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**THE 'RETURN' OF BRITISH-BORN
CYPRIOTS TO CYPRUS
A NARRATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY**

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

Summary of Thesis

My thesis is the product of an in-depth qualitative study of the 'return' of British-born Cypriots to Cyprus. By specifically focusing on the second generation, my thesis seeks to rectify the lacuna in research on the second generation's connections to the ethnic homeland, capitalising on these migrants' positionalities with respect to questions of home and belonging. The thesis consists of eight chapters: Chapter 1 introduces the context in which the research was conducted; Chapter 2 provides the historical and geographical background for the Cypriot migration experience; Chapter 3 presents the methodological and ethical context in which my research was conducted; Chapters, 4, 5, 6 are the main empirical chapters, discussing the British-born Greek-Cypriot returnees' experiences, motives and viewpoints, from childhood memories to today's adult experiences; Chapter 7 provides an additional comparative angle through the inclusion of a subsample of British-born Turkish Cypriots; and finally, Chapter 8, my concluding chapter, revisits the research questions, draws comparisons with other empirical studies on second-generation return, and re-evaluates my methodological framework. Through the voices and life-narratives of second-generation British-Cypriot 'return' migrants – following a biographical timeline – the multifaceted perspectives in which notions of 'return', 'home' and 'belonging' can be viewed and experienced in a migratory context are revealed. My study shows the complexities and ambivalences involved when exploring ideas of 'identity' and 'return', views of 'home', and feelings of 'belonging' in the ancestral homeland – demonstrating how boundaries of such notions are blurred, eroded and re-established by a new generation of migrants, reflecting *their* time, experiences, choices and ideologies. My findings deconstruct the meaning of 'return', move beyond the primordial cultural confines of notions of 'belonging', and challenge the simple dichotomy of 'home' versus 'away', revealing new similarities (and differences) beyond such predefined labels and categories, which form the building blocks for new, contemporary, ways and spaces of belonging.

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Chapter 1

Setting the Scene

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is the product of an in-depth qualitative study of the ‘return’ of British-born Cypriots to Cyprus. It is part of a multi-sited and multi-method AHRC-funded project entitled ‘Cultural Geographies of Counter-Diasporic Migration: The Second Generation Returns “Home”’, which explores second-generation ‘return’ migration in the wider Greek diasporic context. The project, by specifically focusing on the second generation, seeks to rectify the lacuna in research on the second generation’s connections to the ancestral homeland, capitalising on this migrant cohort’s strategic positionality with respect to questions of home and identity.

In a few words, my own study examines the ‘return’ to Cyprus of British-born individuals of *Cypriot* parentage, and explores their complex and ambivalent identities, views of ‘home’ and search for ‘belonging’ in the ancestral homeland. The thesis provides comparative material to be set alongside two other groups of second-generation ‘returnees’ studied in the field by the wider project: Greek-Americans and Greek-Germans. Besides adding a third comparative element to the main project, my DPhil thesis presents an original and independent study, being the first study to address return migration to Cyprus in general (even first-generation return has not been studied), with a unique focus on the second generation.

Furthermore, in order to provide a more holistic impression of the second generation’s ‘return’ experiences and the multifaceted ‘hybrid’ experiences involved, this thesis will pay extra attention to two additional angles, which I believe to be important in the Cypriot context and which extend the exploration of second-generation ‘return’ beyond the parameters of the main project. One significant difference between the main AHRC project’s other two ‘groups’ of ‘returnees’ – Greek-Germans and Greek-Americans – and the British Greek-Cypriot group is that the latter shares their

‘homeland’ with another ethno-national group: the Turkish Cypriots. Hence, though the main project – and my contribution to it – focuses on ‘homecomings’ in the Greek ethno-linguistic diaspora, I decided to include a smaller sample of second-generation Turkish-Cypriot ‘returnees’ in my study, in addition to the quota sample of British-born Greek Cypriots. I made this choice to include the ‘Turkish side’ of the story partly because not to have done so would have implied failing to recognise the bi-communal nature of the Cypriot population – in other words I felt a kind of moral duty to explore both aspects of the Cypriot demographic reality – and partly because of the relatively easy accessibility of the Turkish Cypriots (since the opening of the ‘Green Line’ separating the two territories) offering inviting possibilities for comparison.

