

Youth and Politics in Protracted Conflicts: a comparative approach on hope for a settlement and return of displaced Cypriots



Outline

The current
context and
Methodology

The Survey

Main findings

Political
Implications

Threat Perceptions
and Political
Preferences in ISR-
PAL and Cyprus

Youth and the Cyprus issue: The Background

1. The vast majority of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot youth have grown separated from each other, deprived of the right to learn about the life and aspirations of each other (UNDP, 2009).
2. The two separate educational systems have largely contributed to this (Makriyianni, Psaltis & Latif, 2011; Philippou & Theodorou, 2014; Zembylas & Karahasan, 2017; Spyrou, 2002; Hajisotiriou, 2012)
3. Recent research by Dizdaroglu (2020) suggested that the youth in both communities is politically disempowered and not engaged in the ongoing efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem.
4. Still, recent social psychological research also suggests that the opportunities for contact that were made possible after the opening of the checkpoints in 2003 can bring positive changes (e.g. prejudice reduction and trust building) by intergroup contact between the two communities (Psaltis, 2012; Yucel & Psaltis, 2019; McKeown & Psaltis, 2017; Zezelj et al., 2017).



Ledra Str. Nicosia, UN Patrolled Buffer Zone, 7th March 2020

The current context

These developments call for an understanding of the wishes and expectations of the people of Cyprus in both communities about the solution of the Cyprus problem and especially the youth who are the future of Cyprus and the internally displaced people who are the victims for such a protracted period and, importantly, excluded from the formal negotiation process

Research Questions

1. What are the hopes and expectations of the youth and IDPs about the Cyprus issue and how do they compare to older people and non-IDPs?
2. How or why displaced persons themselves make the decision to resettle in their pre-conflict residences especially the children and grandchildren of first generation IDPs.

Methodology

- A representative sample telephone survey with (N=536 GC; 550 TC completed in the period 22/07/2020--12/08 2020 in the Greek Cypriot community (by the University Centre for Field Studies) and 07/12 / 2020-06 / 01/2021 in the Turkish Cypriot community by LIPA Consultancy Ltd.
- The margin of error is 4% with a confidence level of 95%.
- Designed by an interdisciplinary research team:
 - Dr Charis Psaltis (Department of Psychology, University of Cyprus)
 - Eran Halperin (Psychology Department, The Hebrew University)
 - Neophytos Loizides (School of Politics and International Relations, University of Kent)
 - Djordje Stefanovic (School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide)
 - Oded Leshem (Harry. S Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, Hebrew University, Jerusalem)
 - Huseyin Cakal (School of Psychology, Keele University)
- Supported by grant : *Youth and Politics in Protracted Conflicts: A comparative approach on hope for a settlement and return of IDPs* and was funded by LSE Hellenic Observatory through an A.G. Leventis Research Innovation Programme on Cyprus call

The Survey

Political Efficacy (e.g As citizens, there is always something we can do to change the political situation)

General Hope and Insecurity (e.g When I imagine the future of Cyprus if feel.... Hopeful/hopeless, Afraid/Not afraid)

Wishes and Expectations for the Future of Cyprus

- Achieving peace, as you define and understand it) between the two communities in Cyprus
- Ending the Cyprus problem, Ending the Cyprus problem in a way that addresses the core needs of both communities
- Ending the Cyprus problem in a way that assures political equality for Turkish Cypriots and assures security for Greek Cypriots from any Turkish influence
- A mutually agreed upon accord that will result in a Bizonal Bicomunal Federation

Support for Peace Building Initiatives

Expectations and Severity of Escalation

Ethos of Conflict

Demographics (IDP status, Owning Property in the other side, Age, Gender, Educational Background, Income)

Wish for return under own and other community administration (IDPs)

Attitudes towards other community, Greeks and Turks

Political stance on elections

What have we learned about the youth (18-35) in the two communities

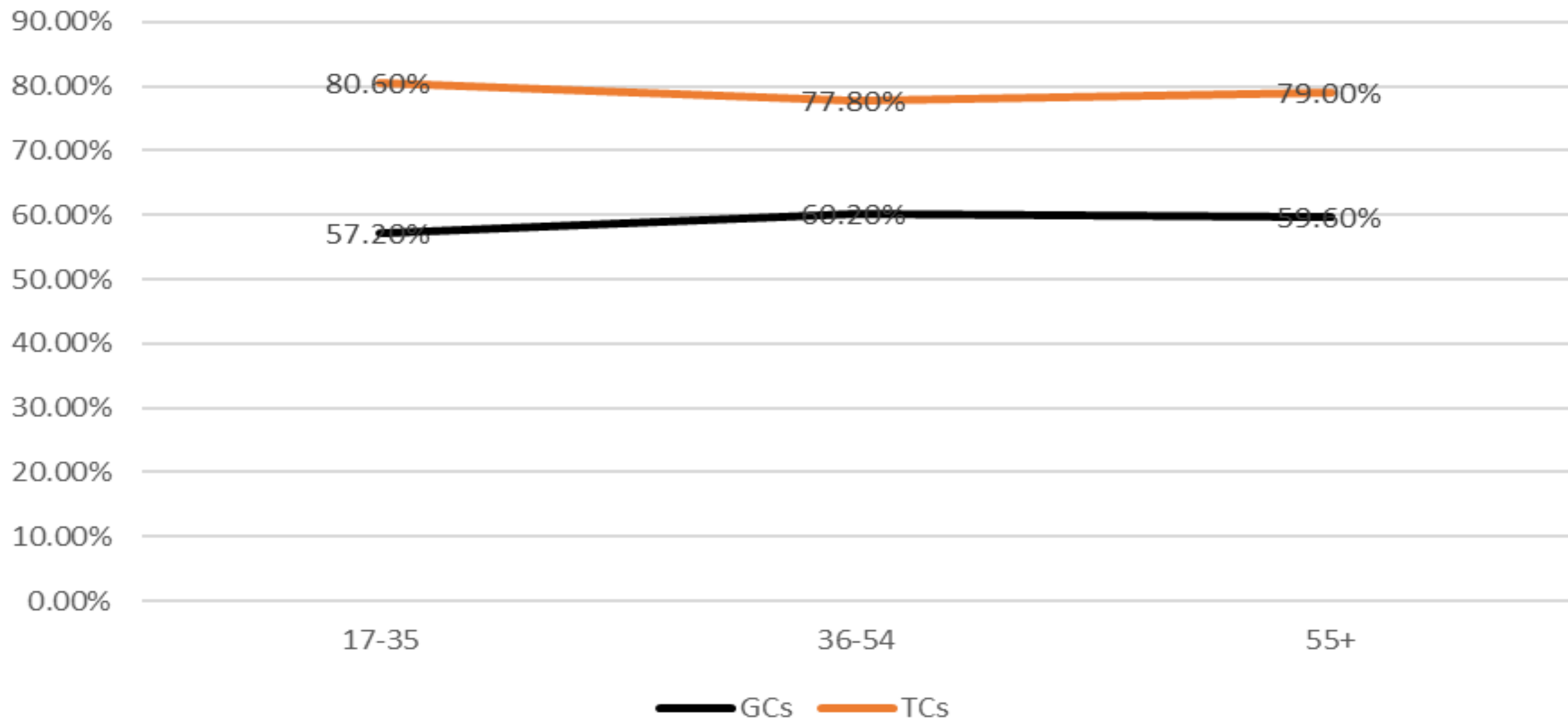
In the Greek Cypriot community:

- Youth were less supportive of peace and peace building activities compared to the 55+.
- Also less supportive of BBF but importantly,
- lower adherence to a negative “ethos” of conflict and less negative feelings towards Turks from Turkey compared to the other two age groups which is a hopeful sign for the future as it suggests that the youth are slowly overcoming prejudice related to the events of 1974

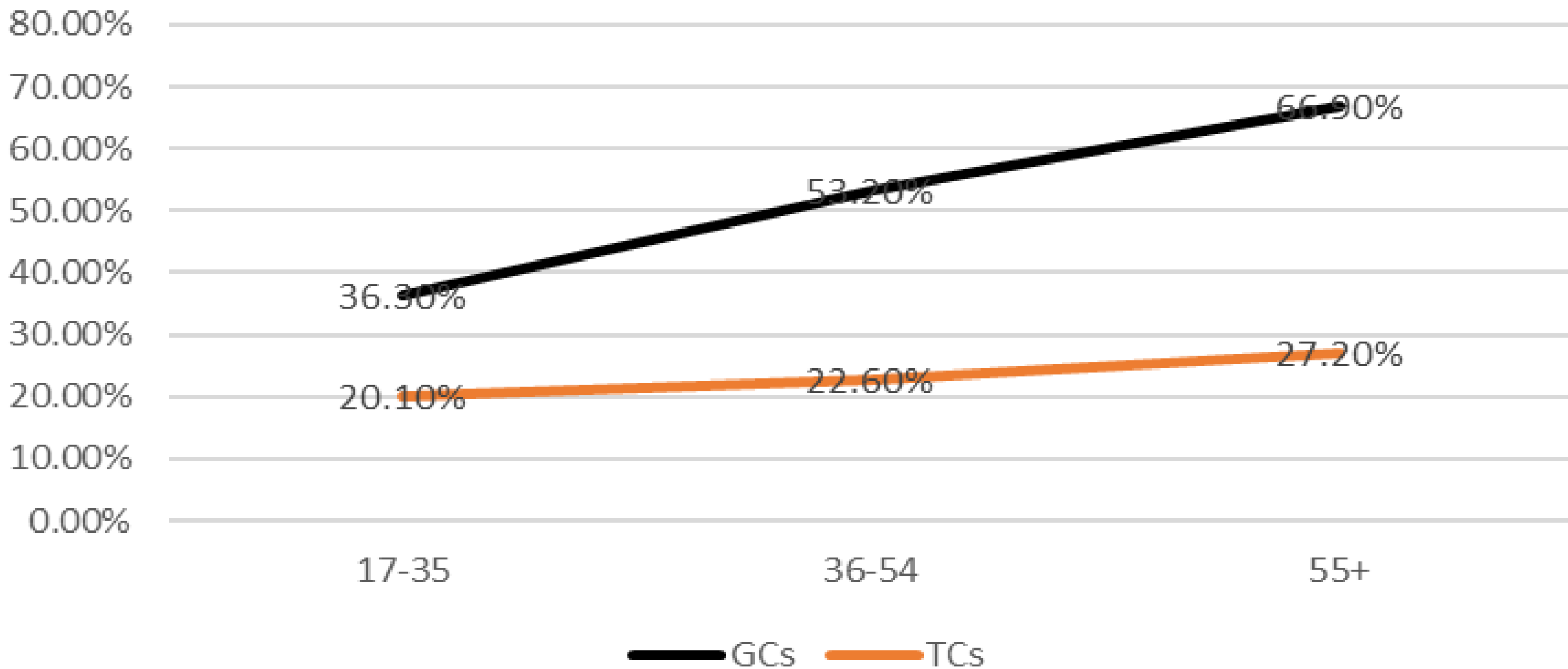
In the Turkish Cypriot community:

- Less likely to wish for peace and support peace building activities compared to the 55+.
- Lower levels of adherence to a negative “ethos” of conflict compared to both middle aged and 55+ and this could at least partly be attributed to higher levels of contact of the youth with Greek Cypriots.

