

WORKING PAPER SERIES NO. 59

From ethnic insiders to refugee outsiders:

A community level ethnography of Greek
Cypriot identity formation and transference
since displacement

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Paper submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of
Science in Forced Migration at the Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford

January 2010

Refugee Studies Centre
Oxford Department of International Development
University of Oxford

Working Paper Series

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1 Introduction

Does co-ethnicity support co-ethnic integration? Does building an identity primarily around issues of displacement and loss make it more difficult to integrate into a new place? How does forced displacement affect attitudes towards one's host society? Towards return? Could the strength of this identity of loss create divisions among people who share language, culture, religion and even heritage?

In policy directives regarding local integration of refugees, authors posit a hierarchy of variables as significant for successful integration. Among the most important, theorists cite length of time in refuge, economic sustainability, and shared ethnicity (Crisp 2004; Fielden 2008; Kunz 1981). While opinions tend to be divided on the predictive capacity of the first two, most authors concur that co-ethnicity is the most significant element for integrating two communities into one (Kunz 1981).

Through this paper I will investigate the hypothesis that key variables, particularly co-ethnicity, are predictive of successful integration. Hirschon (1998), Loizos (1999), and Al Rasheed (1994) have already highlighted the gap between theory and practice in the realm of local integration. This paper, however, will look at where there are gaps vis à vis facilitating variables and why such gaps may exist.

The case of Cyprus offers an ideal laboratory for studying the extent to which co-ethnicity serves as a pre-condition for successful integration. Greek Cypriot refugees¹ were displaced during the 1974 Turkish intervention which transformed a once ethnically mixed island of eighty percent Greek Cypriots and eighteen percent Turkish Cypriots into two separate ethnic communities. During this period, over one fourth of the Greek Cypriot population was forcibly displaced from regions in the north of the island and many sought refuge in the Greek Cypriot controlled south.

Integration theory would predict that after thirty-five years of co-habitation, refugees who share language, culture, religion, ethnicity and even family and social networks with their hosts would be fully integrated into mainstream Greek Cypriot society with little continued focus towards return to the now Turkish controlled zone. Yet contrary to this prediction, in certain key respects Greek Cypriot refugees seem to continually resist integration through self-description, social affiliation, and through their persistent preoccupation with return, even as they enjoy full legal, economic, and cultural integration.

This paper will explore how and why Greek Cypriot integration is resisted on the discursive level even as it exists in the formal sense. I will argue that problematic assumptions about what integration entails, the significance of co-ethnicity for

¹ I use the term "refugee" for descriptive purposes as that is how the individuals themselves and others refer to this population. According to International Law on the Status of Refugees (CRS 51), however, these individuals are considered internally displaced persons.

integration, the impact of the displacement experience, as well as the failure to connect a discussion of solutions to causes of displacement may all underlie the apparent paradox we see in Cyprus and elsewhere.

The following chapter offers an overview of current policy debates on durable solutions, detailing the recent shift towards privileging local integration for cases of co-ethnic refugee, economic opportunity and protracted exile. The chapter will discuss definitions of integration, what constitutes “successful” integration, as well as why integration may not occur when it is predicted. This discussion is divided into two parts: the first tackles the challenge of predicting belonging and the second reviews the significance of forced displacement as an identity-shaping experience. The third chapter presents the case of Greek Cypriot refugees in particular. Drawing on fieldwork conducted during various trips to Cyprus over the last four years, it discusses the ways in which refugees and to some extent the “host” government and the international community resist local integration. The chapter also posits some underlying reasons for this resistance. These reasons include assumptions of belonging to one’s place of origin, the emergence and persistence of a refugee identity, and concerns for participating in a solution and “righting the wrongs” of displacement. The final chapter considers the lessons from the Cypriot case in a broader context, highlighting weaknesses in the current literature and offering recommendations for a more nuanced understanding of obstacles and facilitators of local integration.

2 Theories of Integration and Non-integration

Local Integration: what and when?

In order to understand how the Greek Cypriot case contradicts predictions of integration theory, it is first important to understand what this theory suggests. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ Policy Development and Evaluation Service has piloted a shift in the last few years towards focusing on local integration (rather than return) as a viable and even preferable option for specific cases of displacement. Various PDES working papers, such as Crisp (2004), Fielden (2008) and Jacobsen (2001) argue that local integration is most likely to succeed and thus should be promoted when close affinities exist between the host and refugee population, when exile is protracted, and/or when the economic opportunities offered to refugees are better in the host state than in the state of origin. These UNHCR-commissioned publications signal a significant shift away from the organization’s former blanket preference for return (Crisp 2004).

Beyond UNHCR, studies such as Zetter et al.’s 2002 European Refugee Fund Report and Ager et al.’s 2002 Report to the United Kingdom’s Home Office generally agree that local integration will be fairly successful when exiles share a common language, culture, religion and ethnicity with their hosts. For example, numerous UNHCR working papers and field reports highlight cases where ethnic affinity, time, and economic opportunities

led to successfully “solved” refugee situations (Crisp 2004; Fielden 2008; Jacobsen 2001; Stone and De Vriese 2004; Uehling 2004). In her survey of local integration policies throughout the world, Fielden (2008) describes how Tajik refugees of Turkic or Kyrgyz ethnicity were quickly integrated into their “ethnic mother states” of Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, how Azeri refugees of Armenian descent seemingly melted into Armenian society, or how Congolese refugees in Gabon, Hindu/Sikh Afghan refugees in India or Angolans in Zambia all demonstrate successful co-ethnic local integration experiences. Kunz (1981) and others (Crisp 2004; Stone and De Vriese 2004) predict the potential of future situations’ success based on these same conditions.

Fielden’s, Jacobsen’s, and Kunz’s predictions would therefore indicate that given the shared ethnicity of Greek Cypriot refugees and their hosts, enhanced by favourable local economic opportunities and the passage of time, Cyprus would offer great potential for local integration. Yet, thirty-five years after displacement, there is strong resistance to the integration of Greek Cypriot refugees in southern Cyprus on the part of the “host” government, the international community and, primarily, the refugees. Why might this be?

A first important point to clarify is what is meant by “integration.” There are many indices one could include in an analysis of integration. How researchers measure the success of a particular group’s integration, therefore, will depend on the indices they choose to focus on. The *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, for example, defines location integration as the process through which “the contracting states shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees” (Art. 34, CRS 51). The Convention continues by listing a bundle of religious, economic, and society rights that refugees will earn over time as they integrate into their host societies.

Other studies of integration, such as Jacobsen (2001) and Bakewell (2000) portray integration as primarily economic, whereas Kunz (1981) posits that integration is primarily dependent on cultural similarity: “Perhaps no other host factor has more influence on the satisfactory resettlement of the refugee than cultural compatibility between refugee background and host” (Kunz 1981; 46). Given this variety of definitions, it is reasonable that a refugee group, sub-group or individual refugee may be very well integrated according to one measure (such as economic and legal) and not according to another (e.g. cultural and religious).

In the case of Cyprus, refugees have full Cypriot legal citizenship, share culture, religion and language with their hosts, and are generally well integrated into the economy. Thus, on these traditionally analysed levels, Greek Cypriot refugees are well integrated. Yet, on a discursive, relational and identity enacting level, displaced individuals resist fully joining the society of their hosts. By the discursive level, I mean the common patterns of speech used to describe society and its members (Foucault 1970); by relational, I mean the conscious and unconscious patterns of interactions and networks between people (Ager et al. 2002; Putnam 2000); and by enactment I mean the ways in which individuals practise their own identities (Hadjiyanni 2002). Amongst Greek Cypriots there seems to

be a dichotomy between “successful” integration in the traditional spheres and integration resistance in the discursive and identity realms. The host government and the international community generally support and even encourage this brand of resistance (Bryant 1998; Hadjiyanni 2002; Loizos 2009; Papadakis 2005).

Second, definitions of integration often focus primarily on the host government’s actions (or inactions) and neglect the role of refugees in determining integration outcomes (Zetter et al. 2002). Individuals may have varying motivations regarding integration based on their own impetus for migrating (forced or voluntary), their attachment to their cultural identity, and their desire to seek positive relations with the host community (Berry 1980, 1997; Richmond 1994). Both the host state and the refugees shape the integration process (Zetter et al. 2002).

For the purposes of this paper I will consider the government, refugee and the international community’s role in integration efforts, and I will look at integration in terms of Anderson’s (1991) definition of community-building in which identity is based on group feelings of belonging and self-description. Drawing on this definitional scope, integration “succeeds” when two communities voluntarily merge under the rubric of one group. The new community may be homogeneous or multi-cultural but it is united in that members of both groups can “imagine” themselves as belonging to the new community born of their merging (Anderson 1991). Though there are many ways to consider “success” in integration, I find theories of belonging, such as Anderson’s, most useful as they capture elements neglected by traditional analyses focusing solely on more visible or concrete variables such as legal status, income, language fluency, or religious affiliation (Ager et al. 2002; Zetter et al. 2002). Notions of home making and imagined communities allow us to make sense of situations, such as Cyprus, where traditional indicators of integration contradict more abstract and relational measures.

