 years the attempts of the world's best diplomats to forge a political agreement.

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Introduction

Since the breakup of the former Soviet Union, and the corresponding demise of the Cold War that permeated for decades relations between east and west, a number of small-scale but often violent conflicts have dominated the attention of the world's diplomats, political leaders, and international agencies. Bosnia, Kosovo, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, East Timor, Angola, Somalia, South Africa, Israel-Palestine B these are a sample of the better-known conflicts centered on struggles between ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. Characterized by extreme nationalist rhetoric, intolerance of cultural differences, abuse of minorities, and use of violence to subvert the political process, these conflicts have resulted in unimaginable human death and injury, destroyed centuries-old communities, caused irreparable destruction to historical treasures and fragile environments, set back for decades economic development in already depressed regions, and brought inconceivable suffering to millions of displaced people.

While these conflicts have been given center stage in the world's news and by the world's political leaders, they have not received a great deal of attention by academics and scholars who study human communication. Diplomats looking for advice and assistance on how to deal more effectively with intractable international conflicts find embarrassingly little help in our published literature or from our convention programs. In communication, it seems that we have left responsibility for investigating such situations with the international relations experts, who typically focus on a macro level of analysis, dealing largely with the socio-political-economic issues and giving primary emphasis to national governments, military units, and economic systems. Ironically, it is not unusual to hear from both diplomats and international relations analysts that at the heart of many conflicts lie communication problems between the opposing factions. However, without readily available help for dealing with these communication problems, they tend to receive little to no attention.

Given the emphasis within most university settings upon quantity of publications as the primary criteria for promotion, tenure, and merit salary increases, it is quite understandable that few individuals have sought to become involved in international conflict situations. Any research project can take years to complete, and becoming meaningfully involved is not a simple matter. Such

conflicts can be quite messy B they are time-consuming, emotionally draining, sometimes dangerous, and often bring feelings of hopelessness and even a state of depression. In addition, they demand that one spend a great amount of time on site, in some cases relocating to a remote country for extended periods of time, and neither the travel funds nor the blocks of time that are necessary for working on site are usually forthcoming. As several colleagues have told me when I describe my involvement with the Cyprus conflict: Alt sounds like a great opportunity for an established scholar with tenure, but please don=t recommend it to junior faculty or graduate students.@

Recently, there has been an interest growing among communication scholars in developing theories and methodologies that grow from, are targeted toward, and are integrated with social issues. In general, within universities there is a stronger call for faculty to assume greater social responsibility in their teaching and research, thanks in part to pressure from their funding communities. In the field of communication, established scholars such as Vernon Cronen (1995) and others have begun to articulate a basis for establishing our academic integrity around Apractical theory.@ Although many changes will be needed in how universities operate, these developments should make it easier for those entering the field to devote their attention to issues such as international conflicts.

In this paper I intend to offer a brief overview of my participation in the work of citizen peace-building groups in Cyprus, an international conflict situation with which I have been involved since 1994. In Cyprus, I worked with a group of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot peace builders who are attempting to establish a bi-communal citizen-based peace movement on the island. The situation in Cyprus provides an instructive example of how practical knowledge based in the study of human communication can be applied with a protracted conflict situation and how such applications can help us establish more meaningful theoretical understandings of communication phenomena.

Background

Cyprus has a long and complex history, and its strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa has rarely left it free from intrusions of outsiders. For most of the past five thousand years it has been raided, settled, and often occupied by Phoenicians, Assyrians, Arabs, Greeks, Normans, Franks, Genovese, Venetians, Ottomans, and British. In 1960, after over 80 years as a British colony, Cyprus became an independent nation state for the first time in its modern history.

It was established as a single, ethnically-mixed bi-communal state, set up as a partnership between the Turkish-speaking Muslim community, which was approximately 20% of the population, and the Greek-speaking Orthodox Christian community, which was approximately 80% of the population.

Ethnic violence between the two communities soon erupted however, and in 1964 the United Nations intervened to stop hostilities. By this time most of the Turkish Cypriots had withdrawn into enclaves which encompassed just 3% of the territory of Cyprus. Ten years later, intervention by Turkish troops following a Greek-instigated coup against the president of Cyprus led to the geographical and communal division of the island. The results of this war displaced thousands of families and individuals from both communities, representing over one-third of the population, and

it almost completely severed communication links between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. A fragile but long-lasting hold has been placed on hostilities by the presence of United Nations Troops, but the ethnic, political, economic, and social differences have been continuously increasing. (see Attalides, 1979; Hitchens, 1984; Koumoulides, 1986; Markides, 1977; Stearns, 1992).

Since 1963, when the bi-communal clashes erupted, political negotiations have not produced any major agreements to end the conflict. Hundreds of diplomats have come and gone, and the division has not weakened. Unfortunately, there has been little pressure from the population of the two communities on their leaders to make necessary compromises. Indeed, the voices of extreme nationalism have played a much larger role in both communities than have the voices of reconciliation. This lack of pressure from ordinary citizens toward reaching a solution can be partially attributed to the absence of a strong citizen-based peace movement.

Because communication links are almost completely severed in Cyprus, with no exchange of mail, telephone calls, or personal visits between ordinary citizens, a bi-communal peace initiative is difficult, if not impossible to develop without the assistance of outside third-parties. The United Nations presence in Cyprus was primarily a military and refugee assistance mission, and most diplomatic posts primarily concerned themselves with contacts with political leaders. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were not well established in Cyprus, in either community. This left academia as perhaps the one of the few avenues through which meaningful contacts could take place between ordinary citizens of the two sides of the island.