The second additional angle I initially decided to explore was to pay special attention to ‘mixed’ marriages and couplehood. This was incited by the knowledge that mixed relationships and marriages are rising globally. With the ‘postmodernization and globalization of ethnicity, that is its decoupling from locality, all the evidence suggests that ethnicity is a declining barrier to love and marriage’ (Waters 1995: 139). I felt that this could be highly relevant in the case of British Cypriots. However, as my fieldwork progressed I realised that my participants’ experiences of ‘mixedness’ were not simply a matter of being part of a ‘mixed’ family or not. Through listening to their stories, and observing their daily lives, I found out that these migrants’ ‘identities’ and feelings of belonging are ‘mixed’ by virtue of their *migration*, rather than simply through intermarriage in the family. After all, experiences of belonging, or not, reach much further than the immediate family, and include a wide variety of personal, social and professional spaces. Hence, rather than consciously seeking out so-called ‘mixed couples’, I observed a wider manifestation of ‘cultural mixity’ (or hybridity) in *all* of the participants’ narratives and everyday interactions.

I am aware that the history of hybridity has caused some to critique the concept as problematic, arguing that hybridity retains a discourse of racial purity characteristics of 19th century evolutionism (Mitchell 1997; Werbner and Modood 1997; Young 1995). It is in light of, and in response to, this critique that Hutnyk (2010: 61) poses the question whether ‘this old usage [is] relevant to the diversity of cultural hybridities claimed

today'. Indeed, since its initial use in Latin referring to the offspring 'of a tame sow and a wild boar' (Young 1995: 6), hybridity has proven a useful concept across various academic arenas, from disciplines like sociology, literature and anthropology to a variety of interdisciplinary venues (Kraidy 2005: 2). In migration and diaspora studies, the overall focus in the literature on hybridity is on 'host meets guest' (for example Chambers 1996), but as my empirical material will show, there are many more layers to it, as such categories are not clear cut and participants move between (and at the same time occupy) a wide range of positionalities. Despite objections that the assertion of hybridity relies on the assumption of an anterior racialised 'pure' that precedes the 'mixture', Young (1995) acknowledges the strength and value of the term, which lies in its encapsulation of the logic of both/and, which 'makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different', thereby engendering 'difference and sameness in an apparently impossible simultaneity' (Young 1995: 26). It is within this perception that I use the term 'hybridity' (or the adjective forms 'hybrid' or 'mixed') to describe the wide range of intercultural and intersocial processes within the participants' lived experiences and social relations in Cyprus (cf. Brah and Coombs 2000).

These two additional angles – the Turkish Cypriot subsample and the development of 'mixed' relationships and spaces of interaction – embody some of the complexities of the area under investigation and add further illuminating answers to the research questions, which I will elaborate presently. Before describing in more detail my topic of research, I will briefly introduce myself and the other members of the AHRC project team.

1.2 THE RESEARCH CAST

My involvement in migration studies initially derived from a desire to better understand my own life experiences and those of the people around me, which had been marked by challenges across and beyond geographical, ethnic and cultural boundaries. Though my own childhood and upbringing were not particularly 'hybrid' –

being born in The Netherlands, raised by Dutch parents and having received an apparently 'mainstream' Dutch education – I have always had a great interest in migration-related matters and the personal stories of those involved, which led me to embark on a professional career as a social worker and job counsellor for migrants and other minorities. My fascination with issues such as 'home', 'identity' and 'belonging' was further incited and personalised in my early twenties, when I embarked on a journey which was supposed to be a one-year trip 'to broaden my horizon' but turned out to be a 'boundless' journey of a lifetime. During the years that followed I lived and worked across and 'in between' countries, cultural and national spaces, with migrants and travellers, as well as being a migrant myself. Most of this time I spent in Israel, where I encountered the challenges of living as a 'foreigner' in a culturally demanding and politically charged environment within this complex region of the world. I personally experienced the everyday struggles of being the non-Jewish partner of an Israeli Jew. It was (and still is) quite common for such couples to take the forty-minute flight to Cyprus to 'legalise' their relationship which is the simplest – and often the only – way to tackle the hegemonic religious system in Israel. So it was during this period that I first travelled to Cyprus, though for very different reasons than my more recent research-related visits. I consider this time, during which I constantly had to (re)assess and (re)negotiate my own position and those of the people around me, one of the most challenging yet valuable periods of my life so far; it intensified my appreciation for peoples' lives and experiences across a wide range of social, cultural and political settings.

When I moved to the UK in my early thirties, I felt the time had come to explore the issues that I had encountered over the years in a more academic context. The Sussex MA in Migration Studies gave me the opportunity to do this. It allowed me to deepen my grasp of questions of identity formation, hybridity, home and belonging, and it strengthened my passion for further research. The fieldwork for my MA dissertation, which I conducted with the Bedouin of the Negev desert in Israel, enabled me to have a taste of qualitative research and in-depth interviewing, an experience which I thoroughly enjoyed. I discovered how much I appreciate qualitative research – particularly the life-story, narrative and ethnographic approaches – which strongly

drew me to the prospect of doing a DPhil. Being familiar and at ease with life in the Mediterranean and having experienced life amongst 'divided' populations, the research project on second-generation 'return' migration to Cyprus created the perfect opportunity for me to further explore these important and current issues in the field of migration studies.