Returning to Cyprus, we find that although there is a certain level of de facto integration on an economic, legal, and cultural level, there has not yet been a mutual re-imagining of two communities as one. This element of non-integration manifests on a discursive and relational level, which most cursory analyses of integration would overlook. What drives this resistance – this failure of imagination? How have the international community, the host government and the refugees themselves influenced this contradictory phenomenon?

Why Might Integration Not Take Place?

Given the assumption of integration as a natural consequence of co-ethnic refuge, what might be impeding the process of integration in the Cyprus case? I would suggest two possible hypotheses: First, Crisp, Fielden, Kunz and others may have oversimplified the formula of components that facilitate integration – particularly as regards the importance they assign to co-ethnicity. Second, these same authors may have over-looked equally predictive factors including the impact of the refugee identity on notions of belonging, concerns for “righting the wrongs” which caused the displacement, and refugee agency in the solution process.

Predicting belonging

Regarding the first possibility, much of the local integration literature can be summed up as an effort to predict when and under what conditions refugees will belong in their state of refuge rather than in their state of origin or a third state (Al Rasheed 1994; Crisp 2004; Kunz 1981). One key claim is that the more similar the host population is to the refugees, the more likely feelings of “belonging” will emerge. Authors tend to define “similar” as similar ethnically (Chimni 1999; Fielden 2008; Kunz 1981; Uehling 2004).

It is not surprising, however, that discussion of integration should give undue weight to shared ethnicity, for what is integration but the incorporation of a new group into the national community? This process may require both host and guest to alter their self-perceptions and perceptions of the other, but ultimately the process of redefinition will be smoother the less both groups need to change. And as ethnicity has traditionally served as the theoretical building block for national belonging (Anderson 1991), newcomers of the same ethnicity are assumed to be more likely to identify with and be identified as members of the host nation (Kymlicka 1995). Following this line of thought, local integration of co-ethnics would actually serve as a form of metaphorical repatriation – a return to the ethnic home or “patria” if not to the physical one (Long 2007).

For example, Chimni (1999) argues that European states were far more open to locally integrating rather than returning refugees when refugees within their borders were of European descent. With the end of the Cold War and the changing nature of refugee demographics (from primarily European to primarily non-European), states began to actively restrict entry, resist local integration and promote return.

While ethnicity may be a facilitative factor in certain cases, it is neither fixed nor homogeneous. Rather it shifts, fades and re-merges in new forms as with other defining aspects of a person’s identity (Anderson 1991; Barth 1969; Cohen 2004). Thus privileging such a fluid and socially constructed concept as a sufficient variable would be unwise. Accounts that reify ethnic identity or suggest that ethnic affiliation will trump other affiliations risk vastly oversimplifying complex situations.

Returning to Chimni’s argument regarding co-ethnicity predicting states’ willingness to accept refugees, Chimni ignores the fact that common ‘ethnicity’ was not the only factor driving Western state actions. Political considerations played at least as important a role in determining these states’ policies. Political considerations are often as important as common ethnicity in shaping host states’ attitudes towards local integration (Hirschon 1998; Loescher et al. 2007). During the Cold War Western states often viewed accepting Soviet-bloc refugees as a political gain. Each refugee was a living embodiment of Soviet oppression and Western magnanimity; here were individuals who were voting with their feet and choosing the Western model over the Soviet (Barnett and Finnemore 2004). With the end of the Cold War the political incentive to accept Soviet refugees was lost.

Thus, even though Bosnians and Kosovars fleeing Balkan violence were of European descent, neighbouring states pushed for containment through “safe havens” and

“temporary protection” as measures to resist absorbing these refugees into their populations (Dubernet 2001).

Another reason not to overemphasize the role of ethnicity is that on an individual level, other aspects of individuals’ identities may override ethnic identity, depending on the circumstances. As a case in point, Barth (1969) notes that ethnic identities are experienced the strongest (as both dividing and uniting factors) in times of threat. Thus it is possible that co-ethnic refuge during and immediately following conflict may be more cohesive than multi-ethnic refuge. Once the threat has subsided, however, other concerns may emerge and cause divisions among co-ethnics. Economic concerns, refugees’ search for belonging, the displacement experience, and attitudes towards solutions may all influence group cohesion in the long run (Al Rasheed 1994; Hirschon 1998; Kibreab 1989; Zmegac 2005).

Economic Competition and Burden

Various authors, including Jacobsen (2001), Soysal (1994), and Zmegac (2005) argue that level of economic opportunities in a given society will determine how refugees, regardless of their ethnicity, will be received. Soysal suggests that hosts with available land and developing economies are more likely to value refugees – no matter their background – for their labour potential. In contrast, Zmegac contends:

The intrusion of any migrant group, whether or not it shares ethnicity, cultural traits, language, and/or structural features with the local population, sets the stage for cultural differentiation and symbolic conflict between the old and the newcomer population (2005: 1).

Turning to Cyprus, Loizos (1981), Maratheftis (1989) and Zetter (1991) describe how in the immediate aftermath of the Greek Cypriot displacements, the non-displaced Greek Cypriots opened their homes, shared school hours, paid higher taxes, and willingly took other measures to welcome and incorporate their displaced co-ethnics (and compatriots in this case) into their community. After ten years without a solution, however, the host community’s generosity began to sour as “old comers” complained that the refugees were driving up housing prices, taking their jobs, and overburdening the welfare system (Zetter 1991). Al-Khalidi et al. (2007) describe similar instances among Iraqi refugees settled in Syria, as the co-ethnic hosts shifted from generosity premised in “pan-Arab” support to resentment at bearing a foreign burden.

“The Myth of Home”

In much of the literature advocating return, various authors document a unique attachment between individuals and their places of origin. This is another factor which can influence group cohesion and can cut across ethnic lines (Chimni 1999; Kibreab 1989; Malkki 1992). Malkki challenges the idea that this attachment is somehow “natural” or “given.” Rather, she argues, this attachment is a social construction that exists in a social space and thus can be both lost and recreated in other physical spaces. The specific attachment that refugees often report to feel towards their home Zetter describes as the “myth of home” (1999).

While the actual attachment to a territory may be a social construction as Malkki suggests, Al-Ali and Koser (2002) and Kibreab (1989) argue that when individuals have been forcibly displaced, they attach greater significance to the physical space from which they came. Hirschon (1998), in turn, demonstrates how this myth persists even when the option for return is no longer available. Exiled communities find comfort and solidarity around a myth of the lost place. They cultivate and renew the link to the place in their imagination and, as a result, maintain a type of connection to the place despite the physical displacement. Zetter argues that even when return is an option, individuals will vary in the degree to which their own myth is connected with an actual intention or even desire to return.

A uniting fact, however, is that one possible result of this myth's creation, maintenance and regeneration is that those who embrace the myth may become marginalized from those who do not as the myth creates a point of both unity and division. Loizos (2009) and Zetter (1999) highlight the presence of this "myth of home" amongst Greek Cypriot refugees. They show how the "myth of home" remains strong even as the reality of home may be slipping away. Loizos argues that Greek Cypriot refugees' attitudes towards return have changed over time from an immediate passion for literal return to a more pragmatic acceptance of their current situation and merely a nostalgic and symbolic orientation towards their places of origin.

The Refugee Identity

A third crucial factor, which may over-determine successful integration despite shared ethnicity, is the emergence of a persistent refugee identity. In legal parlance, only individuals who are outside their country of origin and hold a well founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion and are unable or, owing to such fear, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country qualify as refugees (Art. I(A), CRS 51). Thus, according to the 1951 Convention, once individuals have been legally incorporated into the host state or returned to their state of origin, they lose their refugee status and become regularized residents – undistinguishable in category from other citizens (Hadjiyanni 2002). Yet legal labels are limited in their relevance. A crucial issue is that while individuals may no longer be legally categorized as refugees or perhaps never were (in the case of IDPs or those who are not recognized), they may still experience their identity as such. Equally important is that the prevalence of this feeling may be so strong as to affect group affiliation, life patterns, and political and social orientation in ways that serve to distance the individuals from those who have not shared a similar experience (Hadjiyanni 2002; Zetter 1999; 2007).

Over time, groups forcibly displaced through conflict may retain, develop, and re-construct their refugee identity as an exiled collective throughout the lives of those originally displaced as well as the lives of their descendents. Various authors have documented this exile persona among Asia Minor Greek (Hirschon 1998; Loizos 1999), Palestinian and Armenian (Chatty 2009), Iraqi (Al-Khalidi et al. 2007) and Greek Cypriot exiles (Hadjiyanni 2002; Loizos 1999).

In the case of Asia Minor Greeks and Greek Cypriots, this intergenerational persona has persisted despite conditions of co-ethnic refuge (Hadjiyanni 2002; Hirschon 1998). Hirschon (1998) describes how due to the similarities between mainland Greeks and Asia Minor Greeks one would expect the two populations to merge over time. However, the groups consciously and unconsciously distinguished themselves creating conceptually different categories invisible to external evaluation. Hirschon writes:

The urban refugee population and the local Greeks had few identifiable differences – their historical experience apart – yet their interaction generated boundaries, a recognized characteristic of ethnic groups” (Barth 1969: 15-16)... Since the [displacement] had occurred over fifty years before, something more was being conveyed in the retention of this [refugee] label for decades and across generations. It had become shorthand for a sense of separate identity compounded of various elements...(Hirschon 1998: 4).