Only recently have there been sustained contributions from third-party scholars in Cyprus. There were periodic conflict resolution activities held with members of the two communities as early as 1966 (see Burton, 1969; Doob, 1987; Mitchell, 1981; Talbot, 1977), but for various reasons these were limited to single workshops, usually held outside the island, with little followup. The late 1980s and early 1990s brought more frequent interventions from academics (see Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, 1993; Fisher 1994 and 1997), but funding difficulties and resistance from political leaders prevented their continuation. It wasn't until the mid-1990s that an ongoing effort by third-party scholar-practitioners was put in to place (see Broome, 1998a for an overview of conflict resolution activities in Cyprus).¹

In 1994, I accepted a position as Senior Fulbright Scholar in Cyprus, with the responsibility for offering seminars, workshops, and training in communication, problem solving, intergroup relations, and conflict resolution.² My initial appointment was for a nine-month period, but as events unfolded, the fellowship was renewed twice, resulting in a stay of two and one-half years in Cyprus. Prior to actually taking residency on the island, I was invited to participate as part of the training team for a series of conflict resolution workshops that took place during the spring and summer of 1994. This allowed me to start a working relationship (and many friendships) with the individuals participating in those workshops, from which emerged a core group of individuals committed to peace-building activities within each community and between the two communities.

Most of the individuals who had participated in the spring and summer 1994 conflict resolution seminars had not worked together on a regular basis in the past, and they were not a cohesive group.

In fact, the individual views of peace building varied significantly within the group, both within each community as well as across community lines. They needed the opportunity to explore these differences and to develop a consensus on a vision for their work. In addition, the workshop participants had no plan of activities for their work. They had not explored various possibilities for fulfilling their general purposes, and they had not formed project teams for any specific activities. They needed help in developing a specific and realistic agenda that could guide their work.

In order to address these challenges, the group asked me to facilitate a series of problem-solving and design workshops. A core group of thirty-two individuals, consisting of approximately equal numbers of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, was formed, and we met regularly during the nine months from October 1994 through June 1995. The primary objective of the sessions was to help the group develop a thoughtful design for their peace-building efforts and to build stronger teamwork for carrying out this design. The work with this bi-communal group of peace builders was a long and sometimes arduous process, but it resulted in significant personal learning of the part of everyone involved, and it led to the formation of a solid peace-building movement that is continuing to gain strength today, in spite of many political and practical obstacles that stand in the way. During the remainder of my time in Cyprus, another two years, I continued to work with this group as they organized and conducted workshops and seminars with a number of other bi-communal groups on the island. Gradually, the number of people involved grew from the original 32 individuals in the core group to include by the end of 1997 more than 2000 Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots operating in more than 50 different groups.³

Although various activities were developed and implemented by the different project groups (concerts, exhibitions, language teaching, skills workshops, publications, media programs, etc.), several of the projects utilized the interactive design process and its set of consensus methodologies that had been employed during original nine-month design period with the core group. The remainder of this paper provides a general description of this process and its applications in Cyprus.

I believe the design work with these citizen peace-building groups provides a valuable example of the A practical theory@ theme of the present workshop.

Process

The consensus-building process employed with various peace-building groups in Cyprus is a problem solving and design system referred to in the literature as A Interactive Management@ (IM).

IM has emerged over the past 20 years as a powerful way to assist groups in dealing with complex issues (see Broome, 1989 & 1992 and Broome & Fulbright, 1995; Warfield 1995). The IM system helps parties in a conflict situation design group products that integrate contributions from individuals with diverse views, backgrounds, and perspectives. In IM sessions, a group of participants who are knowledgeable of the situation are engaged in (a) developing an understanding of the current state of affairs, (b) establishing a collective basis for thinking about the future, and (c)

producing a framework for effective action. In the process of moving through these three phases of group work, the individuals are able to develop a sense of teamwork, and they gain new communication and information processing skills.

IM is based on John Warfield's Science of Generic Design (see Warfield 1976 & 1995). The theoretical constructs integrated with IM have grown out of more than two decades of practice, and it draws from both behavioral and cognitive sciences, with links to general systems thinking. IM grew out of concerns about how to help groups composed of diverse participants work together more effectively in dealing with complex problem situations. Methodologies were created to address many of the serious communication obstacles to consensus building in groups (e.g., unfocused discussion, poor listening, premature evaluation, emotionally laden issues, hidden agendas, domination by high status or vocal members, etc.), and to provide safeguards against dangerous information processing deficiencies that often plague groups (information overload, improper attention to minor issues, inadequate organization and display of information, etc.). IM was established as a formal system of planning and design in 1980 after a developmental phase that started in 1974.⁴

The IM system seeks to appropriately balance the *behavioral demands* of group work, such as those mentioned above, with *technical assistance* that makes it possible to deal with the complexity of issues. The system is designed to prevent groups from (a) prematurely focusing on solutions before they have adequately defined the situation, and (b) under-conceptualizing alternatives for resolution of the conflict situation. Special methods are employed to encourage the participants' creativity, and facilitated group processes are used to manage the group's communication. The IM approach is based on integrating the following synergistic components of group problem solving:

1. A group of *knowledgeable participants* who represent the variety of perspectives that are relevant for dealing with the situation;
2. A *trained facilitation team* that is able to guide the group through the problem-solving and planning process;
3. A special set of *consensus methodologies* that have been carefully selected to help groups generate, structure and make choices among ideas;
4. The use of *behaviorally sensitive technologies*, including computer assistance, to increase efficiency and productivity of group work; and
5. The use of a specifically *designed physical environment* that is appropriate for implementing the selected methodologies and for maximizing effective group communication.