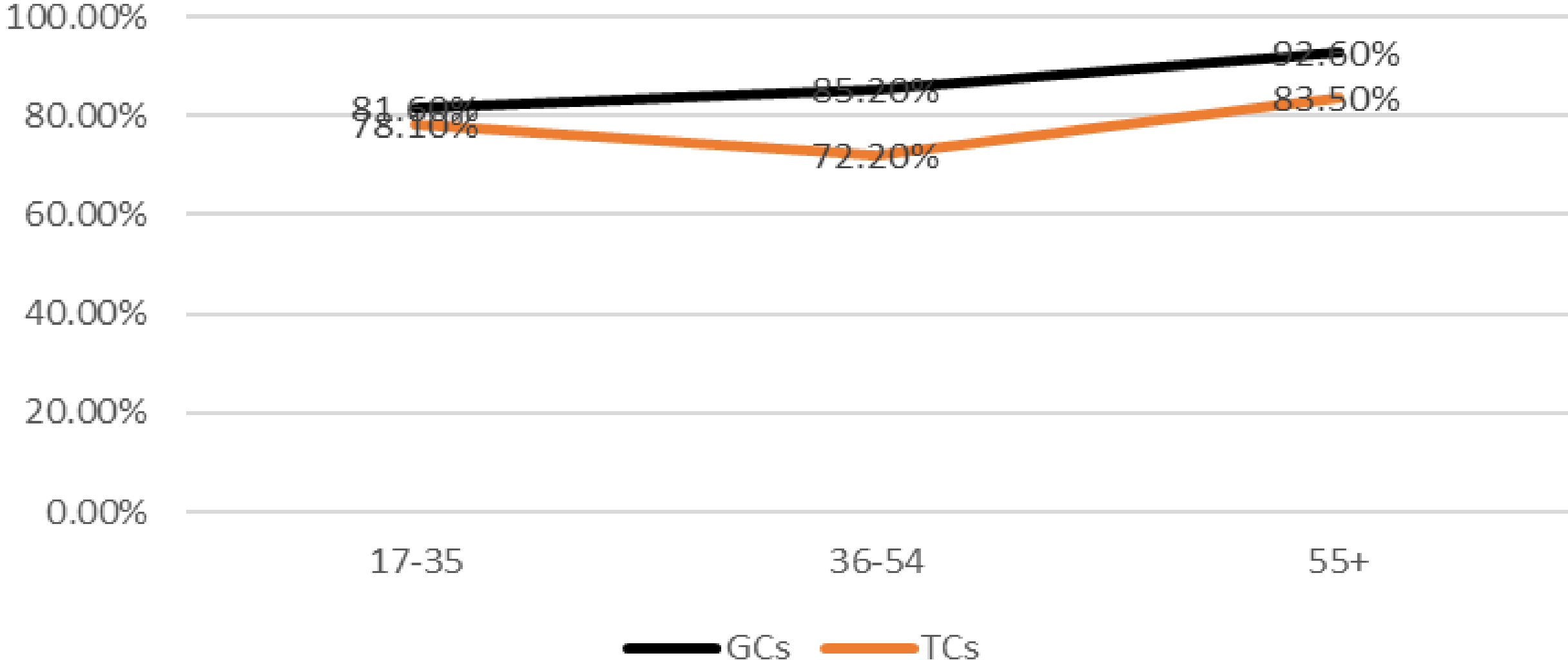
Q1.1. As citizens, there is always something we can do to change the political situation (% Agreement)



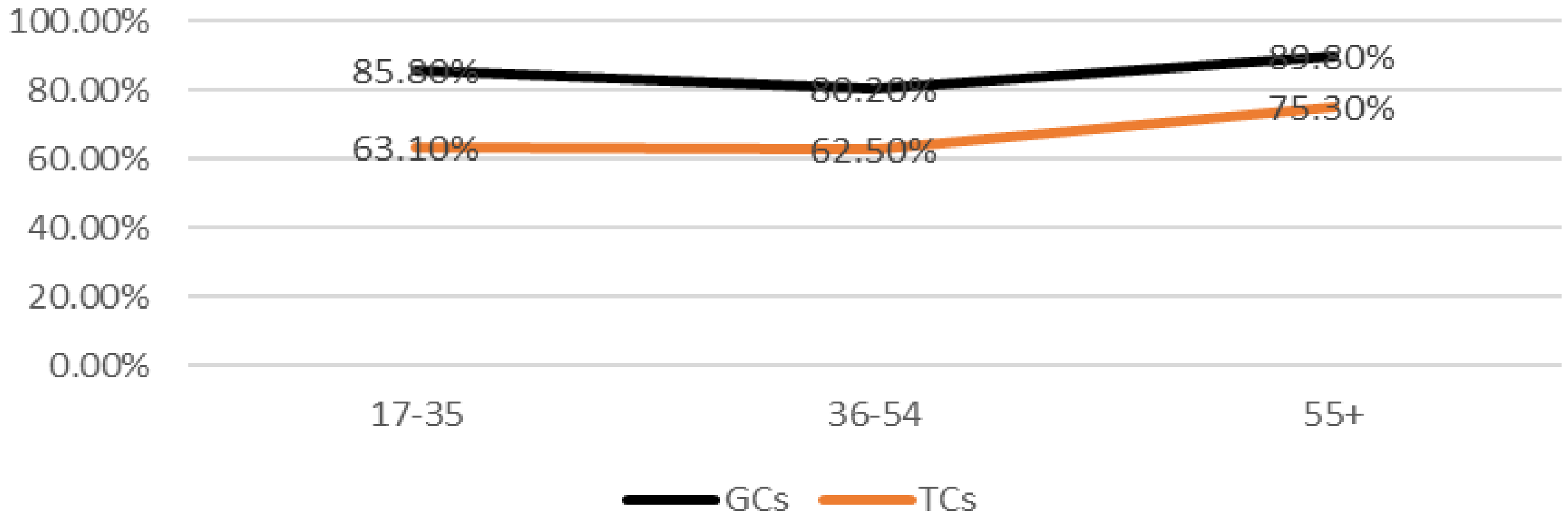
Q29.1 I attend informational meetings to discuss the Cyprus problem.



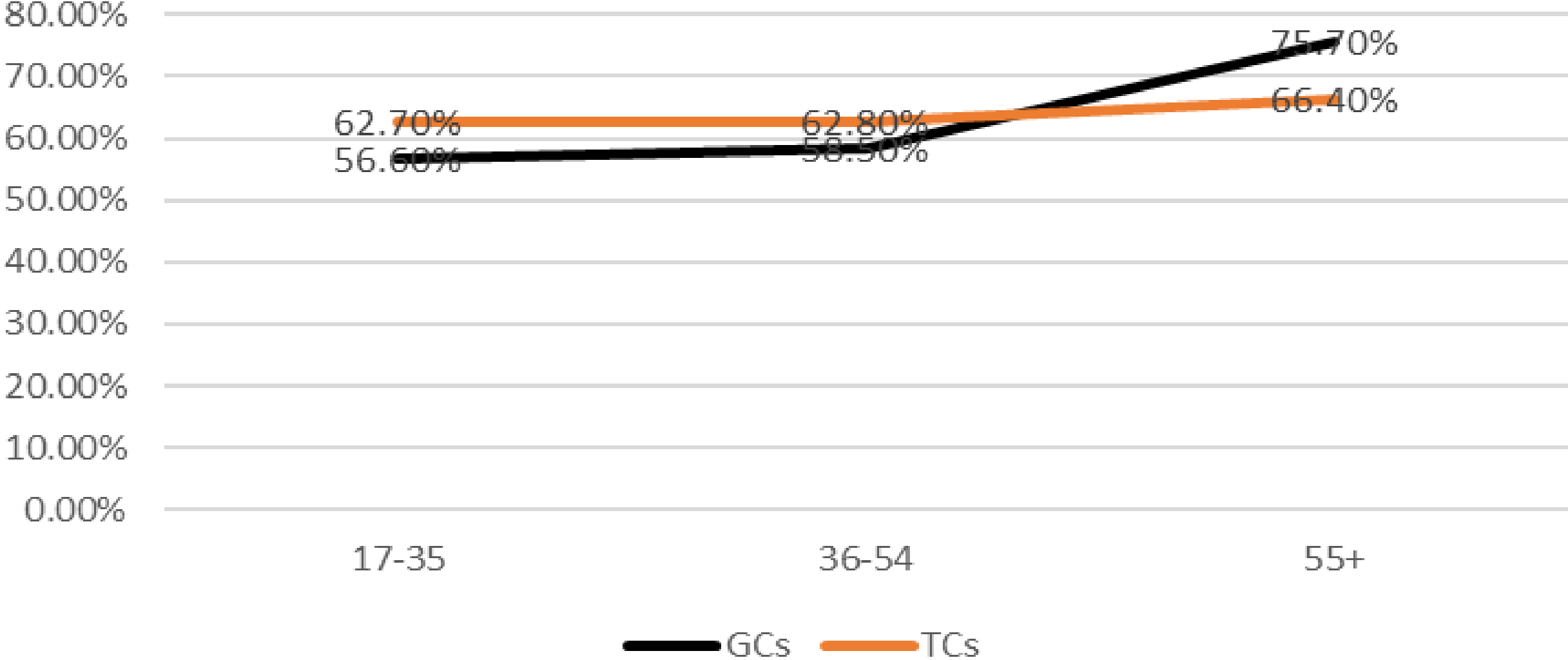
Q5.2. Ending the Cyprus problem in a way that addresses the core needs of both communities.