A range of authors shed light on the conditions under which the refugee identity may emerge (Al-Rasheed 1994; Hirschon 1998; Kibreab 1989; Kunz 1981; Richmond 1994; Zetter et al. 2002). In a first and most obvious sense, the simple lived experience of forced displacement can serve as a basis for the refugee identity. In situations of co-ethnic refuge, one central difference between co-ethnics is the experience of displacement. Forced displacement, as opposed to voluntary migration, often entails removal from a former membership group, flight for political rather than economic reasons, the potential for temporary exile, limited choice of host state, and the imposition of additional requirements for entry into the host state (Zetter et al. 2002). Richmond (1994) argues that reactive flight and coerced exile impinge on the integration process as most refugees orient themselves towards eventual return rather than embracing their new life as members of their host society. Similarly, Kunz (1981) argues that individuals who are forced to leave their homes will often have a much stronger desire to return than those who leave voluntarily. Thus the experience of forced displacement may both trigger and sustain a dynamic and differentiating identity which can offset predictions of co-ethnic cohesion.

Second, Hirschon (1998) argues that the source of refugee self-designation is clear. The identity is premised on two main elements: individuals’ perceptions of long-term marginal and disadvantaged position in their host society and their well developed sense of identity rooted in their status prior to displacement. Sheffer (2005) extends Hirschon’s first point through his categorization of refugee diasporas as state-linked or stateless. State-linked diasporas (such as Greek Cypriot refugees) “are interested in cooperation with host societies and governments” and generally “accept the basic rules of the game that exist in the host state” (2005: 366-367). As a result state-linked refugees tend to be less marginalized and militant in their positions and actions vis à vis their places of origin than stateless refugees. In contrast, the refugee identity would be more prevalent among stateless diasporas.

Regarding Hirschon’s second “catalyst,” Kunz (1981) suggests that the particular relationship between the refugee group and the population in their country of origin sets

the internal differences between refugees who “cling to their [pre-displacement] identity and anticipate return and those who eagerly embrace their new life, leaving the old behind” (1981: 42-43). According to Kunz those who experienced majority status and benefits prior to displacement are more likely to continue identifying with their place and community of origin after displacement and thus to view their exile as temporary. Kibreab (1989) in turn suggests that differences in host and refugee perceptions of temporariness of stay can cause fissures even among co-ethnics. He argues, “the mutual belief of both refugees and locals in the temporariness of refuge, is why, in spite of common ethnicity and religion, the refugees and host communities form two distinct social entities with limited social and cultural interactions” (1989: 476). Jacobsen contends similarly that “the interests of the refugees themselves in integration is a key variable. Much depends on whether refugees hold out for repatriation” (2001: 21). Accordingly, refugees’ search for belonging as well as the “myth of home” become both drivers and products of this exile persona (Hirschon 1998; Zetter 1999).

Al-Rasheed (1994) found evidence for this phenomenon among Iraqi refugees exiled in London. Muslim Iraqis (as Kunz’s majority-identified refugees) have built group cohesion around the goal of maintaining a connection to the homeland and eventual return. In contrast, Iraqi minority-identified refugees, such as Iraqi Christians, more fully embraced exile as a chance to begin a new life and cut ties with a country in which they were a marginalized group. While the former resist integration, the latter pursue it. Al-Rasheed’s findings raise interesting questions for the Greek Cypriot case. What if return as an ethnic majority is impossible for Greek Cypriot refugees? Would they still hold out for return? Or instead, would they seek integration into their current situation where they do have the possibility to remain the ethnic majority?

Finally, host government and international policies can influence the development and maintenance of this identity through labelling practices. For example, Zetter (1991) describes how the Republic of Cyprus’ creation and maintenance of a bureaucratic label for refugees served to sustain and entrench this status. The impact of the host government and international community’s influence will be explored further in the case study. What are the refugee identity limits? It is important to note that the refugee identity, as with other identities, is not static or homogenous. Rather it shifts between people, generations, genders, and political persuasions. There is a great diversity of understanding regarding what it means to be a refugee and how this identity is experienced. A person’s identification as a refugee interacts with other variables such as their ethnic, political, generational and gender identifications, and all of these concerns, in turn, shape each other (Hart 2008; Shacknove 1985).

The Pursuit of “Justice”

Actors’ varying concerns for righting the wrongs caused through displacement is a fourth factor theorists overlook when privileging co-ethnicity as a determinant of success. This concern may push refugees, the host government, or the international community to resist integration as “un-just” compliance and to push for “justice” through return. On first glance this factor may seem to stem from desires to “re-root” or to “re-place”

oneself following displacement based in the naturally assumed link of person and place of origin (Malkki 1992). However, this factor differs substantially in that it considers the political ramifications of the causes of displacement and looks to reverse or counteract them through an equally politicized solution (Long 2007). For example, when displacement is a by-product of ethnic cleansing, and especially when it is a result of the “un-mixing” of peoples, accepting permanent re-settlement through local integration rather than return may appear to indirectly encourage ethnic cleansing. As one ethnic conflict specialist stated referencing great power policies during the Greek and Turkish population exchanges, “the ethnic entrepreneurs kicked the people out on the one hand and [the League of Nations under Fridtjof Nansen] settled them on the other. Good team work you could say” (Off the record, personal communication, 16th April 2009).

At the political and international community level, what the “wrong” is that needs to be “righted” has varied throughout history and context. For example, following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, the map of the area was transformed from multi-ethnic empires to self-determined nation states. At the time ethnicity was often used as the organizing principle for managing the mixed flows pouring out from and across the crumbling empires. Thus righting the wrongs of dispersed minorities meant the creation of ethnically homogeneous communities as nation states rather than the return of these minorities to their various regions of origin (Chatty 2009; MacMillan 2003). As a case in point, the transfer of ethnic Greeks from Asia Minor to mainland Greece was seen as a form of metaphoric “re-patriation” of dispersed nationals to their appropriate home territory (Long 2007).

After World War II, however, state borders solidified, and maintaining the status quo of nations, once formed, emerged as the new norm. In this climate international players and host states began to see additional population transfers as affronts to the global map of nations as well as threats to general regional security. Thus, when mass refugee flows spilled over borders as a result of conflict, the new doctrine pushed for unilateral returns – or the “re-mixing” of populations – as the only means to ensure peace and security (Phuong 2000). According to Rosand, during this era “Return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons became an integral part of the peace-building effort within UN operations” (Rosand 1998: 1120). Beyond ensuring peace, arguments for repatriation over local integration were commonly expressed in terms of promoting “just” solutions and “righting wrongs” produced through displacement (Phuong 2000).

Comparing refugees groups themselves, this concern for seeking justice through “re-placing” those forcibly displaced in ethnic conflict underlies various refugee groups’ claims on return throughout the world. Historically the Jews, Armenians, Circassians, and more recently the Palestinians and Greek Cypriots all have sought to justify their determination to return based on this same desire to rectify past injustice through reversing displacement. In the following chapter I will explore in more depth the obstacles to the integration of refugees in Cyprus, focusing particularly on how concerns for seeking justice, for seeking belonging, and for maintaining the refugee identity influence the integration process.

3 The Greek Cypriot Refugee Case

Background to the Case

In 1974, as a result of the Turkish military intervention, approximately one-fourth of the ethnic Greek population in Cyprus was forcibly displaced from the four main Northern districts of Morphou, Kyrenia, Famagusta and Karpasia. My case study focuses primarily on refugees from the town of Kyrenia. Kyrenia was the smallest of the six major towns of pre-1974 Cyprus. It had a population of about 3000, approximately 500 of whom were Turkish Cypriot (Census of population and agriculture 1962). The town was situated between the sea and the Five-Finger mountains along the central north coast of Cyprus. As one of the main trading posts between the Levant, Turkey and Greece, Kyrenia was well known for its port, seamen and traders. According to residents the constant traffic of boats and travellers was one main source of diversity and cosmopolitan character in this otherwise village-like community. The region was also known for its beauty and quality of life. Countless times its former residents would tell me of how the idyllic views of sea and mountains captured the imaginations of foreign ambassadors, retired dignitaries, British expatriates and local Kyrenians alike. Many government officials, for example, chose to live in Kyrenia and commute the twenty minutes to the capital, Nicosia.

When reminiscing about life in the community, Kyrenians describe town residents as proud, outspoken and well educated. They say Kyrenia had higher rates of literacy (per capita) than most other places of its size. Many residents lived off the land or sea, everyone knew everyone else, and children ran free in the streets. Between neighbours and extended family networks there was incredible generosity and community support. While individuals did leave Kyrenia for studies, work or marriage, “they always tried to come back. They could not get away [from Kyrenia] too long” (Andreas, interview, 16th November 2006).

In the early hours of July 20th, 1974, Turkish war ships seized the shores of Kyrenia in a surprise attack. As the “first refugees”² of Cyprus, Kyrenians had no warning. Many fled to Nicosia or were taken into Turkish custody, assuming all the while that they would return to their houses within hours, then days, then weeks. As the Kyrenians were the first to arrive in Nicosia, the government had not yet organized a relief response. According to various interviewees, rather than waiting for government aid, most Kyrenians pooled resources in order to rent their own apartments, to find jobs, and to put themselves on their “own two feet” (Eleni, interview, 3rd December 2006).