The IM approach assigns to participants all responsibility for contributing ideas, while group process is managed by a trained facilitation team. Methodologies for generating, clarifying, structuring, interpreting and amending ideas are selected to match the phase of group interaction and the requirements of the situation. These methodologies include the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) (Delbeq, Van De Ven, & Gustafson, 1975), Ideawriting (Warfield, 1990), Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) (Warfield, 1995), and field and profile representations (Warfield, 1995). A brief description of these methodologies is contained in Appendix A.

Applications in Cyprus

The IM applications in Cyprus can be grouped into three primary stages. The *first stage* consists of the workshops conducted during my first nine months of residency with a core group of 32 Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot peace-builders. Their work led to the *second stage*, when further workshops were conducted with targeted groups of young business leaders, young political leaders, and a women=s leaders group. A *third stage* of IM work occurred after I left my residency as Fulbright Scholar in Cyprus, when workshops were designed and conducted by local teams of Cypriots, through a distance-learning arrangement with me as their consultant. During both the first and second stages, I served as primary facilitator for the workshops, and although during the work with targeted groups I employed a team of facilitators from the core group, it wasn=t until I left Cyprus that IM work was conducted without my physical presence in the group. Teams conducting work in the third stage received their initial training through participation in the workshop sessions I facilitated with the core group in 1994 and 1995, and they received hands-on experience in their role as part of the facilitation team for workshops with the targeted groups. In addition, I returned to Cyprus at the end of 1997 to conduct a formal training workshop with a specific focus on learning the steps of the IM methodologies. Although I have continued to initiate and facilitate IM workshops focused on the Cyprus conflict, much of the work that has taken place since I left Cyprus at the end of 1996 has been conducted by my colleagues.

Before reporting about the specific groups with which interactive design work has been carried out in Cyprus, I would like to describe a few characteristics of the environment in which this work took place. At the time this work was taking place, there existed among officials in both communities significant skepticism and sometimes explicit opposition to conflict resolution and peace-building activities. There was no public support for this work on the part of the authorities or the general population, and sometimes deliberate attempts were made to stop the work, especially by the Turkish-Cypriot officials. For neither side was peace work seen as furthering their political goals. For the Turkish Cypriots any peaceful bi-communal gathering was seen as weakening their goal of creating a separate state, since the argument for a separate state is partly built on the notion that it is not possible for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to live and/or work together peacefully and equitably. For the Greek Cypriots involvement in such activities posed the danger of drawing attention away from what they saw as the real problem of invasion and illegal occupation of their territory by the Turkish army. The media in both communities often published negative critiques of rapprochement activities, and sometimes their reporting bordered on the slanderous.

Many of the individuals who took part in the workshops were subjected to harassment and constant criticism by colleagues and neighbors, sometimes leading to negative consequences for their careers.

A small but vocal group of demonstrators often gathered at the Greek-Cypriot checkpoint through which participants much pass before entering the buffer zone for meetings, and they subjected those passing to verbal abuse, with the constant danger of physical abuse. There were several instances of tire slashings and other forms of vandalism to automobiles parked near the checkpoint.

Perhaps the most burdensome aspect related to the entire experience was the necessity to gain permissions for holding bi-communal meetings. The process of bringing any group together always involved a series of bureaucratic steps. First, the names and ID numbers of those participating had to be collected at least 10 days prior to the event. These lists were then sent to authorities in their respective communities. For the Greek Cypriots, this list was given to the police at the Ledra Palace checkpoint on the south side of the buffer zone, where the participants would register before entering the strip of land that defined the 1974 cease-fire line. For the Turkish Cypriots, the meeting itself and the list of participants first had to be approved by the civilian authorities, then sent to the military authorities, and finally given to the guards at the Ledra Palace checkpoint on the north side of the buffer zone. Without one's name on the approved list, the guards were powerless to allow anyone to pass. The full list of participants had to be sent to the United Nations guards stationed in the Ledra Palace itself, where an additional check was performed. In addition to the steps involved with creating lists of participants and gaining approvals from the authorities, it was also necessary to reserve one of the two available meeting rooms in the Ledra Palace, to arrange for food and refreshments, to bring in materials, equipment, and supplies needed for the meeting or workshop, to set up the room for the meeting, and finally to clean up the meeting space afterwards and transport everything out of the area. Thus, a lot of tedious work was involved for the organizers of bi-communal activities, and there was very little flexibility to deal with last minute changes, such as cancellations by some participants and the desire of others to take their place.

By far the most frustrating aspect of working with bi-communal activities was the last-minute cancellations of permissions by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, meaning that the Greek Cypriots would often show up for a meeting that had been carefully planned in advance, only to find that the Turkish Cypriots, who were often waiting literally outside the gate, were not allowed to cross the checkpoint and enter the Ledra Palace meeting area. Of the more than 200 meetings that I attended or helped organize while in Cyprus, nearly as many were cancelled because of lack of permissions, often at the last minute, meaning that the work of organizing and setting up the meeting had to start over again. Needless to say, this also disappointed the participants, although most of them maintained their resolve even in the face of these deliberate attempts to discourage participation in bi-communal activities.

When I arrived for the initial residency portion of the work in Cyprus, just after the series of conflict resolution seminars during the spring and summer of 1994, the Turkish-Cypriot authorities imposed a ban on all bi-communal activities. They even refused to issue to me the courtesy pass for crossing to the north that all Fulbright scholars normally received, meaning that if I wanted to cross the buffer zone into the Turkish-controlled area, I would have to go as a tourist, which required

applying for permission each time I wanted to meet with Turkish Cypriots, as well as paying a special fee that was collected from tourists. This problem was resolved, but it required the intervention of the U.S. Ambassador to have my status as Fulbright scholar restored. More serious was the lack of permissions for the Turkish Cypriots to cross into the buffer zone for meetings with Greek Cypriots. Fortunately, what could have been a major block to progress was overcome and even turned into an advantage when we decided to move ahead with mono-communal workshops, waiting for the time when permissions for bi-communal meeting would become available again. All of the groups with which I worked faced the permission problem throughout my time in Cyprus, but the commitment of the individuals involved in the various groups allowed us to move forward in spite of the games played by the authorities.