As mentioned earlier, my DPhil is part of a larger research project on second-generation 'return' migration in the Greek diasporic context, and I am one of a project team of four. The other three members of the project team are: Prof Russell King and Dr Anastasia Christou at Sussex, and Prof Ivor Goodson at Brighton University. Russell King, who is the project's principal investigator as well as my main supervisor, coordinated the research in terms of time and target management. He also provided specialist input on return migration and migration trends. Anastasia Christou, my second supervisor, and I were the two full-time members of the team. Whilst I was doing my fieldwork in the UK and Cyprus, Anastasia was responsible for the fieldwork in New York, Berlin and Greece. With extensive field experience on second-generation Greek 'return' migration and life-story interviews (Christou 2006a, 2006b, 2006c), she was the fulcrum member of the team, engaged in all aspects and phases of the overall project. Ivor Goodson, an international expert in life-narratives, provided methodological support and advised the team in the management and analysis of data collection.

1.3 SECOND-GENERATION 'RETURN': DEFINING THE TERMS

From the outset of my research I recognised that both keyword terms, 'return migration' and 'second generation', are rather complex, particularly in the context of my study. However it is precisely the complexity of these terms – which problematise notions of 'home', 'abroad', 'return' and 'identity' – as well as the overall lack of attention to second-generation 'return' in the migration and diaspora literature (King and Christou 2008, 2010), that drives the thesis.

First of all, in the case of the second generation the term 'return' is ambiguous, as it is not a return in terms of birth-place statistics, but rather an emigration to another country. This key definitional point is stressed by Christou (2006c: 15) in her earlier study of American-born Greek 'returnees'. Nevertheless, and again as Christou acknowledges, second-generation migrants often do have a sentimental relationship with the parental homeland, which may be very strong. Hence the 'return' has empirical meaning even if it breaches the logic of migration statistics.¹

Secondly, the term 'generation' alone has been subject to various debates (see for example Kertzer 1983; Loizos 2007). The term is embedded in our everyday language and understood in a variety of ways – think of expressions like 'generation X', 'future generations', 'older (or younger) generations' and 'generation gaps' – and often used interchangeably. However, when talking about a particular 'generation' in empirical research, clarifying the exact understanding of the term in the specific context of the study is crucial (Loizos 2007: 194). Kertzer places the conceptualisations of generation in four categories: 'generation as a principle of kinship descent; generation as cohort; generation as life stage; and generation as historical period' (1983: 126). In the context of my study and the wider AHRC project to which my thesis is attached, the term 'generation' is principally understood as an element of kinship descent, a genealogical concept linked to the family migration trajectory and often used in the field of anthropology. Hence, the first generation are the Cypriots born in Cyprus who moved to the UK (nearly all during the 1950s and 1960s), whilst the second generation are their offspring born in the UK. However, though the actual time-span over which my participants returned was not that long (i.e. from the 1980s to the 2000s), there *is* a historical generational effect to be taken into account as well. Societies (both 'home' and 'host') do change over the period of three decades; hence someone who moved to Cyprus in the 1980s may have experienced very different societal and socio-economic conditions from someone who moved in the 2000s. Likewise, time-periods during which childhood holidays took place in Cyprus may vary amongst the participants.

¹ Though this ambiguity should be constantly kept in mind, for reasons of readability I will limit the use of inverted commas when referring to the 'returnees' in the rest of the thesis.

These holiday visits introduce another generation into the family experience – the grandparents of the second generation. Furthermore, as memories and histories are often passed on from the first-generation migrants to the second generation born in the ‘host’ country, the historical events and periods that have influenced the (grand)parents’ life histories – over different time periods – often contribute to the perceptions of history amongst their (grand)children, even (or perhaps particularly) if these perceptions are based on ‘received memories’ rather than their own. Hence, in addition to the understanding of the second generation as a genealogical concept, the historical generational effect needs to be taken into account.

Though I am mainly concerned with the above two meanings of ‘generation’ throughout my analysis, I would like to briefly draw attention to the other two understandings of the term identified by Kertzer, as my participants – in the everyday, non-academic, language of their narratives – sometimes attach a different meaning to the term in the context of their story. The cohort notion of generation applies to a ‘succession of people moving through the age strata, the younger replacing the older as all age together’, such as birth cohorts (Kertzer 1983: 127). So when a participant refers to ‘my father’s generation’, he or she may not necessarily refer to ‘the first-generation Cypriot migrants to the UK’, but rather to a wider group of people of similar age (such as the ‘baby-boomers’). The understanding of ‘generation’ as a life-stage refers to ‘a particular segment of the life course’ (Kertzer 1983: 128), such as childhood, adolescence or adulthood. An everyday example of the term in this sense could be the ‘university generation’. Hence, though a clearly specified academic definition of the term ‘generation’ is essential in empirical research, it is important to acknowledge the way the term may actually be used by the people we research.