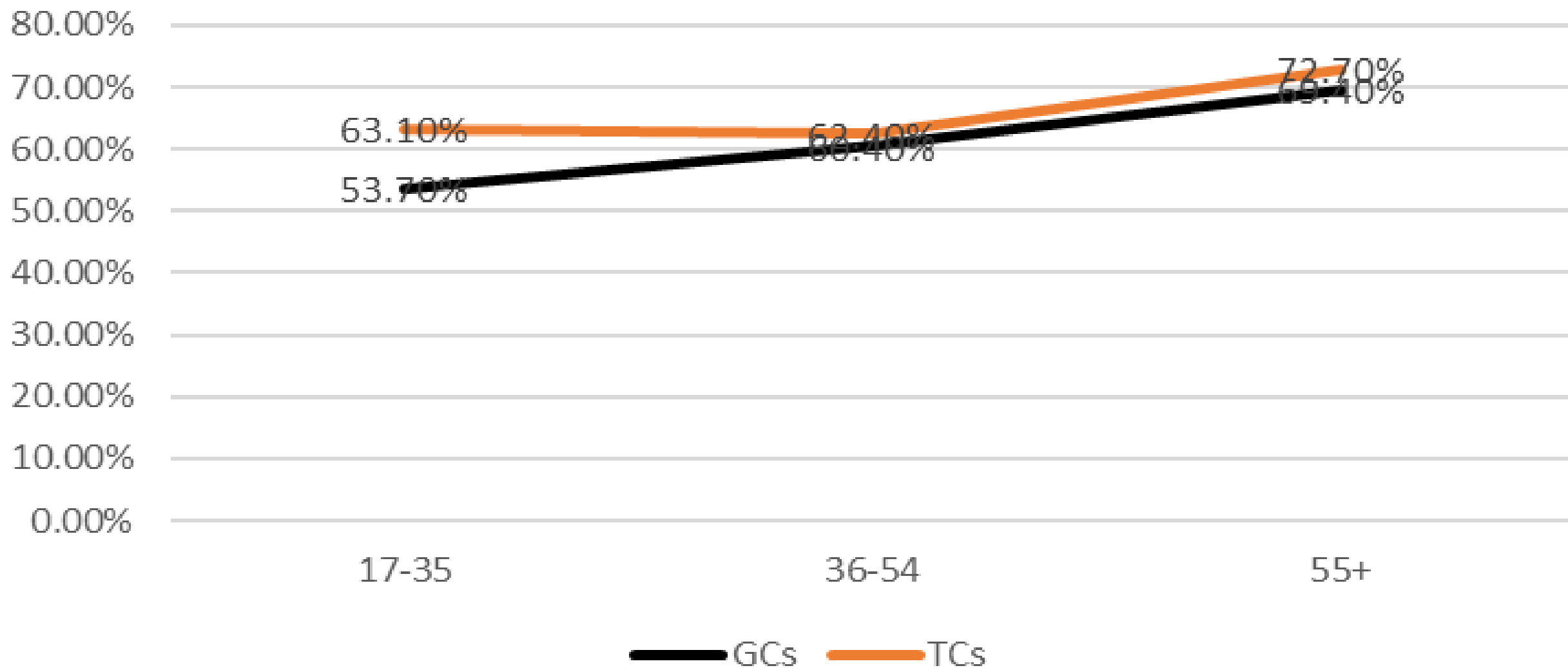
Q5.3. Ending the Cyprus problem in a way that assures political equality for Turkish Cypriots and assures security for Greek Cypriots from any Turkish influence.



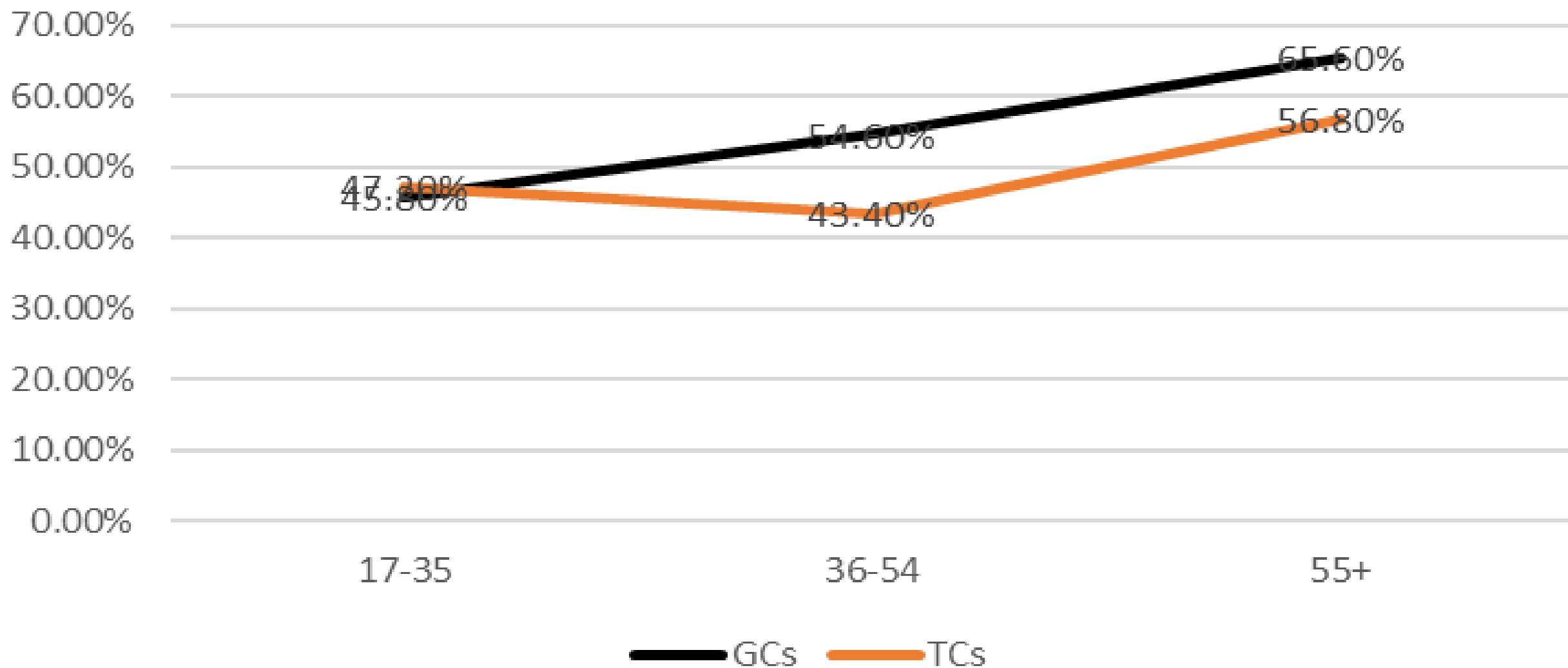
Q6. A mutually agreed upon accord that will result in a Bizonal Bicommunal Federation



Q10.1. Support peacebuilding initiatives between the two communities



Q10.2. When possible, take part in a joint demonstration demanding peace



What have we learned about IDPs in the two communities

In the Greek Cypriot community:

- IDPs think about return and wish for it more compared to TC IDPs. This is related to greater support for peacebuilding initiatives and higher wish for peace and solution of the Cyprus problem.
- About 45% of IDPs wish to return under GC administration
- 15% would return even under TC administration. In this latter group this return intentions are significantly related to pro-BBF support and wish for a solution.

In the Turkish Cypriot community:

- A clear relationship between wish for return and positive quality of bi-communal relations (low ethos of conflict, low prejudice etc).
- **The increase number of TC IDP wish to return in their pre-1974 homes even under GC administration (11%).** This wish is related to contact with GCs and reduced levels of prejudice over the years. It is also related to both wish and expectations for a solution. It is also noteworthy that about 45% of TC IDPs would also return to their homes if this was under TC administration.

Table 4. Reasons for not returning given by Greek Cypriot IDPs.