Thirty-five years later, Kyrenians are now known amongst both the refugee and the broader Greek Cypriot community as hardliners who oppose any compromise solution without first securing full return. Cypriots working towards reconciliation between the north and south often describe the Kyrenian position as extreme, unrealistic, and partly responsible for undermining support for a feasible solution. In 2004, for example, a comprehensive unification plan known as the Annan Plan, was finally put to a

² Greek Cypriot

referendum in both communities. This plan was the product of decades of bi-communal negotiation. Experts suggest that the referendum on the plan was the closest the two sides have come to reunification in thirty-five years. In the months prior to voting, however, members of the Kyrenian community were some of the most publicly opposed to the plan and most actively and financially involved in campaigning against it (senior bi-communal mediators, various interviews, summer 2005).

Many of my Kyrenian interviewees justified their opposition to the Annan Plan based on feelings that “Kyrenians have been sold out by the politicians” (Neophytos, interview, 12th November 2006) and betrayed by their fellow refugees. The plan provides only the right to compensation and not to return for the majority of Kyrenians. This is a result of the fact that Kyrenian homes and land were the first to be conquered, the first to be occupied, and the first to be developed. Consequently Kyrenia now has one of the highest ratios of Turkish settlers to Turkish Cypriots and is the headquarters of the Turkish military in North Cyprus. For these reasons experts on the Cyprus conflict from both sides of the island as well as international experts suggest that the Kyrenia region is the least likely to be returned in a settlement (Galanos, interview, 2nd April 2009; Sözen, EMU lecture, 16th June 2005; US Embassy in Cyprus representative, off record interview, 11th February 2007).

In contrast to known supporters of the Annan Plan, Kyrenian “NO” voters stressed that they would not accept a “salami solution,” i.e. one that included concessions in pieces over time. Instead prominent leaders from the Kyrenian community, former mayors and members of the municipality advocated a comprehensive solution that would guarantee the unconditional right to return for all displaced persons, reunification and the removal of all Turkish troops and settlers – in other words a return to the pre-1974 status quo (Kyrenia Municipality, various interviews, 2009).

While the Kyrenian refugees in my study are a unique group in certain respects, their position on the conflict and right of return tend to be representative of the archetypal Greek Cypriot discourse (see Papadakis 2005). Thus analysing the Kyrenian community may illuminate aspects of the wider community discourse as well as revealing one source of the drive for the resistance to integration among refugees, the government, and the international community as the resistance both reinforces and is reinforced by this discourse. While there is diversity among Kyrenians and among the Greek Cypriot community as a whole, this discourse spans the political spectrum, generations, and the refugee – non-refugee divide. Thus while it is best exemplified among members of the Kyrenian community, it is important to explore the impact it has had on discussions and Greek Cypriot intransigence regarding a solution.

Methods and Methodology

The interviews incorporated into this Working Paper are drawn from a re-interrogation of data collected on various research trips to Cyprus over the last four years. While my research focus changed throughout this time, semi-structured interviews and oral histories collected through these various trips all contributed to my understanding of the

current issue. The following interviews are drawn from a range of ages, genders, and socio-economic statuses. Most interviewees, however, were Greek Cypriot refugees living in Nicosia, (south) Cyprus. All the names have been changed, except for the names of prominent figures. In some cases I was able to record informants' comments as they spoke. In other instances, I jotted down notes after conversations took place.

While most of my conversations were not formal interviews, I believe that the informal structure afforded a more comprehensive picture of individuals' lives and opinions than would have been possible through a more formal research approach. Conducting qualitative interviews with refugees is essential for noticing subtleties that would otherwise be missed in a top down, pre-formulated approach to research. When seeking to understand issues such as identity and self-description and the proactive capacity of refugees to confront the process of integration (rather than integration being fully state-crafted), recognizing subtleties is particularly important. In addition, qualitative interview-based research enables one to put refugee voices at the centre of the research project. This is important when the outcome of the research may impact the people in question. A final advantage of conducting inductive research from refugee voices is that this approach can help limit the influence of current political or policy biases on the research and thus keep issues relevant to refugees, relevant to policy (Bakewell 2008).

One strong limitation to semi-structured, narrative-based research, however, is that individuals' memories are highly subject to influence and change. Thus interview accounts must not be seen as historical fact but rather as personal narrations. Rubin (1999) suggests that individuals need to narrate their past in order to cope and deal with the present. For example, refrains like "Kyrenia was the most beautiful town of the island," "We all knew each other like family," and "We never had any problems," when compared to archival records may remain concrete only in the tellers' imagination (Papadakis 2005; Republic of Cyprus News and Information Archives 2007).

Yet all this is not to say that the stories and impressions of individuals must in any way be treated as secondary to what can be established as "fact." If anything, the reality they have created through their constant narrating has become far more real to them than what may have empirically occurred. This in itself makes it as essential to understand and study the Kyrenia of the mind as the Kyrenia that was before or "is" now. As Hirschon writes, "collective memory is key in the development of identity... [Memory] is not a historical reference but rather a frame of reference against which other experiences can be interpreted" (1998: 15-16).

Reflexivity: Researching as a Young Female and an American

Although I could spend pages describing islanders' perceptions of foreigners, youth, and females as researchers, that is not the intent of this paper. Yet each of these demographic factors played an important role both in my understanding of the situation and in how others reacted towards me. Since my Greek language ability was limited, my impressions are based on what was said or meant for my hearing and the body and facial language of those I encountered. While each of these biases deserves further investigation, I will not

be tracing them throughout this paper. Yet as I keep these factors in mind during my analysis, I hope readers will remember them too.

Integrationist Framework Applied to Cyprus

Greek Cypriot refugees exiled among their own countrymen represent a prototypical case for seamless integration. Not only do they share language, religion, and ethnicity with their hosts, but a portion of those exiled also shared family, social and economic networks (Ager et al. 2002). Regarding economic opportunities, the region of refuge has approximately three times the GDP of the Turkish Cypriot North, three times the salaries, and infrastructure and services of much higher quality (World Development Indicators 2008). Finally, thirty-five years have elapsed since Greek Cypriots were displaced. The vast majority of the refugees and their descendents have now spent more time living in exile than in their places of origin. For those individuals under thirty-five, the community of refuge is the only home they have experienced. Thus given the literature's emphasis on co-ethnicity, economic opportunities, and time as key conditions for integration's success, one might predict that in the case of Cyprus, refugees and hosts would long ago have merged into one community.

On the ground level there has been a certain level of de facto economic, legal, and social integration. Yet, despite having all the conditions identified as the most conducive for successful local integration, refugees still perceive themselves (and are perceived by the government and to some extent the host community) as a distinct social group spanning time, space and generations (Hadjiyanni 2002; Loizos 1999). The following section details some of the ways in which individuals, the host government and the international community resist integration.

How Is Integration Resisted: The Individual Level Recreating the People

At its core, resistance to integration is encapsulated in a powerful "refugee" discourse echoed across genders, classes, generations and even political parties.³ This discourse speaks of peaceful co-existence between Greek and Turkish Cypriots interrupted by the 1974 Greek coup and the Turkish invasion which followed it, ending in the current unresolved status quo with refugee homes under "illegal Turkish occupation." Regarding solutions, the discourse states that refugees want to return to their homes, want a fair solution and want their human rights. As one Kyrenia council member poignantly put it, "We want to go back to our houses. Not money. Not anything else. We want the Turks to go back to theirs and us to go back to ours. If you write this then you have understood us"

³ Throughout the case study the term "refugee" refers to Kyrenians unless otherwise specified. There are stereotyped differences between the various refugee groups. However, a comprehensive comparison could not fit in the scope of this paper. Of the four groups of refugees, Kyrenians and Karpasians are the least likely to be able to return to their homes in any future solution as Kyrenian and Karpasian properties are primarily developed or inhabited by settlers from Turkey. In contrast, most Famagustan and Morphou properties are either uninhabited (as in the case of homes in the buffer zone) or inhabited by Turkish Cypriots who were dispossessed of their homes in the South. Resolutions presented thus far include almost full return for these two latter groups.

(Chouvarta, personal communication, 30th September 2006). Similarly, in an interview with former Kyrenia mayor and community leader Rina Castelli on 2nd October 2006, she said that the most important goals of the refugee community are to “make the problem of the refugees known, to go back to our town, and to have our human rights.”

Particular types of self-segregating actions accompany this refugee discourse. For example many interviewees suggested that “good refugees” participate in protests and public awareness campaigns, hand out leaflets, lobby the government and make lots of noise. Hadjiyanni (2002) and Loizos (1981) highlight similarly distinctive actions among other Greek Cypriot refugees. Dimitria, a mid thirties Kyrenian, nostalgically said:

When I was in high school we [the Kyrenian students] used to carry *Den Xehno* (“never forget”) stickers everywhere with us. Now we hardly see them anywhere. They used to be on buildings, on cars, in windows, up on the blackboard in classes.