Furthermore, many of the returnees’ families are not simply made up by two Cypriot-born parents who immigrated to the UK (i.e. first-generation migrants) and their respective children (i.e. the second generation); this adds further complexity to the term ‘second generation’.² Some of my participants had one parent who was born in

² Definitions of the term ‘second generation’ have been subject to various scholarly debates. Portes and Zhou, for instance, refer to second-generation migrants to the US as ‘native-born children with at least

Cyprus (i.e. first-generation) while the other parent was of Cypriot parentage but born in the UK (i.e. second-generation). Others were brought to the UK as small children by their migrating parents. And then there are those who were born to so-called 'mixed parents', where one parent was a native Cypriot and the other a UK native or a migrant from another country. Moreover, these are not exceptions, but are actually quite common characteristics of 'second-generation' Cypriots in the UK. Therefore, in line with the migrants' experiences, classifications are intentionally kept flexible. To solely focus on those who were born in the UK to two Cypriot-born migrant parents would have given a misleading representation of reality as experienced by my participants. Ignoring the various ways in which migration processes have influenced the family structure counters the aim of providing a holistic understanding of the actual experiences of the descendants of Cypriot immigrants to the UK.

Over thirty years ago Pamela Constantinides already noted the changes in practices and values of engagement and marriage amongst the Greek Cypriots in London (1977: 294-296). From my own enquiry I can affirm that romantic relationships outside the ethnic 'community' are quite common today, in line with the overall European trend which shows an increase in mixed marriages and relationships (Beck-Gernsheim 2007). This is due to accrued mobility which leads to opportunities to meet a partner outside one's national or ethnic group, whether connected to what King terms (2002: 99) 'love migration' or as a result of the increasing presence of long-term migrants – of various generations – as well as transient migrants in European societies (see Kofman 2004). Such factors lead to rising percentages of mixed relationships. Furthermore, some of my British-born participants who are (or were) in a relationship with a 'native' or non-migrant Cypriot saw such a relationship as mixed, despite sharing the same 'heritage'. Mixed relationships and the resultant families raise a number of issues related to the perceptions of 'home', places and spaces of 'belonging', gender relations and the definition of the family unit (see for example Lauth Bacas 2002). Although 'mixed couplehood' still appears to create some kind of barrier in the Cypriot community,

one foreign-born parent, or children born abroad who came to the United States before the age of 12' (1993: 75), whilst others in the European context (see for example Crul and Vermeulen 2003) believe that the second generation includes immigrant children entering the host country before the age of 6.

particularly amongst the first generation in the UK, the inevitability of a relationship outside the ethnic community seems to be acknowledged. In more recent literature on British Greek Cypriots, those authors who do mention the second generation all seem, at one point or another, to make a note or quote their subjects on the issue of ‘mixed’ relationships (see for example Anthias 1992, 2002; Georgiou 2000, 2001). It is quite striking though, that none of these authors has picked up on this issue and further elaborated on it. If we want to develop an understanding of the second generation today, we have to – at least to a certain extent – move away from the more inward-looking features that represented the first generation and focus on those that characterise their offspring, including relationships (whether romantic, social or professional) outside the ethnic community. These characteristics and dynamics are key elements in my empirical data and are present throughout my thesis, as we will see in later chapters

1.4 RESEARCH CONTEXT

Before listing the research questions which frame the thesis, let me elaborate a bit more on the relevance of this research, both as part of the wider project and as an independent study in its own right.³ Within migration and diaspora studies, the second generation has unusually complex and ambiguous views of home, identity and belonging. Over the past decade there has been a rapid increase in research on ‘second-generation migrants’ in the United States (see for example: Brown 2007; Ellis and Goodwin-White 2006; Portes and Rumbaut 2005; Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 2004). And though this trend is now being replicated in Europe (Crul and Vermeulen 2003; Crul and Schneider 2010; Heckmann and Schnapper 2003; Thomson and Crul 2007), the use of the term ‘second generation’ and research on this particular migrant ‘group’ seem to resonate less in the UK, whilst at the same time everyday events strongly indicate that this generation is not fully understood (King and Christou 2008: 2).

³ Some of the paragraphs that follow in this section draw freely on the documents of the AHRC application that was drawn up by my supervisors. With their permission, I reproduce virtually verbatim what has been written, rather than trying ‘artificially’ to paraphrase their text.