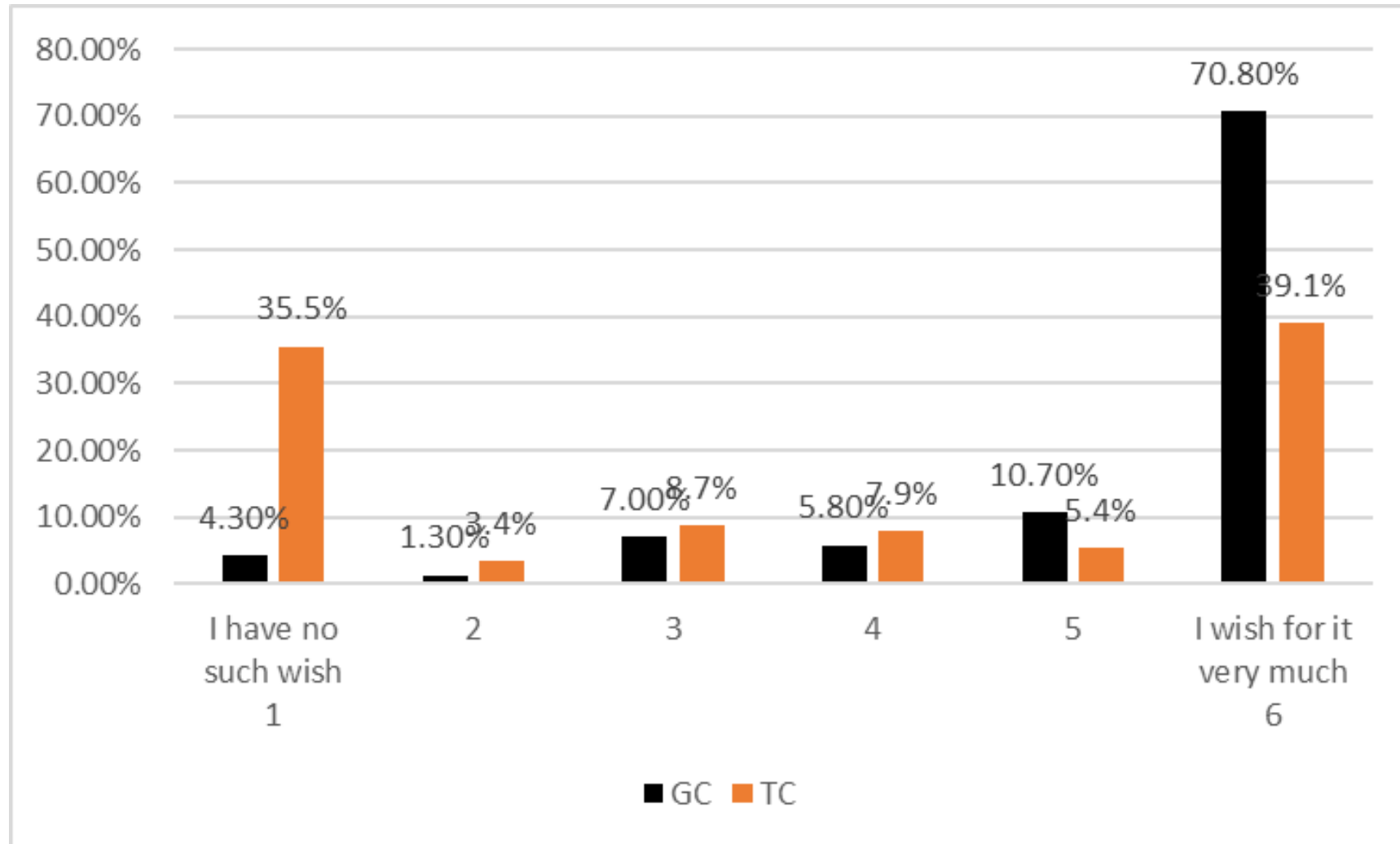
	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
I'm worried about my family's safety	175	1	7	4.66	2.45
There will be significant costs involved in the upgrading of my old home	172	1	7	4.66	2.40
I am worried about my personal security	176	1	7	4.29	2.50
The other members of my family do not want to go back	165	1	7	3.92	2.47
I am worried that very few in my community will come back	172	1	7	3.90	2.31
I'm worried about hospitals and other social services	178	1	7	3.89	2.50
I've made my life here and I do not want a restart	180	1	7	3.83	2.52
I do not want to live close to those who need me to leave my home	173	1	7	3.59	2.45
I am worried that there will be no schools to send my children	177	1	7	3.55	2.54
I would feel isolated	171	1	7	3.38	2.31
I'm worried about finding a job	171	1	7	3.14	2.44
I stopped having an emotional connection to my old place	175	1	7	2.50	2.23

Table 5. Reasons for not returning given by Turkish Cypriot IDPs.

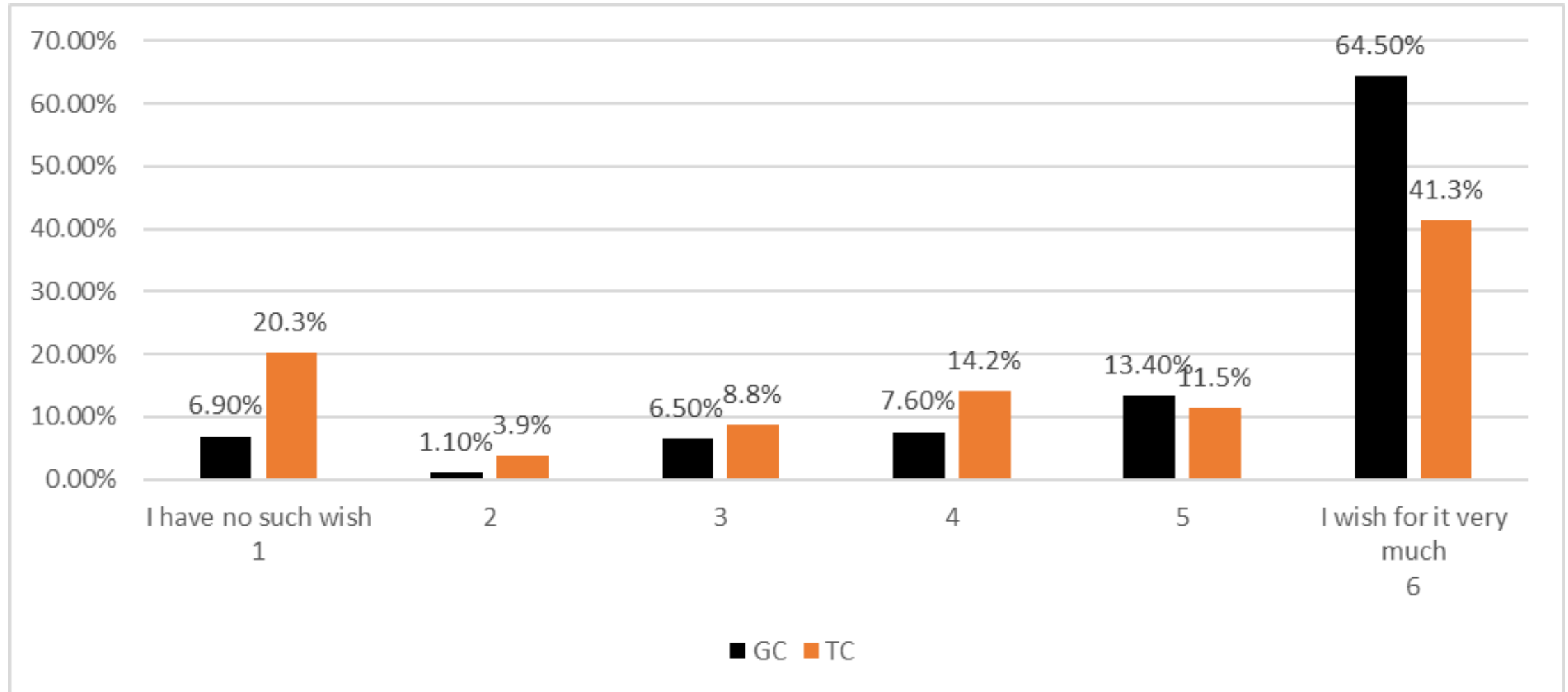
	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
The other members of my family do not want to go back	205	1	7	4.93	2.41
I've made my life here and I do not want a restart	210	1	7	4.80	2.60
I stopped having an emotional connection to my old place	209	1	7	4.38	2.69
There will be significant costs involved in the upgrading of my old home	202	1	7	4.34	2.78
I do not want to live close to those who need me to leave my home	207	1	7	4.34	2.71
I am worried that very few in my community will come back	207	1	7	4.31	2.55
I would feel isolated	206	1	7	4.26	2.49
I'm worried about my family's safety	210	1	7	4.20	2.59
I am worried about my personal security	210	1	7	4.08	2.60
I'm worried about hospitals and other social services	209	1	7	3.97	2.59
I'm worried about finding a job	207	1	7	3.90	2.75
I am worried that there will be no schools to send my children	208	1	7	3.46	2.61

Wish for Peace and Solution

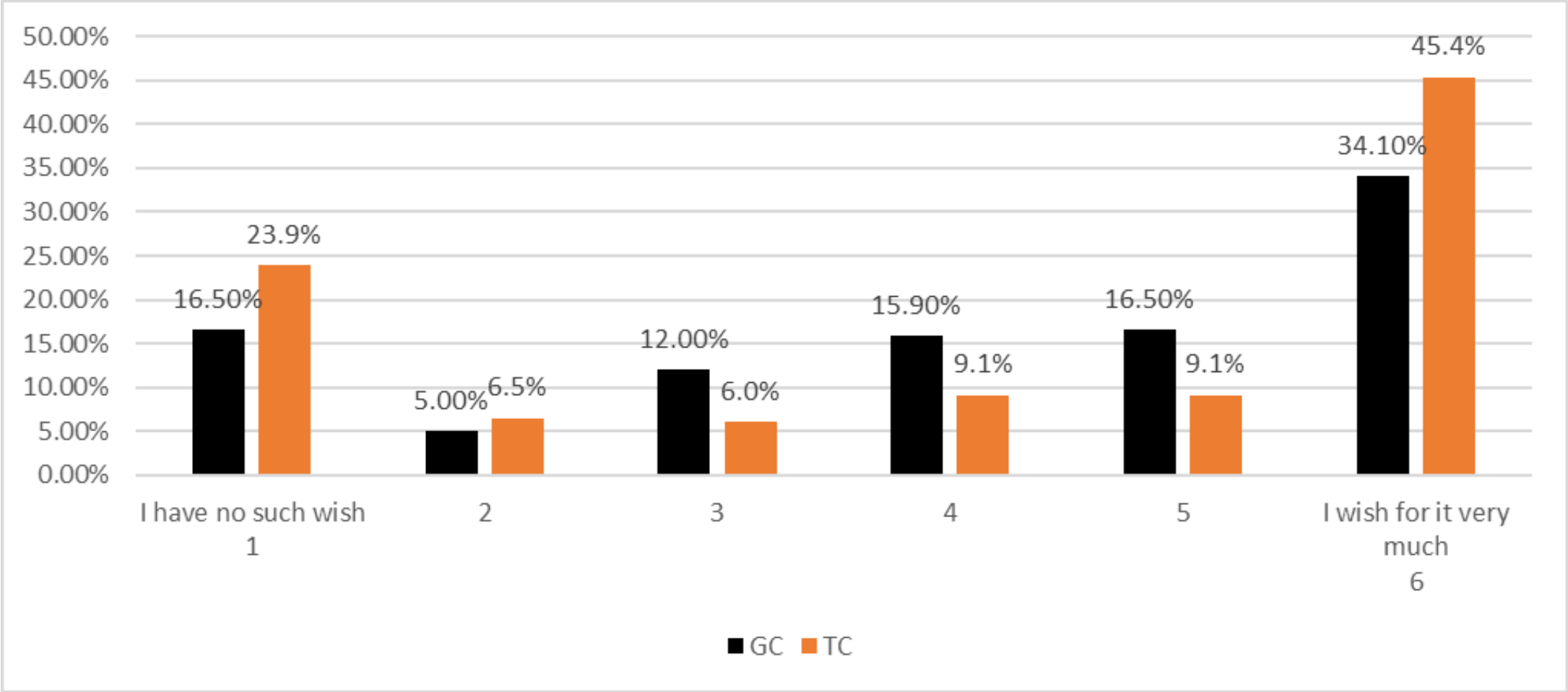
Achieving peace (as you define and understand it) between the two communities in Cyprus