Stage 1: IM Workshops with the Core Peace-building Group

The core peace-building group with whom I worked during the first nine months of my residency in Cyprus consisted in the beginning of 15 Greek Cypriots and 17 Turkish Cypriots. There were nine men and six women in the Greek-Cypriot group and ten men and seven women in the Turkish-Cypriot group. In both groups ages ranged from the mid-twenties to the mid-fifties, with most of the participants in their late thirties and early forties. They were professionals in various fields, including education (university professors and secondary school teachers), business, counseling, and civil service. Political affiliations ranged from the left/liberal (including the communist part) to the right/conservative (including the ruling party in each community). For all of them, participation was voluntary and outside the scope of their normal job duties and family responsibilities. The group was self-selected, and everyone understood from the beginning that their participation would require a significant commitment of time. Logistical assistance for obtaining permissions to meet together in the buffer zone was provided by the Cyprus Fulbright Commission (CFC), although most of the expenses for refreshments, etc. were provided by the participants. Meeting space was arranged at various locations in each community, both with the help of the CFC and by members of the group.

Workshops with the core group progressed through the following design phases (see Broome, 1996 and 1997, for a description of the activities associated with each phase of work with this group):

Phase 1: Definition of the Situation Surrounding Peace-Building Efforts in Cyprus

Phase 2: Development of a Collective Vision for Peace-Building Efforts in Cyprus

Phase 3: Creation of an Integrated Set of Activities for Peace-Building Efforts in Cyprus

Each phase of the group work was guided by specific questions:

Question 1: What are *obstacles* to our peace-building efforts in Cyprus?

Question 2: What are *goals* for our peace-building efforts in Cyprus?

Question 3: What are *activities* that can help us accomplish our goals?

In order to progress through the three phases, groups met in the evenings on a weekly basis, and occasionally on weekends. In the beginning months of the work, separate sessions were held with Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, because the political situation did not permit bi-communal meetings. When they became possible in February of 1995, bi-communal meetings were held in the United Nations buffer zone at the Ledra Palace, a former hotel that now serves as the barracks for the U.N. troops stationed in Cyprus. In addition to the primary objective of the sessions (described earlier), the facilitated design sessions provided an opportunity for participants to experience and to receive preliminary training in the IM problem solving and design process, a set of skills that they were to put to use during the second and third stages of the IM work described below.

During the three design phases, several specific products representing group views were produced. The most important products included: (a) *problematique* - a graphical structure depicting each group=s view of obstacles confronting peacebuilders in Cyprus; (b) *vision statement* - a graphical structure representing the full group=s view of a desirable future for their work in Cyprus, and (c) *collaborative action agenda* - a plan of activities for accomplishing the aims of the group. As described in the previous section, some of these products represent the work of each community=s separate meetings, while some products developed from the two community groups working together. These products provided the group with a way to move forward together in a productive and fruitful manner.

The group=s collaborative action agenda consisted of 15 projects around which the group formed bi-communal teams. The projects consisted of bi-communal activities such as concerts and exhibitions, joint publications, special seminars, and workshops with targeted groups of young business leaders, young political leaders, educators, and women. In order to implement these projects, an Agora/bazaar@ was scheduled, to which approximately 150 individuals were invited. The purpose of the gathering was to Asell@ the project ideas to individuals with an interest in working together with members of the other community. By organizing the agora/bazaar, the core group hoped to increase the human resources available for carrying out these projects, as well as form an expanded circle of supporters. Nearly all of those invited to the Amarketplace@ attended, and after combining a couple of projects and dropping one in which little interest was shown, twelve projects received strong support. Teams were formed around each of these projects, and plans were made for moving forward with implementation of the modified collaborative action agenda.

Although it is not possible in the space of this paper to describe in detail the dynamics of the groups or the various obstacles the core group had to overcome in order to make forward progress (see Broome, 1997 for initial observations), it is important to note that their work was not easy. Even in the mono-communal setting there were significant differences within each group, including political disagreements, personality conflicts, and different ideas of what is meant by Apeace@ in Cyprus. Bi-communal meetings brought additional complications related to a history of separation, meaning that neither side possessed a very accurate view of the other=s concerns.-- problems emerged because of both perceived similarities that did not actually exist between the groups and perceived differences that were not as great as everyone believed. In addition, the amount of time the groups had to spend working separately meant that their work often progressed in ways not well understood by the other

group. There were several crisis points, when it was not clear if the work could continue, but a way was always found to overcome obstacles that threatened the breakup of the group. Partly as a result of their struggles, the group emerged as a strong unit that has remained the driving force behind bi-communal activities until this day.

Stage 2: IM Workshops with Targeted Groups

As part of the implementation of the core group=s collaborative action agenda, IM workshops were offered to several targeted groups. During the two-year period following the agora/bazar, workshops were conducted with three groups: (1) young business leaders, (2) young political leaders, and (3) women leaders forum. These groups were targeted because of the critical role they will play in the future of Cyprus and because no previous rapprochement work had been conducted in these specific contexts. In addition, we believed that the IM process would be the most appropriate tool to help them move forward.