Research on return migration concentrates almost exclusively on first-generation migrants (King 1986; Ghosh 2000; Long and Oxfeld 2004). Earlier studies indicate that, although most return migrants were rural 'countrymen' who migrated for economic reasons, a majority resettled in towns and urban areas upon their return. In one of the more rigorous studies from this earlier era of return, Klaus Unger (1986) demonstrated that rural-origin Greek migrants to Germany who returned to Greece did so mainly to large cities like Athens or Thessaloniki, or to provincial towns, rather than to their depopulated villages. As King et al. (1986) showed in their large-scale survey on return migration to the Italian South, return either took place due to an outside factor – such as changed family circumstances or faltering economic conditions in the host country – or due to homesickness or failure to adapt to the way of life in the host country. Most studies report 'non-economic' factors as the main reason for return, and indicate that the pull-factors, or positive attributes of the home society, have more influence in return migration decisions than factors inherent in the host society. Yet, many of these first-generation returnees were believed to have problems readjusting to the home society (for an overview of these earlier studies see Gmelch 1980).

Unfortunately, these earlier studies generally paid little attention to the specific experiences of female migrants, and only relatively recently has gender been brought in to this aspect of migration research (Pessar and Mahler 2003). Overall, the literature seems to suggest that migrant women are more likely to develop personal and household strategies consistent with long-term or permanent settlement in the host society, and hence are less prone to return to their countries of origin, while men engage in transnational strategies linked to their homelands and to an eventual return there (see for example Chavez 1994; Goldring 1996, 1998; Kibria 1993; Pessar 1986). However, as stressed by Pessar and Mahler (2003), this notion of gender-differentiated proclivities to return can be complicated by added elements of class, age and time. While economically comfortable women may indeed strive to settle in the host country, those who are less well-off (and often single, divorced or widowed) might find that upon return their funds can be stretched farther in the homeland. As to what happens to gender relations upon the actual return, literature appears to be scarce,

but if a generalisation has to be made, it 'points to a recurring theme, *viz.*, the reimposition or reinforcement of patriarchy' (Pessar and Mahler 2003: 828).

Whilst there has been an increase in research on the return of first generation migrants, studies on the second generation often tend to focus on their integration or assimilation into the 'host' society. Relatively little has been written about their connection (and potential return) to the parental 'homeland'. This is because, as pointed out by Peggy Levitt, many scholars believe that transnational activities among the second generation are of little importance as 'most children of immigrants have no plans to return to live in their ancestral homes, and because they are not fluent in their parents' mother tongue' (2009: 1227). Nevertheless, in recent years there *has* been a rapid increase in empirical research discussing both return visits⁴ and more permanent return migration of the second generation (Christou 2006c; Christou and King 2006; Conway and Potter 2007, 2009; Panagakos 2004; Phillips and Potter 2006, 2009; Potter et al. 2005; Potter and Phillips 2009; Reynolds 2008; Tsolidis 2009; Tsuda 2003; Wessendorf 2007, 2009). I reflect on this comparative literature on other domains (Greece, Italy, the Caribbean etc.) throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis.

As to research on Cypriot migration to Britain, much of it is now dated (for example: Anthias 1992; Constantinides 1977; Ladbury 1977; Oakley 1970, 1979) and little of it focuses on the second generation and its relations with 'the homeland'. Furthermore, return migration to Cyprus in general has not been studied. Therefore, my study will be pioneering in that it will focus on three unique research angles in the context of the Cypriot diaspora: first, return migration to Cyprus; secondly, the experience of this phenomenon by second-generation British-born Cypriots; and thirdly, the comparative dimension of Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot experiences.

Demographic trends from various parts of the world with a history of post-war mass emigration (such as Greece and Cyprus) indicate that second-generation return is a

⁴ See for example Levitt and Waters' (2002) edited book, which contains several chapters describing second-generation 'homeland' visits, and the Kasinitz et al. (2004) collection of ethnographies of second-generation migrants in New York, which touches upon their visits (and contemplations to relocate) to the parental homelands.

growing phenomenon. Furthermore, Cyprus (like Greece) has experienced a 'migration reversal', from mass emigration (for Cyprus mainly to the UK) in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, to mass immigration since the 1980s (mainly from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia). These two different cycles of migrants, 'returning' Cypriots and new immigrants from various countries, have rapidly transformed Cyprus and its population into a place which is significantly different from the island left behind by the first-generation emigrants. Hence, this development has led to a new inter-migrant encounter, between the second-generation returnees and the new immigrants (as previously discussed in the Greek context by Christou and King 2006), which sets the scene for one of my research questions.