Ending the Cyprus problem in a way that assures political equality for Turkish Cypriots and assures security for Greek Cypriots from any Turkish influence

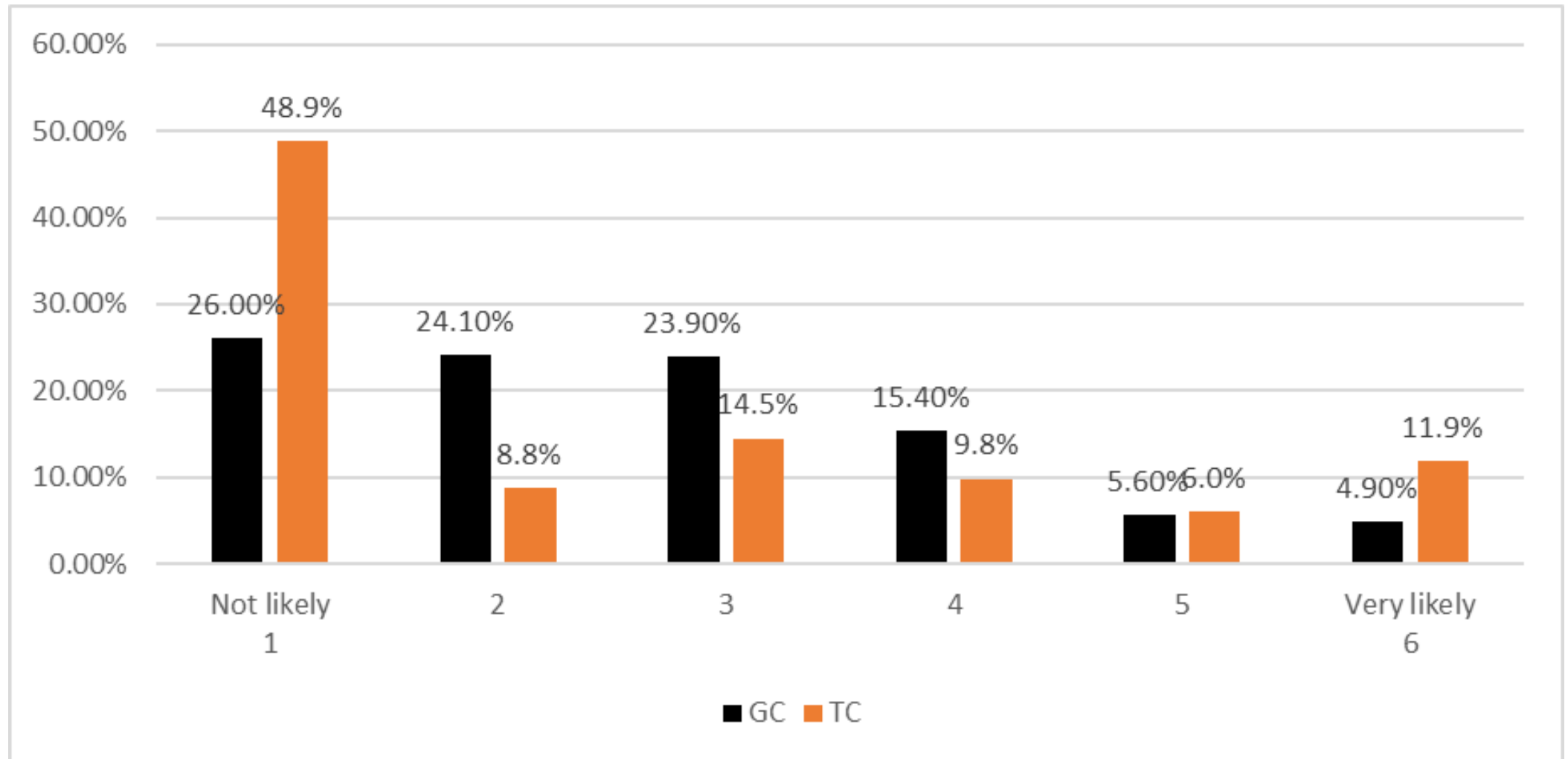


A mutually agreed upon accord that will result in a Bizonal Bicommunal Federation