Dimitria went on to praise the efforts of the newly elected mayor of the Kyrenia Municipality (in exile), Maria Innanou:

Maria embodies the true Kyrenian spirit. She goes to every meeting abroad held for European mayors in order to counter the “so-called” mayor of the north’s attendance – in order to say that “you don’t have a right to be here, you are ‘so called’” and to spread the literature around and educate people. I told Maria that even if she gets to talk to just five people on each trip and each of those people talks to one, then it was worth it (Dimitria, interview, 13th November 2006).

The first time I met Maria following her 2007 election, she was rushing out of the Kyrenia Municipality office on her way to a conference in Brussels. Her arms were filled with books on Kyrenia’s history, sailing culture, and personages, authored by known community artists and poets. When I conveyed Dimitria’s compliment, Maria responded that there was always more work to do because “We need to respond to everything, to all [the other side’s] attempts to claim our rights... Because if we don’t - the little people don’t - who will? The media certainly isn’t” (Innanou, personal communication, 13th April 2007). While this discourse is encouraged and promoted by the Kyrenia Municipality, it is also present among members from different sectors of the Kyrenia community.

In addition to “positive” obligations, the discourse suggests that refugees, particularly Kyrenians, have “negative” obligations too. For example, some interviewees suggested that “true” refugees should not cross into the Turkish-controlled north of the island as they would have to show their identity cards to the Turkish Cypriot authorities at the crossing and thus, by default, recognize the authority of the “illegally occupying Turkish state.” Rather, “true” refugees should refuse to cross until they “can return with our human rights – the right to live in our homes” (Castelli, interview, 2nd October 2006). If refugees must cross to the north, then it should only be to show their children their homes, lay flowers on a loved one’s grave, or make the pilgrimage to one of the holy Greek Orthodox sites.

I interviewed one mid-twenties Kyrenian who had recently finished his two years of compulsory service in the Greek Cypriot military. Hambis shared his frustration with his compatriots through describing his experience guarding the UN mandated “Green Line” separating the two communities:

The most difficult part was being stationed at a point on the Green Line wasting two years of my life watching patriotic [sarcastic] friends go to Kyrenia on holiday. It makes me sick...I asked one friend [also from Kyrenia] what he would do if he saw them and he said “I would shoot them” (Hambis, interview, 27th October 2006).

A mid-sixties Kyrenian mother of three echoed this feeling when I asked if she had visited Kyrenia since the opening of the Green Line: “No, I don’t go back to visit Kyrenia. I don’t consider that the idea of a good time, thank you very much” (Anna, interview, 20th May 2007). This information was offered in public to a group at a Kyrenia reunion. In later conversation with Anna, she explained that she crosses on occasion but not to visit Kyrenia as it is too painful to see.

Neophytos, an active community member and former Vice Mayor, offers another commonly given reason for not crossing:

I have a Turkish Cypriot friend, Mehmet. He comes to visit me at my house here. And after three to four times he asks, “Why do you not come and visit me? I’ve visited you three, four times.” I understand his feelings. It’s as if I do not respect the friendship. But then I had to ask him, “Go there to do what? To see my house, with someone else living in it? To go back to my home as a tourist? Without being able to stay?” (Neophytos, interview, 12th November 2006).

Loizos (1981), Hadjiyanni (2002) and Hadjipavlou (2007) cite similar findings in their work with Greek Cypriot refugees from other regions.

Finally, according to many of my interviewees, “loyal” refugees should not participate in bi-communal activities meant to encourage rapprochement and compromise between the two ethnic communities. Rather, loyal refugees know that it is a matter of “rights” and “seeking justice” and thus they wait for the other side to adopt this same realization. To compromise on a solution is seen as compromising on justice and basic human rights. Stelios, a prominent human rights lawyer in his early thirties and an influential member of the Kyrenian community, when asked if any Kyrenians had supported the Annan Plan, responded, “One [Kyrenian] council member managed to get 1700 Kyrenians to vote ‘yes’ [for the Annan Plan]! That is ridiculous. He got them to vote yes for losing their human rights, their property, for Turkey’s wrongs...” (Stelios, interview, 13th May 2007).

Those within the Kyrenia refugee community who deviate from this Kyrenian discourse (and its implied obligations) are often strongly criticized and to some degree ostracized for their dissent. Kyrenians who publicly supported a “yes” vote on the Annan Plan, for example, are often accused of being “sell outs,” “just in it for the money,” or “forgetful of where they come from.” Eleni Mavrou, the current Mayor of Cyprus’ capital, Nicosia, was

another one of the few Kyrenians to openly support the plan. As a result she faced much criticism both from her own party (which opposed it) and from the Kyrenian community.

Kyrenians who openly state that they do not wish to return to Kyrenia or that they will not return if given the chance are another stigmatized sub-group. As an illustration, when describing divisions within the Kyrenian community, discourse adherents often lob accusations such as the following:

The situation helped [those who do not support return] economically to make more money than they used to make in Kyrenia so that they say, 'Ah if there is a solution, I'm not going back to Kyrenia. My business is here.' Because they are very well to do. Because of the situation they ended up becoming millionaires. They are taking advantage, in other words. But there's only a few numbers of them...very small numbers (Yiannis, interview, 20th September 2006)

Finally, various interviews suggested that a range of actions are also discouraged including crossing to the north "too" often for reasons other than absolute necessity; establishing relationships with Turkish residents of Kyrenia other than the "original" (pre-1974) Turkish Cypriots; and openly expressing willingness to return to Kyrenia under conditions of Turkish control (as proposed in the Annan Plan). Discourse proponents often dismiss individuals who engage in any of the above as "forgetful of what we [refugees] suffered" at the least and as "Turk lovers" at the most extreme. Censure is partly due to the fact that the discourse suggests unity of identity, perspective and mission. Often interviewees propounding the discourse line would express themselves as "We Kyrenians" or "We refugees feel this or believe that..." Conspicuous dissent therefore threatens the foundation of this implied consensus.

While members of the Kyrenian community tend to be most vocal and visible in pushing the non-integrationist discourse, even among Kyrenians this discourse may be the position of the minority. One political analyst, for example, suggested that the more organized and vocal Kyrenians tend to represent the minority opinions. The tendency among the majority, in contrast, is to say what is expected rather than what they feel when discussing the Cyprus problem. The silence of other voices, it seems, whether representing disagreement or tacit agreement, speaks to the power this discourse has gained. For example, one consequence of censure levied for past deviation is that refugees who "break" the implied rules often feel compelled to hide their transgressions from the community (as was Anna's case) or are discouraged from actions they would have otherwise considered acceptable (such as crossing to the north). Thus, based on my interviews, the discourse's importance seems to come not from the numbers who promote it but from its power to dominate broader community discussions on what it means to be a refugee, the future of the conflict and on what constitutes a "fair" solution.

Recreating the Place

Beyond this explicit discourse and actions delineating refugees from non-refugees, there is also another set of more subtle actions which serve both as markers of resistance to integration and as a means of creating cohesion and meaning among those displaced. On

this more internal level of place recreation, “good” Kyrenians are those who have managed, to the greatest degree possible, to replicate a Kyrenian “place” in exile even as they are deprived of living in the actual physical space. Jansen and Löfving (2009) distinguish “place” from “space” by describing physical space as the territory in which a group is situated, i.e. the concrete houses, streets, and land. Place, in contrast, is the combination of cultural elements that constitute the meaning people associate with physical spaces. For example, perceptions of place may include the history, religion, language, traditions, habits, and networks that all contribute to the experience of a home apart from the structures of a space.

Kyrenians’ efforts to recreate the lost place come in many forms. First, individuals work to maintain and build social networks between members of the former district, town or village, suggesting a belief that the lost place can partly be regained through gathering and connecting its people. This includes a wide spectrum of activities on the municipal, community and individual level. The municipalities, for example, will host excursions, summer camps, exhibitions, festivals, and after-school programmes for their constituents. Weddings, holidays, christenings and saints’ days are a less formal way in which refugees are often encouraged to re-connect and maintain their social bonds. Those who neglect these networks are often seen as neglecting “who they are and where they came from” (Hambis, interview, 27th October 2006).

Second, individuals seek to recreate the lost physical space by surrounding themselves with the material emblems and reminders of their old homes. For example, consider Eleni’s reflections on Kyrenians:

Kyrenians were used to being around the sea with their gardens and their flowers and their trees... You will notice most of the Kyrenians have very elaborate gardens – even if they have a tiny little room, just one inch of space on the veranda they will have them. I can actually tell; I can say, ‘That apartment, 6th floor on the right, that is a Kyrenian apartment.’ People think I’m crazy. I’m not. I’m not (Eleni, interview, 17th January 2007).

Inside the homes many Kyrenian families have paintings of the town of Kyrenia on their walls, books memorializing the town and its people on their shelves and, for the lucky few, salvaged, yellowing photographs of their lost homes. Often, when I conducted interviews in individuals’ current homes, they would make sure to show me these emblems, or, when visiting each others’ homes, they would note with admiration and approval the series of paintings, flowers, etchings and other emblems of the lost space.