1. Workshops with Young Business Leaders. These workshops focused on *Issues Facing the Business Community in Working towards Economic Cooperation for a Future Federated Cyprus.* The group consisted of 12 participants from each community. Most were in their early- to mid-thirties. There were five women in the Greek-Cypriot group, while the Turkish-Cypriot group was all male. The majority of the participants were young entrepreneurs in areas such as marketing and advertising, import-export management, computers and electronics sales, fashion design, and interior design. Some were employees in large banks or manufacturing firms, and some owned small shops. For most it would be the first time they would have the opportunity to meet individuals from the other community.

The workshops started in late Spring 1995 with separate weekend retreats at seaside hotels, funded by the Cyprus Fulbright Commission. The Greek Cypriots met for a three-day period at a luxury hotel near the port city of Larnaca on the south coast of the island, and two weeks later the Turkish Cypriots met at a beach resort north of the port city of Famagusta on the east coast of the island. Both groups met from Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon. The participants shared all meals together and stayed overnight at the hotel, providing plenty of time for informal socializing between sessions. Following the initial three day session, which were held in mono-communal settings, the two groups met together in the buffer zone to exchange workshops products. Then over the next six months the two groups met together in both bi-communal and mono-communal settings to continue their work. Most meetings were held during a week-day evening or Saturday afternoon in the buffer zone, but during one weekend a special set of bi-communal meetings were held in which participants traveled together to each side of the island, something that normally is not possible for citizens of Cyprus. The group also went together for a week-long trip to Brussels in order to learn more about the European Union. In total, the group met together for a six month period.

During the workshop sessions, two primary questions guided the discussions:

Question 1: "What are problems facing business leaders in working toward cooperation with the other community?"

Question 2: "What opportunities do you see emerging for business leaders following an acceptable solution to the Cyprus problem?"

Group products resulting from the workshops included each community's *problematique*, or system of issues facing business leaders, and a *support structure* of opportunities for business leaders after an agreement is reached to end the current division of the island.

2. Workshops with Young Political Leaders. These workshops focused on "Defining the Issues Facing the Youth of Cyprus in the Next Decade." The group consisted of 15 participants from each community. Ages ranged from the early twenties to mid-thirties. There were two women in the Greek-Cypriot group, while the Turkish-Cypriot group included four women. The participants were members of the youth wings of the various political parties in each community, ranging from the far left to the right. Most were officers in their youth party structure, while some were affiliated with student political groups. Very few had been involved in bi-communal activities previously, and for most it would be the first time they would have the opportunity to meet individuals from the other community.

The workshops started in the late Spring 1996 with separate weekend retreats, again funded by the CFC. The Greek Cypriots met for a three-day period at a hotel in the mountain village of Platres in the Troodos Mountains, two weeks later the Turkish Cypriots met at a beach hotel near the village of Lapithos north coast of the island. Both groups met from Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon. The participants shared all meals together and stayed overnight at the hotel, providing plenty of time for informal socializing between sessions. Following the initial three day session, which were held in mono-communal settings, the two groups met together in the buffer zone to exchange workshop products. Then over the next six months the two groups met together in both bi-communal and mono-communal settings to continue their work. Most meetings were held during a week-day evening or Saturday afternoon in the buffer zone, but during one weekend a special set of bi-communal meetings were held in which participants traveled together to each side of the island. The group also went together for a week-long trip to Brussels in order to learn more about the European Union. In total, the group met together for a six month period.

During the workshop sessions, two primary questions guided the discussions:

Question 1: "What are issues (problems, challenges, threats, fears) facing the youth of Cyprus in the next decade?"

Question 2: "What should be the goals toward which we direct our efforts to improve the future of youth in Cyprus?"

Group products resulting from the workshops included each community's *problematique*, or system of issues facing youth in Cyprus, and a *support structure* of goals for the youth of Cyprus.

3. Workshops with the Women Leaders Forum. These workshops were titled: *Through the Eyes of Women: A Look at Pain and Suffering in Cyprus.* The group consisted of 10 Greek Cypriots and 12 Turkish Cypriots. Ages ranged from the late twenties to mid-fifties, with most participants in their mid-thirties and early forties. There were no men in the groups. The participants were professionals involved in various NGOs and community groups. Some had been involved in communal activities in the past, but for many it was the first time they would have the opportunity to meet individuals from the other community.

The workshops started in Spring 1996 with separate weekend retreats. The Greek Cypriots met for a two-day period in the buffer zone, and immediately afterward the Turkish Cypriots met at a restored Ottoman house in Nicosia. The participants shared meals together during the day, but unlike the young business leaders and the young political leaders, they did not stay overnight at a hotel, meaning they had less opportunity for informal socializing between sessions. Following the initial two day session, which were held in mono-communal settings, the two groups met together in the buffer zone to exchange workshop products. Then over the next six months the two groups met together in both bi-communal and mono-communal settings to continue their work. Most meetings were held during a week-day evening or weekend afternoon in the buffer zone. Unlike the young business leaders and the young political leaders, we could not obtain permissions for bi-communal meetings in which participants traveled together to each side of the island. It was also not possible to obtain funds for this group to go together for to Brussels (although some members of the group went the following year with a differently constituted women's group). In total, the group met together for a six month period.

During the workshop sessions, two primary questions guided the discussions:

Question 1: "What factors contribute to pain and suffering in Cyprus?"

Question 2: "What are goals for our future that will help minimize pain and suffering in Cyprus?"

Group products resulting from the workshops included each community's *problematique*, or system of factors that bring suffering, and a *vision statement* for efforts to minimize pain and suffering on the island.