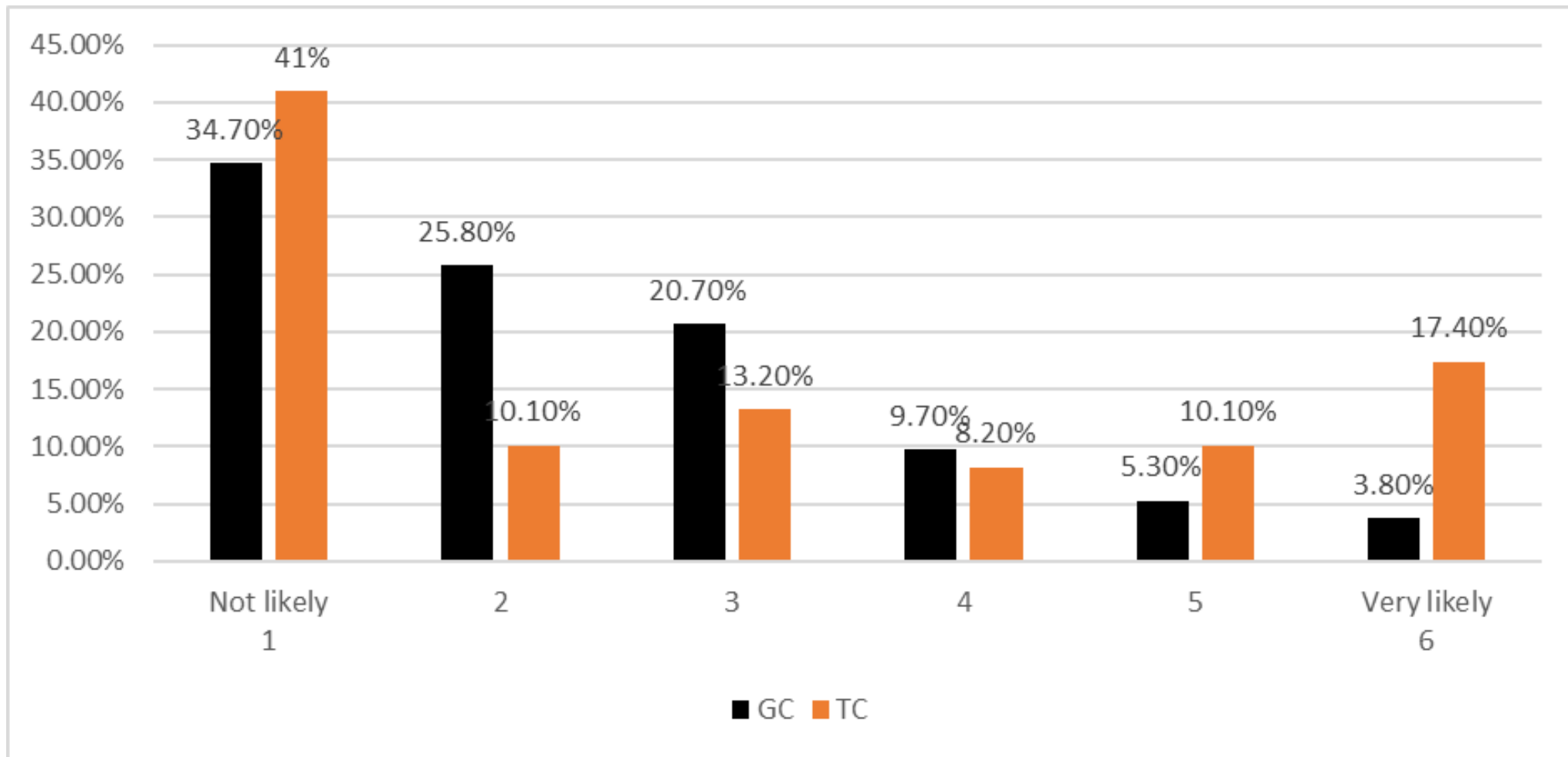


Evaluating the Possibility of Getting to Peace and Solution

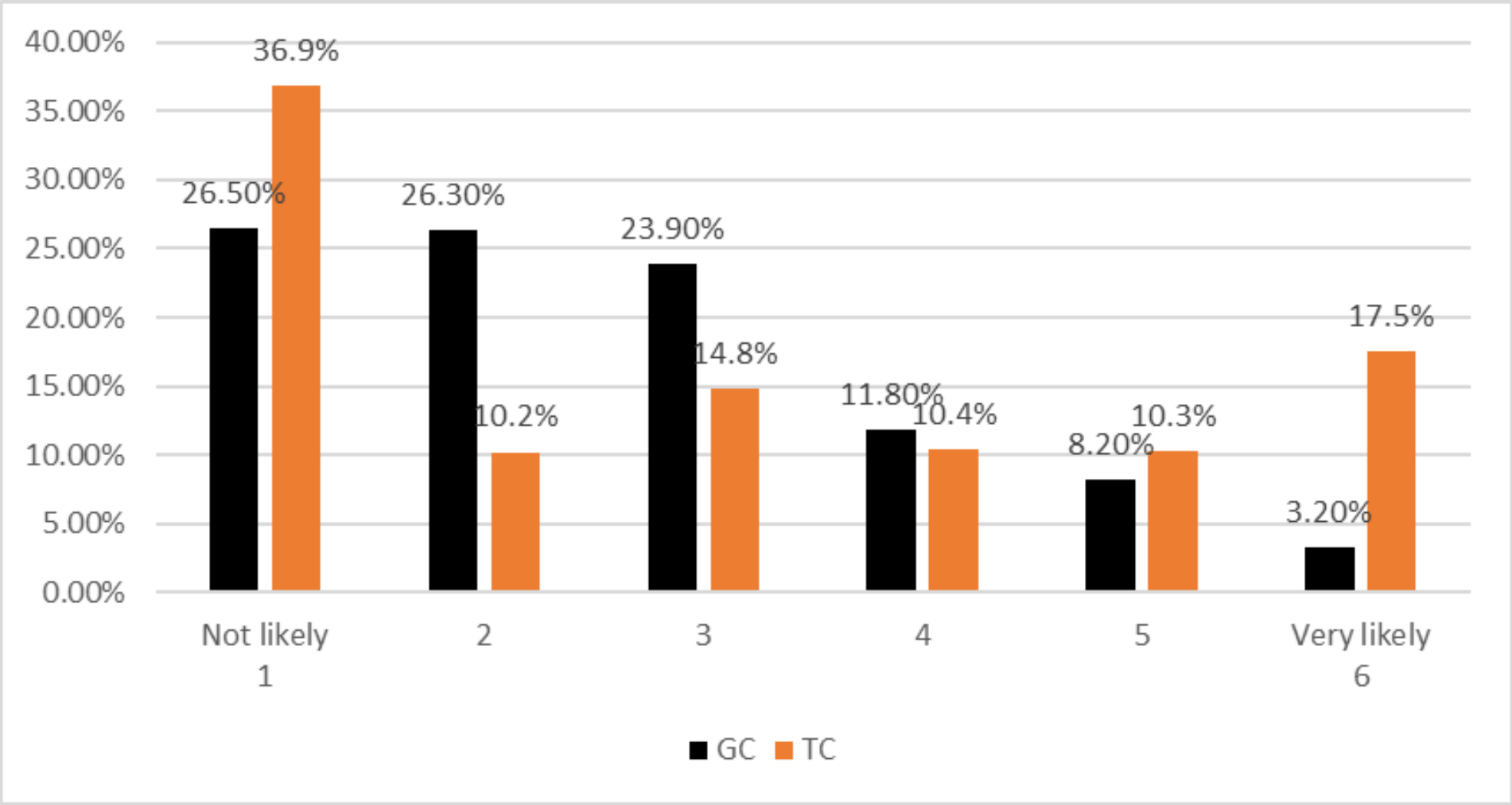
Achieving peace (as you define and understand it) between the two communities in Cyprus



Ending the Cyprus problem in a way that assures political equality for Turkish Cypriots and assures security for Greek Cypriots from any Turkish influence



A mutually agreed upon accord that will result in a Bizonal Bicommunal Federation

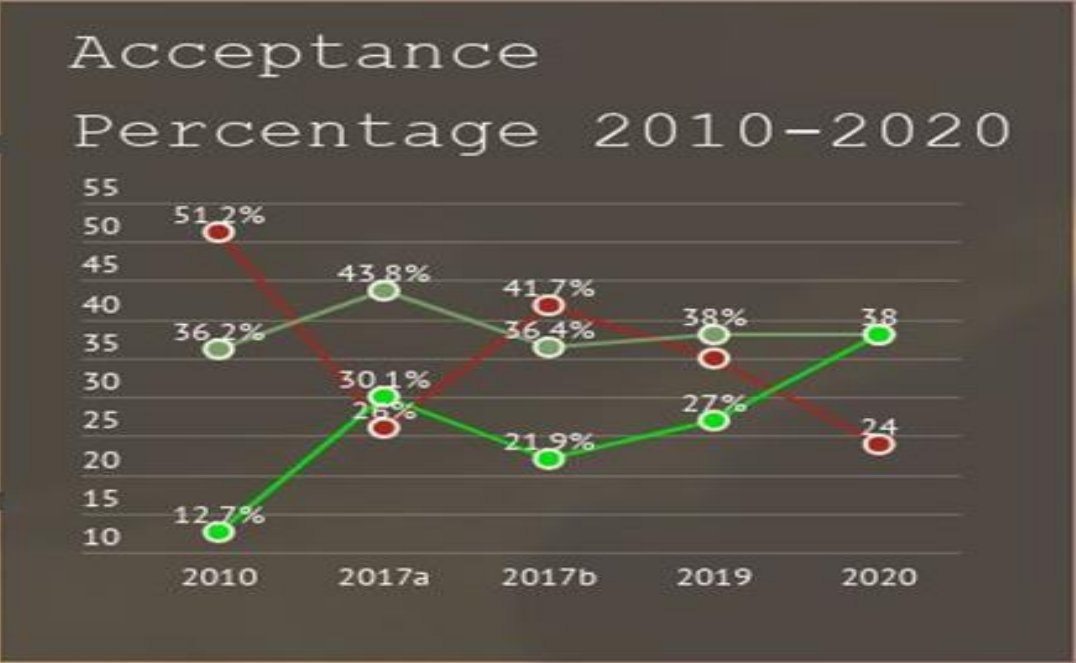


Trends in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot community 2010- 2020

Stance towards Bizonal-Bicommunal Federation 2010-2020 (Greek Cypriots)

Either in favour or I would tolerate if necessary (2020)

 76%



Note: Data collection in 2017 was completed 3 months before Crans Montana (UCFS) and 5 months after Crans Montana (International Cooperation 5 Universities) 2019 data collection completed in first months of 2019 (ESS R9) In 2020 it was completed in March 2020 (KENT-UCFS)

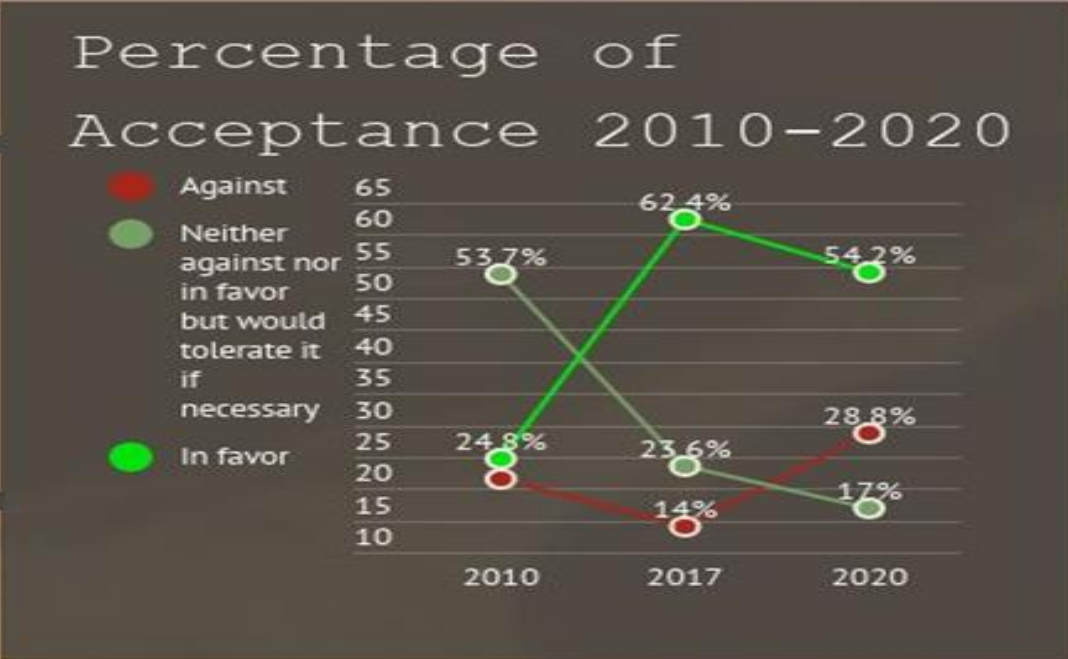


In the last decade the percentage of people who reject BBF has been significantly reduced. On the contrary the people with a federalist mentality have more than doubled. The two bigger groups today are either the people who support BBF or could tolerate it as a solution of necessity. Together they form a majority of 76% according to more recent data available in 2020

Stance of TCs towards Bizonal Bicomunal Federation 2010-2020 (Turkish Cypriots)

Either in favor or would tolerate it (2020)

71.2%



In the last decade the people in favor of BBF have significantly increased in number. On the contrary there is a significant decrease in the people who would tolerate it if necessary. After Crans Montana failure there is a significant decrease in the supporters of BBF. Those who would either support it or tolerate it of necessary however in 2020 still add up to 71.2%

Note: Data collection in 2017 was completed 5 months after Crans Montana (International Cooperation 5 Universities)

In 2020 it was completed in March 2020 (KENT-UCFS)



The role of Intergroup Contact in this trend

1a. The active engagement of bicomunal associations is driving this trend among broader sectors of the society.