Third, refugees further mark their distinctiveness through certain habits and activities – what Zetter (1994) describes as temporal markers of home. For example, each year in the spring, some women travel to the mountains to gather the same types of herbs as they used to in the years before displacement, even though these herbs are now available in grocery stores in town. Other refugees, for example, continue to teach and excel at regional crafts for which their towns were known. Youth compete in football leagues based on their parents’ towns of origin. And elderly men and women make regular visits

to homes and shops to drink coffee and exchange news with fellow townspeople. In some cases these individuals barely knew each other before displacement. The shared experience of being both Kyrenians and refugees, however, has since bonded them in a way that offers new points of commonality. Together they can reminisce about the old life, criticize the current stalemate or share their hopes for return in the future. Loizos (1981) and Hadjiyanni (2002) describe similar behaviour in their case studies of other Cypriot refugee groups as they sought to re-establish daily patterns of life in a new place.

Place – or locality – is fragile. Individuals must work hard to produce and maintain their own particular sense of place. The efforts of one group, Turton (2004) argues, constantly bump up against the efforts of another group, such that the process of production can be continuously challenged. My interviewees' methods of building group cohesion are not necessarily continuations of former, pre-displacement practices. Rather they are often activities and perspectives that the refugees had to work to recreate, maintain and develop through time, even as the community was dispersed both within Cyprus and throughout the world. As Loizos, Bryant, and Zetter also describe, this reconstituting of the social and imagined community has taken decades to reach its current degree of practice. Yet now it enjoys a broad foundation in the lives of many of my interviewees, contributing to their sense of shared place as they await the proverbial return to a shared home.

How is Integration Resisted: The “Host” Government Level

The primary way in which the government contributes to resistance is through its unconditional public support for refugees' right to return. During election campaigns and public speeches politicians often use a non-integrationist discourse similar to that of the refugees, which has undoubtedly helped shape the refugee discourse and been shaped by it. For example, the Republic of Cyprus Press and Information Office states that “The status quo of foreign military occupation and division of an independent, sovereign state, member of the EU and the UN, is totally UNACCEPTABLE.” It continues by calling for the right of return for all refugees by “insisting on the genuine reunification of the island, its institutions and its people” (see Papadakis 2005).

Regarding actions that contribute to resistance, however, the Cypriot state has ambiguous policies on refugee integration. In support of refugee segregation, the government provides refugee identity cards to all displaced individuals and the descendents of male refugees. These cards entitle carriers to particular financial and social benefits such as subsidized home loans and the right to vote in their refugee district (Zetter 1991). In addition the government maintains the refugee municipalities for the main cities “in exile.” These municipalities receive funding from the government, hold their own elections, and represent their voting constituents in the Cyprus Parliament and in the world. Finally, the government mandated *Den Xehno* (“never forget”) as a key textbook in the state history curriculum. This textbook chronicles the suffering of the refugee population, emphasizes their separate experience, and applauds their determination to return (Bryant 1998; Papadakis 2005). Each one of these government actions seems to further separate the displaced population from its hosts.

Simultaneously, however, other government policies have (un) intentionally encouraged integration and frustrated attempts at refugee group cohesion. For example, in the aftermath of the 1974 displacements, the government dispersed the Greek Cypriot refugees throughout the south rather than maintaining original village or city groupings. In addition, the government built permanent refugee housing and offered specialized mortgage loans to encourage settlement in the cities rather than sustaining the camps. This set of strategies is now known in UNHCR parlance as “self-settlement” and “self-reliance” – both methods that lead towards local integration. Finally, and most importantly, political parties worked to prevent refugees from organizing their own party. The leadership of the various political parties at the time discreetly blocked this potential recourse. From the earliest days following displacement, refugees began to organize with the goal of forming their own political party. According to two key political insiders, political parties feared the threat that a new refugee party would pose, as displaced individuals represented approximately one fourth of the voting population. Thus the main political parties at the time, in a rare act of cooperation, worked to thwart the embryonic initiative by appealing to the loyalties of their own party members who had been displaced and by making promises to advocate on the refugees’ behalf for benefits in the short term and return in the long term (off the record, interview with former Minister of Parliament, 3rd April 2009). A separate active refugee party would have served as a means for refugees to exert agency but would likely have also led to even more extreme marginalization of refugees.

How is Integration Resisted: The International Community Level

The international community has not been very involved in the domestic affairs of the Republic of Cyprus vis à vis integration. Thus on one level it has had little immediate impact on the continued non-integration of Greek Cypriot refugees. Yet through continuous support for a resolution that includes return, key players in the international community (including the United Nations Mission to Cyprus, the United States and the United Kingdom) are, in many respects, encouraging Greek Cypriot refugees’ dreams of return and by extension, their resistance to integration. Various UN and EU resolutions have demanded “the urgent return of the refugees to their homes in safety” (UNFICYP 2009). In action, however, the plans they support or deem politically feasible are ones which would require the local integration of a significant portion of refugees in the south, including almost all Kyrenians. The 2004 internationally-brokered Annan Plan, for example, included return for only a portion of all refugees, indicating the international community’s tacit support for the local integration of some refugees - specifically a large portion of Kyrenians (Annan Plan V; Palley 2005).

In summarizing how individuals, the host government, and the international community impact refugee integration in Cyprus, it appears that individuals from the refugee community are the primary drivers of resistance. The host government and the international community, in turn, bolster these community level efforts. Resistance manifests in discourse as well as in action. What perspectives, motivations and actions, however, underlie this resistance? How do motivations differ between the various levels of analysis?

Why Is Integration Resisted: The Individual Level

Individual resistance appears to be grounded in four main areas: an assumption that return is the most natural of all solutions, the persistence of a segregating refugee identity, the desire to exercise agency in a solution as well as to right the wrongs committed through displacement.

Regarding the first factor, a search for “belonging” and a desire to “re-root” in the place of origin are prominent concepts throughout my interviews. The emphasis on return serves as both a source and as a product of refugee group solidarity (Zetter 1999). In contrast, interviewees perceived integration as “un-natural,” “un-ideal,” “un-satisfactory,” and ultimately “temporary, if at all.” Accepting local integration as a possible final outcome would be seen as “giving up” or “giving in.” Loizos (1981) and Hadjiyanni (2002) document similar feelings in their early studies of Greek Cypriot refugees.

Yet my interviewees were not indifferent to Kunz’s (1981) and Al-Rasheed’s (1994) predications that co-ethnicity is preferred to minority status. In fact both assumptions likely play into Kyrenians’ preference for return, for Cypriot refugees do not perceive return as an “either-or” option between living with likes and living in one’s place of origin. Rather Greek Cypriots, as majority-identified refugees, tend to imagine return as returning as the ethnic majority to reclaim their primarily Greek Cypriot homeland (Zetter 1999). Thus, for many refugees who desire to return, return as the most natural solution and co-ethnic habitation as the most natural solution do not conflict, but rather coincide as underlying goals.

An interesting exception to interviewees’ general preference for return arose in interviews with Greek Cypriot refugees who took the opportunity to visit their homes after crossing points to the north first opened in 2003. After visiting, some of these individuals decided that they never wished to return again. This shift in perspective was largely driven by a breaking of sustained ideas of what return would include. As Voula put it, “Going back kills the dream. We realized that we were not wanted back...It was a nightmare...I barely recognized my town” (Voula, interview, 3rd March 2007).

When many individuals returned, they were faced with the reality of a “Turkified” area, with strangers for neighbours, unfamiliar sights, smells, rhythms and all other elements contradicting their memory of home. As a consequence some decided that the physical aspect of home was not enough to sustain their attachment to the space (Taylor 2009). Many of these one-time-visit refugees have since begun the process of shifting their focus towards embracing the south as their permanent home and transforming their attachment to return into a form of nostalgia for a place that once was but no longer is (Loizos 2009).

In addition to the search for “belonging,” refugees’ resistance to complete integration is also grounded in the emergence and persistence of a refugee identity. Various factors contribute to this identity’s emergence. First, as Berry (1980) suggests, the level of integration achieved will depend on two factors, the degree to which refugees retain their

unique identity aspects and the degree to which they desire or experience a positive relationship with their hosts. In the Greek Cypriot case refugees have attempted to maintain their unique identity markers through various means, as discussed in the previous section on re-creating the people and the place. In addition, Cypriot refugees experienced a degree of marginalization from their hosts. For example, refugee children remember name-calling at school depicting refugees as dirty, poor or unwanted (Loizos 1977; Hadjiyanni 2002). Older refugees recall the profiteering of co-ethnic landlords, new bosses and the animosity of fellow Greek Cypriot bureaucrats in charge of distributing much needed benefits. In addition, refugees felt marginalized from the Cypriot political process, particularly in negotiations regarding a solution. These combined factors created a conceptual division between Greek Cypriot host and Greek Cypriot guest even where the distinctions were otherwise invisible (Hirschon 1998).

The second element compounding this separate identity is the cultural, regional and historical elements that distinguish the refugees from their hosts. In the Cypriot case these differences often relate to the distinguishing experience of displacement and loss (as in “no one can understand a refugee but another refugee”) as well as markers specific to the town or village of origin. One interesting result of this dual basis of differentiation is that interviewees expressed their refugee and regional identities almost interchangeably as if they both included or indicated the other. To be a Kyrenian, in other words, was to be a refugee – and for Kyrenians, the Kyrenian community exemplified the plight of refugees.