The three groups briefly described in this section each experienced many Aups and downs as they worked together over the course of several months. The young business leaders, many of whom were entrepreneurs, were all very busy with their jobs, and it was not easy for them to take time away to attend workshops that did not directly have an impact on their business. They also tended to come from more conservative backgrounds, and ideas of rapprochement took time to cultivate. The young political leaders had to deal in differences in political orientation, both mono-communally and bi-communally, as well as the gaps that existed along community lines. In addition, most of them had been well trained in the art of political posturing, and asking them to engage in meaningful dialogue

with the Aenemy@ was going far beyond what they had been taught. The women=s group was dealing with an especially grueling topic B pain and suffering B and many were themselves victims of the very events they were discussing. The hurt and the anger associated with these events were not easy to deal with, especially in a setting where their fellow group members consisted of individuals from the other community who that they believed had brought about the pain and suffering. In all groups there was a lot of resistance at times, and one groups=s willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue was often countered by periods of greatest resistance by the other side. All these factors, however, simply reflected the story of Cyprus, and it was clear to all of us on the facilitation team that were dealing with the Areal thing@ B this was no exercise in fantasizing.

Unlike the core group of peace builders described in the previous section, whose work resulted in the design and implementation of many valuable projects, none of the three targeted groups progressed through the third phase of Anormal@ IM activity, which involved the specific design of an action agenda. Thus, on the surface at least, one could conclude that the work of each group was incomplete. For the most part, this was the result of unavoidable and unpredictable external circumstances. The work of the young business leaders was interrupted by unfortunate timing B because of funding cycles, between the end of my initial Fulbright grant and the start of the second period, I had to return to the States for a period of three months. The business group was just starting with the third phase of their work, and at this point my role as outside third-part was critical to the willingness of many individuals in the group to participate in the activities. My absence meant that the work was put on hold. They lost momentum at a crucial time, and we never fully recovered from the break. However, the work of the young political leaders and the women=s group was subject to an even worse scenario B both the were in the Aprime@ of their work when a tragic clash occurred at the buffer zone that nearly brought war to the island and shut down the bi-communal activities for a period of time, creating a very negative climate on the island and making it extremely difficult to continue the work of these groups, even in a mono-communal setting.

Despite these difficulties, work with the three groups continued at some level, and there have been clearly identifiable results from their activities. Many of the young business leaders participated in a ASenior Business Leaders@ effort that was organized with the initiative of Richard Holbrooke, who became a special envoy of President Clinton to Cyprus. Their earlier participation in our workshop activities allowed them to play a positive role in creating positive dynamics in that group. Many of the participants in the young business leaders also worked together at the European level in various associations. Many of the young political leaders have continued their contacts, and they have cooperated in a regional consortium of youth organizations. Most of the participants in the women=s group became part of a larger women=s initiative sponsored by European Union funds that has met outside Cyprus on several occasions. Many individual initiatives were undertaken by participants from the various groups B for example, one of the young political leaders obtained funds from the Council of Europe to send a bi-communal group of university students to Budapest for a week-long retreat. Overall, the work of the three targeted groups has manifested itself in a very different manner from the core group described in Stage 1, but it is easy to see the impact of the IM workshops on both individuals and follow-up activities of the group.

Stage 3: Extended Applications of IM by Local Facilitators

The workshops that had been conducted with the young business leaders, young political leaders, and the bi-communal women=s forum not only helped create forward movement and momentum within the specific groups, but they also served as a training platform for the practice of IM in Cyprus. When I left my Fulbright position in Cyprus and returned to the United States in early 1997, there existed a small group with experience both as participants in an extended series of IM sessions and as part of the facilitation team for various IM applications with other groups.

Even after my leaving Cyprus, I was soon were able to work again with my Cypriot colleagues, facilitating a week-long workshop in Switzerland that we had organized together for a group of 24 individuals from Greece, Turkey, and the two communities of Cyprus. This positive experience convinced us that much more could be accomplished through the application of IM with various groups, and my colleagues started making plans for working with additional groups. At this point, however, I had not offered any formal instruction in the process, and we believed that this could be very helpful before taking on group without my direct involvement. In order to complete the capacity-building process, I returned to the island in December 1997 to offer a two-week training program focused on the specifics of the consensus-building methodologies we had been using, as well as behavioral and process concerns in working with groups in a conflict setting. This training served as the impetus for a number of projects that were launched by various local teams.

The IM projects carried out by the Cypriot teams took place in both mono-communal and bi-communal settings. One project took place with a bi-communal group know as the ACitizens Group.@ This group had existed for over a year when the IM sessions took place. The participants had already been through a number of conflict resolution exercises, they knew each other quite well, and they had engaged in numerous discussions about the core issues of the Cyprus Problem. The IM sessions helped them understand better the similarities and differences in perceptions within the group, and they used the methodologies to develop a plan of activities. Another project took place with the university students= group. This is a group that my colleagues and I had put together while I was still living in Cyprus, and it had a strong history of good relations among the participants (see Broome, 1999) for a description of the university students= group). The IM workshops which they completed helped them go beyond the friendly relations they had already created, allowing them to explore their differences and similarities in a way that was thoughtful and meaningful. Finally, IM workshops were held with other existing groups, such as one composed of educators, mostly secondary school teachers, who had been working together for over a year.

In all the cases described above, my colleagues in Cyprus were offering IM sessions with groups that already existed and with whom they already had a good working relationship. A very different situation existed with a recent group to which an IM workshop was offered. We have long believed that because of its unique location in the eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus could one day become a physical base for conflict resolution work that brings together individuals from various conflicting middle east countries, and that IM workshops might provide a good way to work with these groups.