- More contact is increasing trust and reducing prejudice which in turn is increasing willingness to cohabitate (Yucel & Psaltis, 2019)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1368430219845053>

Article

**Intergroup contact and willingness
for renewed cohabitation in
Cyprus: Exploring the mediating and
moderating mechanisms**

*Group Processes &
Intergroup Relations* | G
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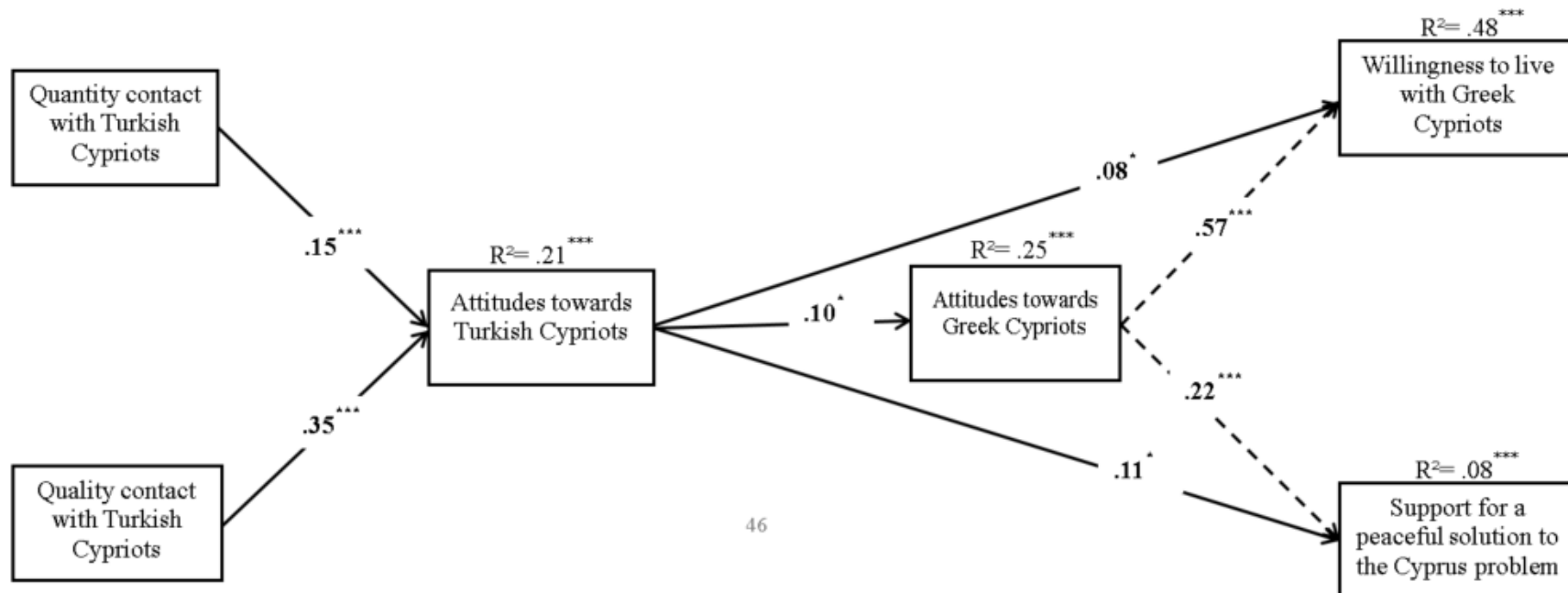
Group Processes & Intergroup Relations
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The role of Intergroup Contact in this trend

1b. Among Turkish Settlers, more contact between Turkish Settlers and Turkish Cypriots improves attitudes toward Greek Cypriots this in turn increases willingness to live with Greek Cypriots and support for BFF and perceived reputation of the settler ingroup improves this further (Unver & Cakal, under review)



Discussion

- There are big differences between the wish for Peace and Solution and the Evaluation of the possibilities for achieving this outcome.
- This is expected in post conflict settings with a history of failed attempts to resolve the problem.
- For instance, a BBC poll in Northern Ireland few weeks before the Good Friday Agreement showed that only 13 percent of the people in the province believed that the negotiations will reach an agreement by May. The poll was released on March 4th while the agreement was made in April 10, 1998 about two months later.

Discussion

- “spiral of silence” in both communities
- Vast majority in both communities not only wishes for Peace in general but is also ready to support specific compromises and a solution on the basis of BBF
- However, disappointment prevails, a kind of learned helplessness that makes the people who support peace and BBF not raise their voice and keeping silent. The result of this is more prevailing disappointment.

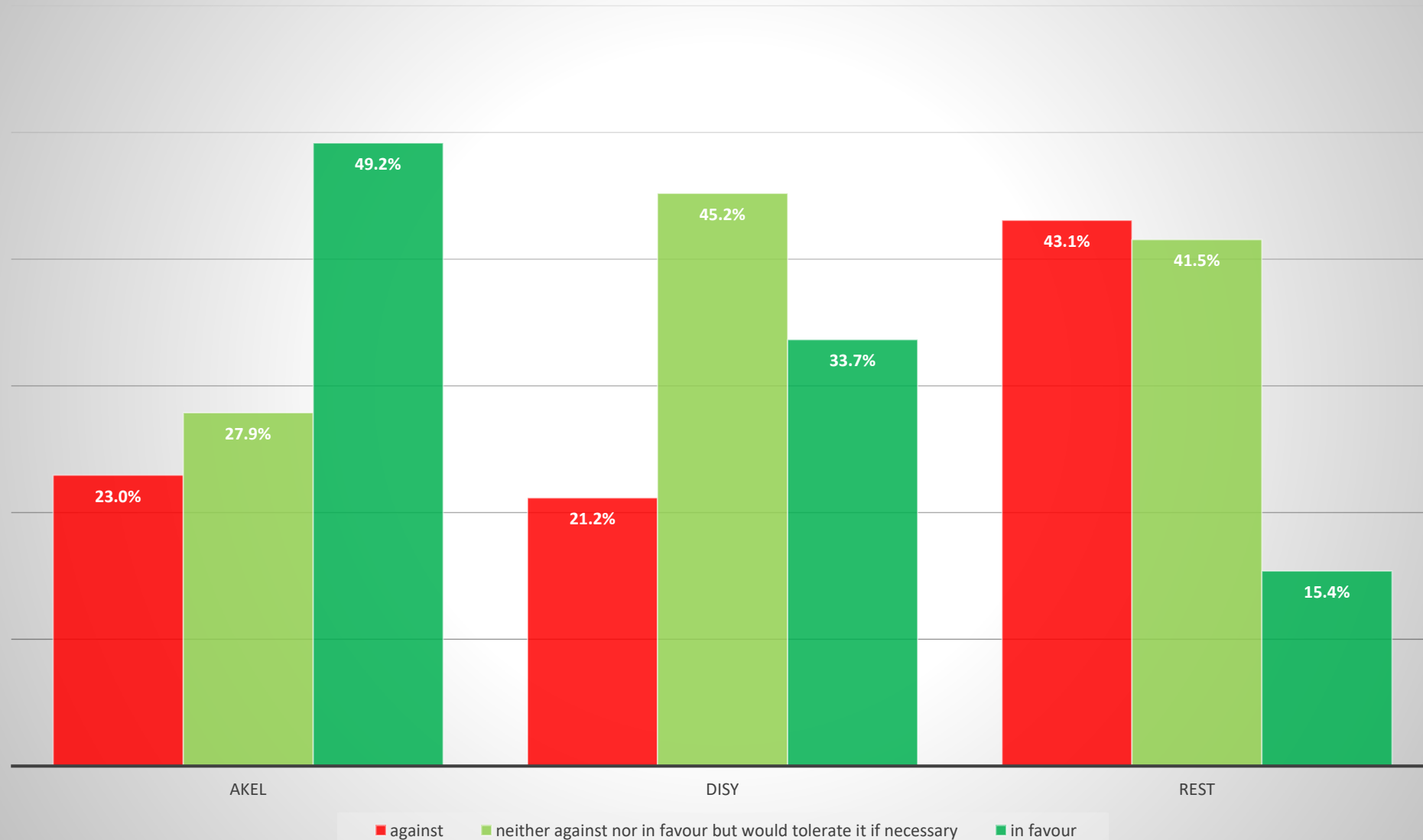
Discussion

- Importantly, the findings in the TC community that were collected after the recent elections suggest that there is a clear majority that still wishes to see peace, solution and a BBF on the basis of compromise solution that would satisfy the core needs of the two communities (even when defined as political equality for TCs exchanged for security for GCs).
- Given the clear corresponding findings of a clear supportive majority from GCs also the findings are promising for the future of negotiations from the point of view of public opinion in both communities.

Why is support for BBF increasing among Greek Cypriots?

- Voters remorse (mourning in 'diplomats graveyard')
- Unlike the past, IDPs more likely to support BBF (Varosha)
- Transformation in AKEL's leadership role for BBF
- Bicommunal contact increases BBF support
- Crises in the Eastern Mediterranean

Support of BBF by Party



Thank you

Questions?

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Trends in the Greek Cypriot community 2010-2020

Stance towards keeping the current situation (status quo) 2010-2020 (Greek Cypriots)

Against Keeping Status Quo (2020)



Acceptance

Percentage 2010-2020



Note: Data collection in 2017 was completed 5 months after Crans Montana (UCFS) (International Cooperation 5 Universities) 2019 data collection completed in first months of 2019 (ESS R9) In 2020 it was completed in March 2020 (KENT-UCFS)