Third, the desire to exert agency over the future of their displacement likely motivates refugees to resist integration as one of the few means available to them to insert their influence in the political process. More traditional forms of acting would usually include literally returning, organizing a political party to pursue return, or, as a coherent lobby group, pressuring the government to pursue it for them. But all three of these avenues are blocked: refugees cannot literally return due to the Turkish military and UN peacekeeping troops patrolling the divide. As indicated in the discussion on government actions, political parties have thwarted earlier refugee attempts to join the political system as their own entity. And finally, community members’ competing stakes in the various solutions have prevented the refugee community from effectively organizing themselves outside the political system. Jansen and Löfving (2009) suggest that when refugee groups are marginalized or not adequately represented through formal channels, refugee identification is more likely to emerge, persist and stimulate grassroots action. In the Cyprus case resistance to integration may be one avenue of agency left to the Greek Cypriot refugees by which to protest the lack of a resolution thirty-five years after their displacement. In this case, self-segregation becomes a political act that allows exiled Greek Cypriots to still demonstrate their opposition to the status quo even when most other forms of agency have been taken away (Sheffer 2005).

Refugees’ drive to right the wrongs of displacement is the fourth element fuelling individuals’ resistance to integration. Many interviewees, for example, emphasize the importance of return for achieving “justice,” “for demanding our rights” and “for showing that might [Turkey’s military intervention] does not equal right” (Dimitria, interview,

21st September 2006 as example). Interviews suggest that return is less a matter of what refugees would return to and more the opportunity to reverse a historic wrong that was committed. Many emphasized to me that return was “a matter of dignity and justice, not money.” Eleni, a Cypriot historian, lamenting the change in some of the younger generation of Kyrenians, told me “[The Kyrenian youth] accept the situation differently...they rebel against their parents. They say, ‘You lost Cyprus. What do you expect? It was your mistake. Why do you expect me to keep on living with it? [The Turks] are the winners. They can keep it!’ But,” she concluded, “some [of the youth] do have a natural sense of justice too” (Eleni, interview, 3rd December 2006).

An interesting parallel emerges throughout my interviews between the loss of Kyrenia and the historic Greek polity’s loss of Constantinople. Both Kyrenian and non-Kyrenian Greek Cypriots depict Kyrenia as the gem of Cyprus, the historically coveted bastion of culture and beauty as well as the frontier to barbarian invasions and strategic defence. One common chant in Greek Cypriot protests against the occupation is “to the shores of Kyrenia!” The textbook, *Den Xehno* has a picture of the Kyrenia castle on the front. This same castle appears as the Kyrenian Municipality’s insignia. As one well known Kyrenian artist described it, “Historically, whichever bastard was in power at the time, they had to have Kyrenia...living there, you had the feeling that many civilizations came and went and left their mark on the spot” (Andreas, interview, 16th November 2006). As a result, my interviews convey that the “injustice” committed by Turkey is magnified when viewed as a repeated affront, which only adds to refugees’ feelings of collective victimization as both Greeks who lost Constantinople and as Greek Cypriots who lost Kyrenia.

In sum, concerns for “justice” and righting historic wrongs spur resistance to integration lest willingness to integrate be seen as complacency toward Turkey’s wrongful action. For example, the new Town Council for Kyrenia (in exile), composed of members from across the political spectrum, formulated a joint statement to this end, stating: “The Town Council for Kyrenia considers its duty and debt to fight with every possible peaceful way at its disposal, without being disappointed and disoriented until the day we see justice” (Kyrenia Municipality 2007). Even while this resistance may exist more in discourse than action, it seems to have already produced a conceptual and relational divide in the Greek Cypriot population, just as Hirschon’s Asia Minor Greeks felt themselves divided from the broader Greek population (1998).

Why Is Integration Resisted: The “Host” Government Level

The motivations underpinning governmental actions are likely mixed. This is a consequence, on the one hand, of the state being made up of multiple parties, departments and individuals with competing interests and institutional memories (Freeman 1998). Some generalities can be drawn out, however, from patterns in government action. One strong factor in state rhetoric, public relations, and diplomacy, for example, is the moral imperative for return, similar to the refugees’ concerns for seeking justice. Often representatives from the main political parties come to rare agreement on the need to achieve “justice through the right to return” (Joint statement, Republic of Cyprus Press and Information Office, 2009). Similarly, Greek Cypriot

political leaders often seek to spur international action on the Cyprus issue by emphasizing the dangers of setting a precedent for future non-compliance if Turkey's breach of international law remains un-addressed (Palley 2005). For example, in a 2007 press release entitled "Unacceptable situation," the Cyprus government states:

Turkey's military aggression against Cyprus tragically continues unabated for thirty-three long years. The military occupation, forcible division, violation of human rights, massive colonization, cultural destruction, property usurpation and ethnic segregation imposed since Turkey's military invasion remain the main characteristics of the status quo on the island... This is certainly a totally unacceptable state of affairs, an affront to the international legal order and an ongoing threat to regional stability that must be urgently redressed" (Republic of Cyprus Public Information Office).

This position, that maintaining sovereignty is essential for stability, is grounded in the Westphalian assumption that state borders are to be maintained as the status quo even following conflicts, occupation, and displacements. Violations of borders, as well as major transfers of the people within them, are recipes for mayhem and thus wrongs that need to be righted (Haddad 2008; Palley 2005).

In addition, the government may also support refugee resistance to local integration as a means of pressuring a solution that includes return. States often encourage the continued segregation of refugees as a means of increasing pressure on the international community to solve refugee situations when they wish to "correct" the displacement (Loescher 2009).

Often governments will use the language of justice even as their pursuit of justice aligns with national interests to regain lost territory (as in the case of Cyprus) or to relieve themselves of the burden of accommodating the refugees (Dubernet 2001; Krasner 1999). If concerns for "justice" and national interests underlie the host government's anti-integration policies, then what might underlie the government's pro-integration (or anti-separatist) policies? According to interviews with government officials, motivations stem from three underlying concerns. The first is a practical concern: the state cannot continuously afford to extend benefits to such a large portion of its population (Former Kyrenian Minister of Parliament, 31st March 2009). This concern is often cited in the context of parliamentary debates on extending refugee benefits to the descendents of female refugees as well as male. The second concern is said to come from the complacency of constituents who are content with the status quo, fear change, do not want a multi-ethnic state, or have gained financially from the split and do not wish to lose the advantages (Parliamentarian, interview, 3rd April 2009). Thirdly, political leaders and parties may be reluctant to follow through with unification as it would reduce their own power under a coalition government with representatives from the north (Yakinthou 2008). Together, these three issues produce contradictions in government actions.

Why Is Integration Resisted: The International Community Level

Taking the international level of analysis, many states resist calling for local integration because they still perceive the situation in Cyprus as a problem to be fixed rather than as a situation resolved – even given the situation of co-ethnic refuge. This perception contrasts

sharply with the great powers' perceptions of the Greek and Turkish motherlands' exchange of populations over eighty years before (Hirschon 2003). This current bias towards return is also likely grounded in Westphalian assumptions that state boundaries are cemented and thus that any attempts at shifting them or large populations within them should be prevented or reversed (Haddad 2008). In other words, local integration would challenge respect for sovereignty. Restoring the status quo would affirm it. Thus, for thirty-five years, major powers, the EU and the UN have continued to work for a solution that includes some form of return, while continuing to call the current status quo "unacceptable" (Joseph 1999).

Krasner (1999) argues that the international community's respect for sovereignty is limited by other factors, however, such as states' concerns for regional stability or national interest. States will respect sovereignty when it aligns with these other interests and overlook it when it conflicts. Krasner's theory could explain why states continue to publicly support return in theory but in practice pursue limited return with limited means. It could also explain changes in the international community's support over time for one solution over another, such as the flip-flopping from a preference for resettlement to a preference for return following the end of the Cold War (Barnett and Finnemore 2004).

Currently the international community supports refugee return in Cyprus. There may come a time, however, where encouraging refugees' right of return might begin to pose a threat to regional peace and security (see Lischer 2005). Given such a shift in perspective regarding Cypriot refugees, Krasner would predict a shift in the international community's support for "protecting" sovereignty through return, to defending stability through local integration.

Implications of Findings

Resistance to integration is expressed in varying forms at the individual, government and international community levels. Multiple reasons underlie motivations for this resistance. What implications can be drawn from the above findings for the prospects of future integration?

A first implication is that feelings of belonging linked to place of origin and feelings of belonging associated with being around co-ethnics contradict the actual but not the imagined experience of Greek Cypriot refugees. As majority-identified refugees (Kunz 1981), interviewees longed for return not only to the lost physical space but also to the imagined community in which they enjoyed majority status. As a consequence, despite the presence of conditions offering the greatest potential for local integration (co-ethnicity, economic opportunity, and time), Greek Cypriots may actually be less interested in integrating with co-ethnics because they were neither minorities nor marginalized in their societies prior to displacement (Al-Rasheed 1994; Kunz 1981). In addition, conditions of desired return on which so much of the emphasis to resist integration seems to be based would require a form of reversed ethnic cleansing. Yet current peace proposals give refugees the right to return only as ethnic minorities in a

Turkish controlled state (Annan Plan V). Greek Cypriot refugees' denial of the current political reality seems to be a key factor contributing to the maintenance of their "myth of return" and their feelings of temporariness (Al-Rasheed 1994). When individuals have had the chance to visit and see the reality for themselves, it has become harder for them to maintain these myths.