By adding a third comparative element to the main AHRC project (and indeed a fourth one, with the Turkish-Cypriot sub-sample), my thesis contributes to a wider study with a multi-locational focus on instructively chosen second-generation groups who have returned to their ancestral home, which has the potential to shed new light on how diasporas, migration processes and identities are conceptualised and understood (King and Christou 2008; 2010). Several methods of ethnographic data collection were used, though the core research instrument of both this thesis and the wider project was the collection of life-narratives, through which we can gain creative insights into the linked meanings and understandings of 'migration', 'return', 'home' and 'belonging'. Committed to the inherently interdisciplinary area of migration studies and the cross-fertilisation between the different social sciences, my thesis draws on insights from various fields, such as anthropology, human geography, sociology and life-history analysis. These different disciplinary perspectives are woven together in an integrated interdisciplinary approach which has been increasingly recognised as valuable in the study of migration, and is also reflected in the fact that this is a doctoral thesis in Migration Studies. The dialogic approach adopted throughout my fieldwork and data analysis further contributes to the depth and variety of the data gathered. A fuller account of the methodological and ethical contexts in which my research was conducted and analysed will be given in Chapter 3.

Let me sum up the positioning of my thesis by making three contextual points relating to the thematic, regional and epistemological settings of the study. I take each of these in turn.

First, in line with the main project, the **thematic** position of my research is located within literature on second-generational and ‘ancestral’ return.⁵ My empirical data will also be supported by other relevant literature, such as material on ‘home’, ‘belonging’, ‘transnationalism’ and ‘identities’. As my thesis is written in a ‘data-guided’ way, meaning that further themes arise from the data, rather than being identified beforehand, ‘theory’ is very much grounded throughout the text. Reflecting the complexity and fluidity of the key terms assigned to this thesis, the issues I focus on are not clear-cut exclusive categories. Rather, the concepts are in constant interplay with each other throughout the thesis. Hence, the relevant literature and concepts are interwoven throughout the empirical chapters, rather than discussed in separate literature reviews. By putting my empirical data first, and then linking it to the theoretical literature, I hope to create a ‘conversation’ between the data and wider concepts and settings.

This approach also proved useful for narratives of gender and class, and overlaps with the epistemological context of my thesis, which initially drew me to the concept of intersectionality, as it underscores the multidimensionality of participants’ lived experiences whilst contesting fixed categorisations such as gender and class (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992; Crenshaw 1993; McCall 2001). Rather it tries to move away from this additive model by treating each ‘category’ as being at intersection with others – hence, in this context class would always be gendered and gender always classed (Anthias 2008: 13). And although I am very sympathetic to this approach, and indeed my participants’ modes of identification often did take place at the intersections of

⁵ Various terms are used by different scholars to describe the phenomenon under study such as: ‘ancestral return’ (King 1986: 6-7); ‘ethnic return’ (Tsuda 2003); and ‘roots migration’ (Wessendorf 2007). ‘Counter-diasporic migration’ is a term deployed by Russell King and Anastasia Christou – and indeed assigned to our AHRC project – to ‘describe the return to the diasporic hearth of descendants of the original migrants who were “scattered”. This lineage of descendancy can either be recent (e.g. the second generation) or it can be more historically remote (return to the land of the ancient ancestors); our project concentrates on the former’ (King and Christou 2008: 2).

various effectivities, their actual narrations of gender and class were too dynamic and situational – part of a historical process in which gender and class inform each other but also operate in distinct and particular ways – to be encapsulated by sex/gender, class and ethnicity and their intersections. Furthermore, the vast majority of studies on intersectionality have focused on the particular positions of multiply marginalised subjects (Ferguson 2000). While intersectionality professes to describe multiple marginalisations (for example the black lesbian woman) and multiple privileges (the white heterosexual male), ‘it neglects to describe the ways in which privilege and oppression intersect, informing each subject’s experiences’ (Nash 2008: 12). Therefore, rather than engaging further with the concept of intersectionality, my actual fieldwork reconfirmed the suitability of my chosen methodology of narrative ethnography. It allowed me to focus on historical processes, social situations and their outcomes, rather than constructing people as belonging to an intersection of fixed and permanent categories (such as working-class Cypriot female) (Anthias 2008: 14).

By focusing on the dynamics of one’s life story I was able to capture not only physical movement but also movement in terms of class and gender. Although I am wary of creating a too-generalised picture here at the outset, a broad set of class transitions are identifiable: my participants are the children of first-generation Cypriot migrants from humble rural backgrounds, who moved as economic migrants into urban working-class areas in the UK, climbing the financial ladder through hard labour, enabling their children to enter higher education and access a ‘higher’ socio-occupational class than their parents, and from there a ‘middle-class’ lifestyle in Cyprus. Along similar – and at times overlapping – lines, the empirical material also shows movement in terms of gender relations, such as the shift from a highly patriarchal life in the UK to a more independent lifestyle in Cyprus. These movements in terms of gender dynamics, ‘class’ and occupation are also the reason why I prefer not to introduce the participants beforehand in terms of such (strict) social categorisations. Rather, I encourage the reader to follow the participants’ movements through their life narratives, which reveal their journeys in terms of occupation, education, gender and ‘class’, and the various contexts within which these notions surface (or not).