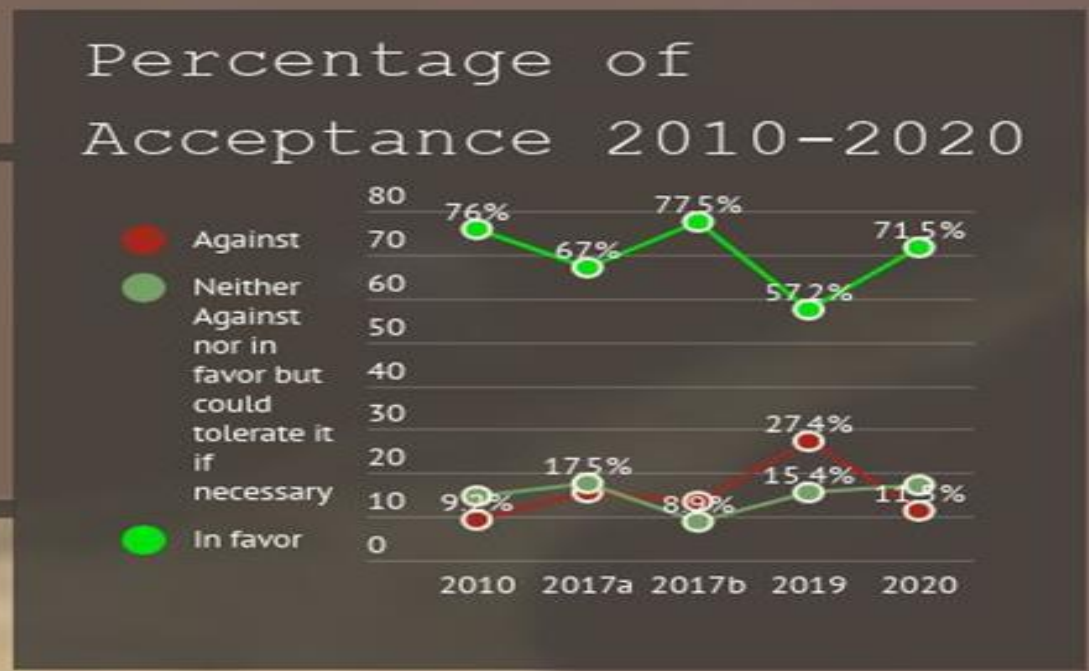


Just after Crans Montana a slight decrease of people who reject keeping the status quo was observed. However, from 2019 to 2020 an impressive increase of people who reject the status quo was observed. Today 79.4% of Greek Cypriots reject the continuation of the status quo

Stance towards Unitary State 2010-2020 (Greek Cypriots)

In favor of Unitary state (2020)

 71.5%



Note: Data collection in 2017 was completed 3 months before and 5 months after Crans Montana (UCFS) (International Cooperation 5 Universities) 2019 data collection completed in first months of 2019 (ESS R9) In 2020 it was completed in March 2020 (KENT-UCFS)



In the last decade around 70% of Greek Cypriots support the Unitary State. After the Crans Montana failure there was a temporary decrease in the support of the Unitary State but in 2020 the trend is undone with 71.5% of Greek Cypriots supporting the Unitary state

Stance towards two states 2010-2020 (Greek Cypriots)

% Against Two state solution in 2020



Percentage of Acceptance 2010-2020



Note: Data collection in 2017 was completed 3 months before Crans Montana (UCFS) and 5 months after Crans Montana (International Cooperation 5 Universities) 2019 data collection completed in first months of 2019 (ESS R9) In 2020 it was completed in March 2020 (KENT-UCFS)

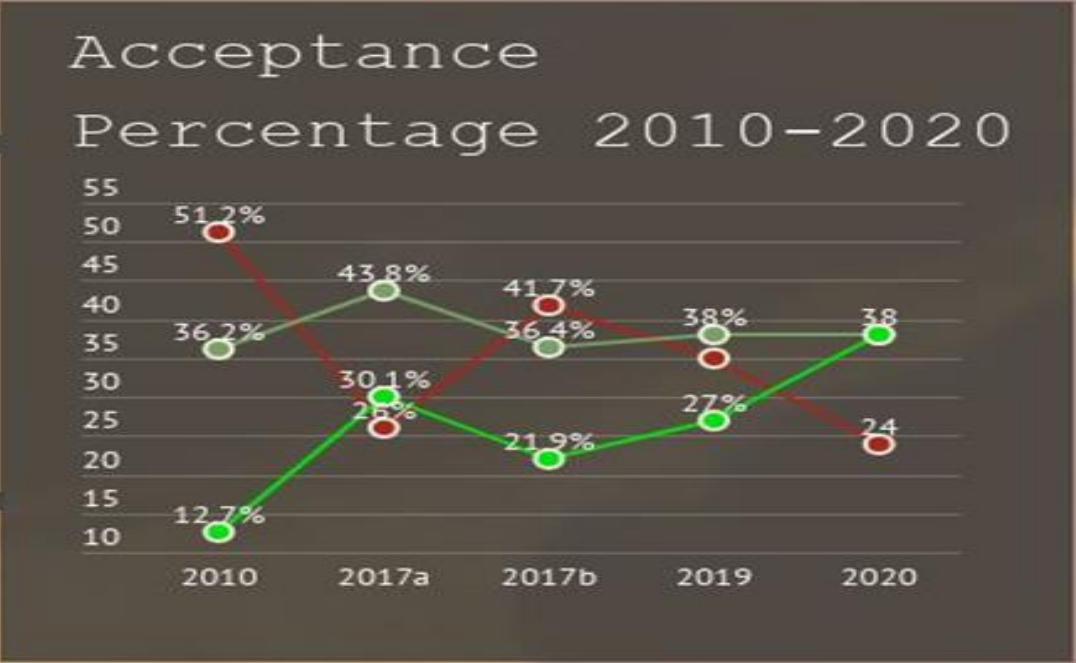


In the last decade above 70% of Greek Cypriots reject a two state solution. After the Crans Montana failure there is an increasing rejection of the two state solution in the Greek Cypriot community

Stance towards Bizonal-Bicommunal Federation 2010-2020 (Greek Cypriots)

Either in favour or I would tolerate if necessary (2020)

 76%



Note: Data collection in 2017 was completed 3 months before Crans Montana (UCFS) and 5 months after Crans Montana (International Cooperation 5 Universities) 2019 data collection completed in first months of 2019 (ESS R9) In 2020 it was completed in March 2020 (KENT-UCFS)



In the last decade the percentage of people who reject BBF has been significantly reduced. On the contrary the people with a federalist mentality have more than doubled. The two bigger groups today are either the people who support BBF or could tolerate it as a solution of necessity. Together they form a majority of 76% according to more recent data available in 2020

Trends in the Turkish Cypriot community 2010-2020



Stance towards keeping the current situation (status quo) 2010-2020 (Turkish Cypriots)

In favour of Keeping Status Quo (2020)



Acceptance Percentage 2010-2020

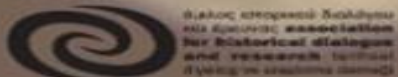


Note: Data collection in 2017 was completed 5 months after Crans Montana (International Cooperation 5 Universities)

In 2020 it was completed in March 2020 (KENT-UCFS)



Since 2010 there is an increasing trend of those you accept the continuation of the status quo. From 2019 to 2020 a further increase of people who accept the status quo was observed. Today 51.8 % of Turkish Cypriots accept the continuation of the status quo





Stance towards Unitary State 2010-2020 (Turkish Cypriots)

Against Unitary state (2020)



Percentage of acceptance 2010-2020



Note: Data collection in 2017 was completed 5 months after Crans Montana (International Cooperation 5 Universities)

In 2020 it was completed in March 2020 (KENT-UCFS)



In the last two years those who are against a Unitary State amongst Turkish Cypriots is the bigger group. Immediately after Crans Montanta a significant increase against a Unitary State was observed. In 2020 there was a significant decrease in the people who oppose it but it is still the bigger group with 47.2 % being against



Association for historical dialogue and research



Stance towards two states 2010-2020 (Turkish Cypriots)

% In favor of Two state solution in 2020



Percentage of Acceptance 2010-2020



Note: Data collection in 2017 was completed 5 months after Crans Montana (International Cooperation 5 Universities)

In 2020 it was completed in March 2020 (KENT-UCFS)

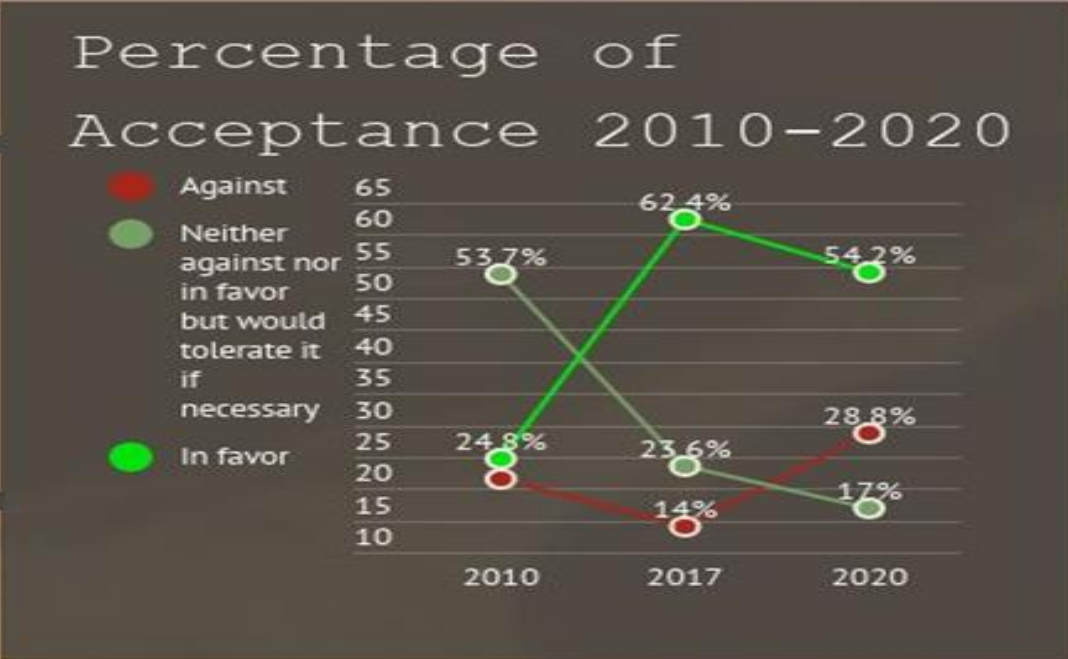
After the Crans Montana failure there is an increasing acceptance of the two state solution in the Turkish Cypriot community



Stance of TCs towards Bizonal Bicomunal Federation 2010-2020 (Turkish Cypriots)

Either in favor or would tolerate it (2020)

71.2%



In the last decade the people in favor of BBF have significantly increased in number. On the contrary there is a significant decrease in the people who would tolerate it if necessary. After Crans Montana failure there is a significant decrease in the supporters of BBF. Those who would either support it or tolerate it of necessary however in 2020 still add up to 71.2%

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