Yet even as ideas of return are dispelled for some, the lack of any final proposal has enabled beliefs of total return to be sustained though circumstances have rendered the prospect increasingly unrealistic. The host government has fuelled refugee hopes by promising the right of return even when the political and logistical feasibility of total return has long been in doubt. The international community has also played a role in supporting (partial) return as a precondition for negotiated settlement. As a consequence, so long as a preferred solution seems to be in the offing, refugees have continued to resist local integration as a "solution." And, in a cyclic fashion, continual refugee reiteration of the refugee discourse at both the state and the international level has kept the issue of return on the Republic of Cyprus, UN, EU and US agendas much longer than it would have been absent this advocacy (Galanos, April 2nd, 2009; Kyrenia Municipality, interviews, 2007; US Embassy Representative, interview, 3rd April 2007).

Finally, resistance to integration, while initially emerging as an exercise of refugee agency, has ended up limiting the agency of dissenting refugee voices, particularly within the community of Kyrenians. Thus what started as a movement to insert refugee influence into the resolution process has come at the price of blocking other refugee voices from participation. Some might argue that it has even come at the price of a resolution, through encouraging intransigence.

4 Towards a More Nuanced Understanding of Obstacles and Facilitators of Local Integration

Re-evaluating "Ideal" Conditions

As detailed throughout this paper, various theories suggest that certain variables, namely economic opportunities, time, and shared ethnicity, offer the greatest potential for the successful integration of refugees into their host societies. Of these factors, shared ethnicity is lauded as the most significant precursor. Thus, this paper tested the hypothesis that given these elements, particularly shared ethnicity, refugees were likely to be successfully integrated. To examine this hypothesis, the case of Cyprus was considered, in which all the key variables are present.

The case study revealed, however, that even co-ethnicity may be insufficient to ensure successful integration. In Cyprus, this inadequacy stems primarily from refugees' continued search for belonging, their adherence to a refugee identity, and their determination to participate in and pursue a just solution. All of these elements work

against co-ethnic integration. Thus, it would seem the hypothesis needs revision and refinement. In an examination of the Cyprus case, what lessons can we learn regarding how local integration predications could be revised to narrow the gap between generalized prescriptions and specific experiences?

Lessons from the Cyprus Case

Before determining if lessons can be drawn from the Cyprus case, it is important to question whether this is an anomalous case. I would argue that Greek Cypriot refugee resistance to integration, despite conditions of co-ethnic refuge, does not seem to be an exception. Hirschon (1998) has written extensively on the non-integration and refugee identity maintenance of Asia Minor Greeks in Piraeus. Chatty (2009) and Hart (2008) describe the politicization of a separate Palestinian identity even as Palestinians are hosted by their co-ethnics. In addition, Al-Khalidi et al. (2007) write of the emerging trend among Iraqi refugees to begin, for the first time since Iraq's arbitrary establishment as a state, to see themselves as Iraqis rather than simply Arabs in refuge among fellow Arabs (in Syria and Jordan).

Thus, if the case of Greek Cypriot refugees in Cyprus is not an exception, adjustments must be made to predictions for successful integration based on co-ethnic affinity. Drawing from the case study, three adjustments could help to nuance understandings of integration: first, definitions of integration must not be too narrow; second, certain conducive conditions (such as co-ethnicity) may need to be re-thought; and third, elements such as the impact of the displacement experience, concerns for "righting the wrongs" of displacement, and the ability of refugees to exert influence in a given integration context should be incorporated in predictions.

The narrower the definition of integration, the easier it is to ascertain if a group meets the criteria for integration. When Fielden (2008), Crisp (2004), Loescher et al. (2007) and others consider integration, they rely primarily on narrower definitions based on legal, economic and broad cultural indices, and they neglect a study of discursive and relational integration measures. Thus, contradictions between integration on the formal level and integration on the discursive level can arise, as is the case in Cyprus. Including these more abstract elements in an integration analysis would enable theorists to capture cases in which individuals appear to be integrated, but, as in the Cyprus case, are not.

Beyond broadening the definitions and their resulting predictions, theorists should consider how various key factors will interact. Time, economic opportunity and co-ethnicity, for example, impact each other as well as other factors operating at multiple levels of society. Therefore suggesting a highly contingent factor, like shared ethnicity, as a primary determining factor is over-simplifying a complex situation and overemphasizing a variable concept. As we see in the case of Cyprus, ethnic commonality, while important for hosts and refugees alike on a formal assistance, accommodation and integration level, was not sufficient to orient hosts and guests towards permanent integration. Rather, other variables served to counteract and compete with ethnic cohesion.

Not only is it important not to oversimplify and overemphasize allegedly important variables, but predictions must also consider the particular context. For example, the displacement experience is an important variable which can create intergenerational fissures between refugees and hosts. Yet all experiences of displacement will not be equally formative just as all cases of co-ethnicity will not be equally conducive (Malkki 1995a). From the case study, for example, it seems that Greek Cypriots' status as majority-identified refugees as well as their experience of marginalization in the Cyprus conflict's resolution process aggravated the impact of the displacement experience, the draw of return, and, as a result, resistance to integration. Looking beyond Cyprus, Al Rasheed, Kunz, Jansen and Löfving and Sheffer describe similar instances of displaced ethnic majorities marginalized or restricted in exile, mobilizing, memorializing and recreating their place as a distinct group. The prevalence of these feelings, rather than displacement itself, may be so strong as to affect group affiliation, life patterns, and political and social orientation in ways that serve to distance the individuals from those who have not shared a similar experience.

Finally, there is a general tendency in literature on integration to privilege state actions over refugee involvement in predicating integration outcomes (Zetter et al. 2002). As the case of Cyprus and the work of Richmond (1994) and Berry (1980) show, refugee agency influences and shapes the integration process in tandem with host states and communities. To analyse one factor without the other is to miss a crucial piece of the picture. While some authors (such as Jacobsen 2001) do discuss the importance of refugee "buy-in" for the success of integration, they seem to assume that the presence of the "ideal" conditions (co-ethnicity, economic opportunities, and time) will bring with it refugee support (Crisp 2004; Fielden 2008). The case of Cyprus, as well as others such as Rwandans in Tanzania and Angolans in Zambia, illustrates that despite "ideal" conditions, refugees may still resist local integration as a durable solution for all of the reasons discussed (Bakewell 2000; Van Der Meeren 1996). Thus, refugees' interest in integration appears to be a key determinant to its success and thus should form a part of future predications.

Future Directions

This paper offers an initial critique of current thinking on refugee integration as well as preliminary recommendations for a more nuanced understanding of obstacles and facilitators of local integration as a durable solution. Future research should explore how local integration initiatives vary across various cases of refuge and whether general patterns exist. For example, is a certain level of stability and status security necessary for enabling integration resistance? Second, what is the influence of the relation of host state to state of origin? Third, are there regional or cultural differences in patterns of integration and non-integration?

Secondly, resistance to integration is neither static nor fixed. Thus, further research must be done on the impact of time on resistance to integration. Does it strengthen or weaken the resistance? What determines this? My research with Greek Cypriot refugees took place at a given point in their process of negotiating their relationships as Cypriots, as Greek

Cypriots, as refugees, and as Europeans. It could be that in the coming decades Greek Cypriot refugee self-segregation will all but disappear. Alternatively, resistance may continue to reshape and adapt as new generations and circumstances influence its expression.

Finally, more research is needed, particularly in the Cypriot case, on the differences within a given refugee group (Hart 2008). For example, how does integration resistance vary depending on gender, age, class, and generation? How do the experience of marginality or dreams of majority-status return vary based on these same categories? Do gender, age or class influence the expression of the refugee identity?

All of these avenues of inquiry will serve to enhance the understanding of how community is created and reformed and to explain, as in the case of Cyprus, how individuals can live, work, study, and pray alongside their co-ethnics, yet still imagine themselves as separate.

In conclusion, my conversation with Christos, a mid-twenties Kyrenian, provides unexpected insight. I met Christos at a Kyrenia community reunion where he was being honoured for his artwork depicting the town of Kyrenia. After explaining my research to him, he responded, “Do you ever ask the other Kyrenians if they have realized that they failed? We are never going back. When are [Kyrenians] going to realize that Kyrenia is the people?” (Christos, interview, 4th November 2006).

Though Christos meant to critique the Kyrenian project, his comments actually encapsulate its success – at the expense of integration. Returning to the definition of successful integration outlined in the beginning, I proposed that “successful integration” occurs when two groups manage to imagine themselves as members of the same community. Taking this definition, the fact that the child of displaced Kyrenians can intuit the separate Kyrenian community’s coherency and its persistence thirty-five years after his parents’ displacement demonstrates the resiliency of the refugee project and the current limits of integration. His sense of failure may be the best indication of the group’s success.

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