Secondly, the changed position of Cyprus within the changing global map of migration, as mentioned earlier, and the particularity of Cyprus' history in light of its colonial past and the partition of the island, position my thesis in a **regional** context. Cyprus is a peripheral European space positioned now on the 'front line' of migration dynamics between the EU on the one hand and multiple migratory supply sources and routes on the other. Yet its British colonial past places it within a very different historical migratory space. Like other Southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal), it exemplifies a 'Southern European Model' of 'migration turnaround' from mass emigration to mass immigration in recent decades (King et al. 1997; King and Thomson 2008), within which return migration is one component among many. Chapter 2 will further elaborate on this and set the geographical and historical scene of my thesis.

The final context is **epistemological**. The contemporary ethnographic approach based on the principle of interaction between actors in a mutually shared place (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 256), and the employment of the inductive research method of life-narrative collection, ensure both the 'authenticity' and richness of the research data. Movement is both real, across physical space, and imagined, across spaces of meaning and identification. So if we want to find out how people interpret their place within their often complex and distinctive world, characterised by accelerating mobility, we have to engage with the stories they tell – and narrative accounts, unlike other approaches, offer the necessary means (Lawler 2002). In an age in which our society is claimed to be characterised by 'individualization' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), the personal – individualised – narrative emerges as a new socially-constructed genre providing the researcher with new scripts to study. Furthermore, the interplay between such self-scripted ('small') narratives and externally ascribed ('grand' and 'received') narratives provides a creative insight in the formation of 'narrative capital' (Goodson 2006) amongst this specific group of migrants. In contrast to cultural capital, usually related to national social orders (Bourdieu 1986), narrative capital is both more personal and flexible, constructed and authorised by the migrants themselves, and related to the new global order, enabling both 'authenticity' and richness and variety in the material gathered. Goodson's notion of narrative capital is one justification for

my preference for some quite long interview extracts – longer, perhaps, than the norm in a social science thesis. Another reason is my methodological strategy (described in more detail in Chapter 3) of referring drafts of my thesis back to a sample of my interviewees for them to check and ‘authenticate’. As we shall see in due course, this rather novel and ethically sound initiative proved to be successful in other respects too.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overarching aim of this thesis is *to explore and uncover the ‘return’ migration of second-generation British Cypriots and their evolving and often ambivalent views of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’*. To ensure the comparative added-value that was one of the justifications of incorporating the DPhil studentship within the AHRC project, my research questions are similar (though not identical) to those of the main project:

- How are images of the ‘homeland’ constructed and passed on to the second generation in the diaspora? And what is the role of short ‘home-country’ visits in the learning process about the homeland and its potential selection as a ‘place to be’?
- What factors stimulate the second generation’s decision to return?
- How do family, gender and generational dynamics influence the return experience of the second generation? And vice versa, how does the second generation’s return influence family, gender and generational dynamics?
- How do second-generation returnees react to the potential discovery that the ‘pure’ Cyprus of their received memory (from parents’ stories, holiday visits etc.) has been fundamentally altered by globalisation and mass migration in recent years?
- How does the second generation’s return influence the meaning and boundaries of their ‘identities’: their sense of ‘who they are’ and where or what ‘home’ is?
- How are the returnees’ narratives of home and ‘belonging’ shaped or influenced by externally scripted views of home on the one hand, and self-scripted more individualised ideas on the other? In other words, can we contrast the role of a

cultural-geographic – more ‘essentialised’ – Cyprus as opposed to home as a more personalised – hybridised – space?

On the one hand, then, my thesis ‘parallels’ the main project in order to generate comparative data for some joint outputs – this was specified and justified in the original grant application to the AHRC.⁶ But on the other hand, this thesis makes its own, distinctive contribution which bears repeating here. This distinctiveness derives partly from the character of Cyprus as a post-colonial and now partitioned island space, and partly from the desire to ‘take’ my study in two new directions – the emphasis on ‘mixed’ personal, social and professional spaces and generational complexities, and the comparative Greek and Turkish dimension.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS STRUCTURE

The present chapter, **Chapter 1**, has introduced the thesis, the wider AHRC research project to which my study is attached, the other team members and myself. It has set out some important contextual and theoretical background, rounding off with the research questions and objectives.