A good start was made with this proposal during the late summer of 1999, when a group of Jewish and Arab Israelis, Lebanese, Egyptians, Greeks, and others from the eastern Mediterranean were brought together in for purposes of helping to create a *APeace Village@* in Cyprus. The founders of this group have been given a piece of land for building a new center where young people from throughout the Mediterranean can come for retreats and workshops. The project is at its beginning stages, and in order to build a support group in various countries, the group was asked to spend a week in Cyprus, taking part in an IM session to design the goals and objectives of the *Avillage.@* The work was very successful, and it helped build momentum toward the eventual realization of the idea. I was asked to come to Cyprus and help with the project, but because of schedule conflicts I was not able to take part. Although I provided some input into the design of the workshop, it was facilitated by my Cypriot colleagues, and it was very successful.

The work associated with the third stage of IM applications in Cyprus has not been without its challenges. Just after the December 1997 training sessions were completed, the political tide worsened on the island, and a ban was put in place by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities on bi-communal gatherings. Without the possibility of meeting locally, it was almost impossible to continue with many of the plans that had been formed for workshops with various groups. Some work could be accomplished in a mono-communal setting, but without much hope for meeting with members of the other community, there was not a great deal of incentive to continue. This also meant there was no opportunity for facilitators to work together across community lines, so much of the potential learning from such work was no longer possible, and a primary motivating factor was lost. Although it was possible for groups to hold workshops outside Cyprus, funds to meet abroad were difficult to obtain. The resulting situation meant a loss of momentum and was a great setback to the process of building local expertise.

The third stage of IM work in Cyprus is still in its infancy. With the appropriate circumstances and some encouragement, it will continue to develop. Particularly if a political agreement is reached in the near future, and the buffer zone becomes more permeable, the need for IM workshops will increase. Ultimately, there may be an need to institutionalize its presence, building both training and research components. As this happens, it will be necessary to describe a fourth stage of the work, which will have its own dynamics and promises.

Beginning a Discussion

As conflict theorists and practitioners are well aware, conflict situations are usually emotionally-laden due to historical circumstances and the struggle over resources. Historical traumas, memories of personal and collective losses, limited social contact, and destructive communication habits present many obstacles that must be overcome in situations like that found in Cyprus. In different ways, these obstacles affect all attempts by individuals or groups in such conflicts to work together. Even in situations where participants have a personal commitment to peace and a strong desire to promote reconciliation, it is not likely that personal contact alone will be sufficient to help overcome these obstacles, because the situation is further confounded by the complexity of the issues that are embedded in the conflict.

Such situations require a systematic approach that is capable of helping participants progress through the maze of both content and relational difficulties that confront them. Participants must be able to explore critical issues in depth and learn to work together productively. This requires going beyond helping each individual understand the other better or helping people get along in a more civil manner. Rather, work must be done to help participants *create* together a new sense of understanding about the current situation and to *build* a strong basis for a common future together. In short, the successful resolution of intractable conflicts such as that in Cyprus requires the development of what I call *relational empathy* (see Broome, 1993).⁵ Unless participants in such conflicts can construct together a new framework for interpreting the events surrounding the conflict, they are likely to either remain trapped in incompatible views of the past and future, or else they will find themselves forced by circumstances into making unsatisfactory compromises that may lead to an eventual breakdown of any agreement.

The workshops described in this paper provide an informative example of helping groups build consensus and community in the context of a protracted conflict situation. It helps answer the call that many communication scholars have made for enhancing participation in decision making and for paying more attention to the significant problems of our time. There are many questions that need to be addressed about the work reported in these pages, and I hope that my description of the process and the activities related to interactive design work in Cyprus will stimulate such questions during our days together at Baylor. Rather than drawing this paper to a close, I will leave it open to the insights that might emerge from our conversation in Waco in a few days time.

Appendix A

Interactive Management Methodologies

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The IM approach assigns to participants all responsibility for contributing ideas, and the group sessions are managed by a trained facilitator. Methodologies for generating, clarifying, structuring, interpreting and amending ideas are selected to match the phase of group interaction and the requirements of the situation.

Four of the group methodologies typically used with IM are: Nominal Group Technique (NGT) (Delbeq, Van De Ven, & Gustafson, 1975) Ideawriting (Warfield, 1990), Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) (Warfield, 1995), and Field and Profile Representations (Warfield, 1995).

NGT allows individual ideas to be pooled effectively and is used in situations in which uncertainty and disagreements exist about the nature of possible ideas. NGT involves five steps: (1) presentation of a stimulus question to the participants; (2) silent generation of ideas in writing by each participant working alone; (3) recording of ideas by the facilitator on flip-charts in front of the group, with posting of the filled flip-chart paper on walls surrounding the group; (4) serial discussion of the listed ideas by the participants for clarification of their meaning; and (5) selection by the participants of the more important items through a voting process.

Ideawriting is a group method for developing ideas in a small group and allowing the group to explore the meaning of these ideas through open discussion. Ideawriting involves six steps: (1) formation of several small groups of 3-6 persons each; (2) presentation of a stimulus question to the participants; (3) silent generation of ideas in writing by each participant working alone; (4) exchange of written sheets of ideas among group members, with opportunity for individuals to add ideas as they read others' papers; (5) group discussion and clarification of unique ideas; and (6) a report by each small group that explains the ideas generated in the group.

ISM is a computer-assisted methodology that helps a group identify the relationships among ideas and impose structure on the complexity of the issue. The ISM software utilizes mathematical algorithms that minimize the number of queries necessary for exploring relationships among a set of ideas (see Warfield, 1976). ISM can be used to develop several types of structures, including *influence structures* (e.g., "supports," or "aggravates"), *priority structures* (e.g., "is more important than," or "should be learned before") and *categorizations of ideas* (e.g., "belongs in the same category with"). The five steps of ISM include: (1) identification and clarification of a list of ideas (using a method such as NGT); (2) identification and clarification of a "relational question" for exploring relationships among ideas (e.g., "Does idea A support idea B," "Is idea A of higher priority than B," or "Does idea A belong in the same category with idea B"); (3) development of a structural map by using the relational question to explore connections between pairs of ideas (see below); (4) display and discussion of the map by

the group; and (5) amendment to the map by the group, if needed. In step 3 group participants view questions generated by the ISM software. The questions take the following form:

<p>ADoes: A relate in X manner to: B ?"</p>

"A" and "B" are pairs of ideas from the list developed by the participants in step 1 of ISM and the relationship "X" is the statement identified in step 2. The group engages in a discussion, managed by the facilitator, about this relational question, and a vote is taken to determine the group's judgment about the relationship. A "yes" vote is entered in the ISM software by the computer operator if a majority of the participants see a significant relation between the pairs of ideas; otherwise a "no" vote is entered. Another pair of ideas is then projected to the participants, and another discussion is held and a vote is taken. This process is continued until the relationships between all necessary pairs of ideas have been explored. The ISM software then displays a structural map showing the result of the group's judgments. The length of time required to complete discussion of all necessary pairs of ideas depends on the total number of ideas in the set, but generally the process requires between 5 to 8 hours of group deliberation. The number of necessary queries also depends on the total number of ideas in the set, but the ISM software is able to infer, on the average, approximately 75-80% of the judgments involved in relating the complete set of ideas.

Field and Profile Representations

A Field Representation organizes ideas in a way that allows a large amount of information to be worked with effectively. Different types of Field are useful for different types of applications. The Field Representation typically portrays a significant amount of information organized in a form that is suitable for (a) use in decision-making and (b) maintaining an ongoing, visible record of intermediate decision-making en route to a final portrayal of the total set of choices that has been made. A Field Representation shows a set of categories and the members of each of those sets. The members of a given category are all contained within that category.

The ongoing and terminal portrayal of *choices* constitutes a Profile Representation. In constructing a Profile, a group will examine the first dimension of the Field (as determined by sequence structuring) and make some choices of elements from that category. Each choice that is made is represented graphically by drawing a line from the bullet in front of a selected element down to a Tie Line. The Tie Line is a continuous line that is drawn at the base of the graphic. After all choices are made, all selected elements will be connected to the Tie Line. All elements that have not been selected will remain unconnected.

The most frequent type of Field and Profile Representations are called *Options Field/Options Profile*. There are two characteristics of the Options Field that are important to point out. First, it allows *full participation and creativity* in the development of action plans. Since every idea in the field represents only a proposed option, it is not necessary to evaluate any of them at this stage for their feasibility or their acceptance by the total group. Any individual in the group is allowed to propose an idea for inclusion in the field. Thus, there are no limits placed on the *creativity* of the participants. Second, the field is *open and dynamic*. At any point, even after the sessions are finished, additional items can be added to the field. There are no limits placed on the capacity of the field to grow as new ideas are contributed. This gives it flexibility to meet differing demands as the situation changes and as more people become involved in the process.

There are two characteristics of the Options Profile that are important to note. First, the options selected by the group represents an *integrated set* of activities and initiatives. Participants selected the set of options by considering all the proposed ideas from an organized and sequenced field that has been built on several prior products, including a problematique and a vision statement. Second, the profile represents a single *alternative* plan of action. Additional alternatives could be developed by the same group meeting at different time or by another group.

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[Please note that references have NOT been checked for accuracy. In this DRAFT manuscript, some references may be missing or incomplete. I have included in the references most of my own published accounts of work related to the process described in this paper.]

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Endnotes

1. It is important to note that the work described in this paper took place within the larger context of other conflict resolution work that was started in the later part of the 1980s by local initiative and then promoted in the early 1990s by the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD), based in Washington DC. Without the efforts of IMTD and the Cyprus Consortium, which included IMTD, the Conflict Management Group (CMG) at Harvard University, and members of National Training Labs (NTL), the IM work which is the focus of this paper would not have taken place.

2. The conflict resolution Fulbright Scholar position in Cyprus was created at the request of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot individuals who recognized the need for outside third-party assistance in order to make progress in their dream to build a peace movement on the island. The idea was strongly supported by the Cyprus Fulbright Commission, and the position was first advertised in 1993 for an intended start date for 1994. I was the first person to fill the position, and because of progress that was made during the time I spent in Cyprus, and with additional lobbying from those involved in the bi-communal activities, the conflict resolution scholar position has been continued indefinitely.

3. Unfortunately, bi-communal contacts were stopped by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities at the end of 1997, and as of January 2000, they have not been allowed to re-start. This has cut what would likely have been a continued increase in numbers of people involved, although it could not stop activities from being held outside the island. It should also be noted that the use of the Internet has allowed contact to continue between those who were already part of the bi-communal activities, and several projects have continued because of the ability to exchange information via electronic means.

4. The practice of IM exists in several locations around the world, including: Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Mexico; Tata Consultancy Services, Hyderabad, India; City University, London, England; University of São Paulo, Brazil; Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, California; Christakis, Whitehouse and Associates, Berwyn, Pennsylvania; Defense Systems Management College, Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Ford Motor Company, Michigan; Arizona State University, in Tempe, Arizona; and Americans for Indian Opportunity in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Work has also been conducted in several other countries, including Brazil, Costa Rica, Greece, Japan, and Kenya. For descriptions of Interactive Management sessions with Native American groups, see Broome & Christakis (1988), Broome & Cromer (1991), and Broome (1995).

5. Relational empathy draws from Stewart=s (1983) conception of Ainterpretive listening@ and Stewart and Thomas= (1986) Adialogic listening.@