Chapter 2 is a background chapter, providing a brief overview of Cyprus’ recent political history and migration to and settlement in the UK, with special attention being paid to the second generation. This is followed by a discussion on the ‘migration reversal’ Cyprus has experienced in recent years, referring both to return migration as well as to the new immigrants from a wide range of countries who have come to the island. As literature on some of these topics is rather limited, I try to add some further insights by interweaving some of my own empirical material, which I collected during fieldwork in the UK.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological and ethical perspectives and context in which the research was conducted, analysed and written up. It provides an in-depth explanation and assessment of the research design and methods of data collection

⁶ The first of these comparative outputs is King et al. (2009); leading to King et al. (2011).

used: primarily life-narratives combined with other forms of ethnographic data. I emphasise and justify the reciprocal approach I adopted throughout my research and data analysis, referring and checking my findings back to my research participants.

These three chapters are then followed by the four substantive chapters that make up the core of my thesis: the 'results' chapters. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 roughly 'follow' the British-born Greek-Cypriot migrants along a biographical time-line, whilst Chapter 7 provides an additional impression of the experiences of the British-born Turkish Cypriots. In a little more detail, **Chapter 4** is about childhood memories of the parental homeland, exploring those parts of the participants' narratives which refer to impressions of Cyprus and 'Cypriotness' whilst growing up. This chapter addresses three childhood-related phases in the narratives: childhood memories of growing up in the UK; childhood memories of visits to the parental homeland; and finally the adult reflections on such memories. **Chapter 5**, then, looks at adult experiences, exploring the participants' motives for moving to Cyprus, their experiences of adjusting to the island, settling in, and managing everyday life in Cyprus, particularly with reference to interactions with native Cypriots and Cypriot society at large. **Chapter 6** brings us back to date, the moment of narration, and addresses the central concern of my thesis: how have the participants' journeys contributed to their feelings of home and belonging *today*, and what are the key elements in the constitution of such feelings? This is the main chapter where, following my preferred 'grounded theory' approach, my results are framed and interpreted within the context of various theoretical literatures. Finally, **Chapter 7** is dedicated to the sub-sample of British-born Turkish-Cypriot returnees. Following a similar chronological approach – albeit on a smaller scale – I highlight those themes that stood out in their life narratives. By drawing comparisons with their Greek-Cypriot counterparts, similarities between the two 'groups' are revealed as well as some significant differences.

The concluding chapter, **Chapter 8**, revisits the research questions set out earlier in the present chapter, draws comparisons with other empirical studies on second-generation return, and re-evaluates my methodological framework. I reflect on the key

findings of my study, as well as its limitations – both of which provide directions for future research.

Chapter 2

The British-Cypriot Migration Experience: From Cyprus, to the UK, and Back...

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief overview of the island's recent history, migration and settlement, and its various politico-historical predicaments. As my thesis is mainly about the participants' feelings of 'home' and 'belonging', not all of the issues touched upon in this chapter will be further elaborated or directly touched upon in the rest of the thesis. However, they are essential in order to set a background and the starting-point from where the other chapters, and more precisely the returnees' narratives, unfold. As relatively little has been written on the UK Cypriots, particularly the second generation, I will complement the available literature with some of my own data collected during my exploratory fieldwork with the UK Cypriot 'community', which I carried out in the months before going to Cyprus to embark on my main period of fieldwork there.

Cyprus has a variegated and dynamic history in terms of socio-economic and migration patterns. As a former British colony it has been a source of emigrants living across the Anglophone world for several decades, with the largest community in the UK. Economic motives were the main push factor for migration from Cyprus during the 1950s and 1960s, while another wave of migration took place after the partition of the island in 1974. It was the Turkish occupation which, paradoxically, created the preconditions for rapid 'modernisation' and economic development in southern Cyprus, as the cheap labour initially provided by the Greek-Cypriot displaced persons who had fled from the north and settled in the south presented a stimulus for rapid development. Later on, in order to accommodate the economic revival in southern Cyprus, on its way to become a prospering service society – as well as the native Cypriots' increasing unwillingness to work in menial jobs – foreign workers were

attracted to the island. Today Cyprus has a large migrant population, from labourers, to professionals and entrepreneurs, as well as ‘expat’ retired persons. Migrants come from a remarkable variety of source countries, in Europe (both Western and Eastern), the Middle East, and South and East Asia.

This chapter opens with a brief political history, including the ‘Cyprus problem’ and its political consequences. This is followed by an overview of Cypriot migration and settlement in the UK. I next turn to a discussion on the second generation in the UK, noting the limited extent to which they have been discussed in the relevant literature. I then touch upon the topic of return migration to Cyprus, and end with a discussion on the ‘migration reversal’ Cyprus has witnessed over recent years.

Although much that is contained in this chapter applies to both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, as both share many experiences of migration and settlement in the UK, there are also differences between the two groups. However, although I have tried to use the term ‘Cypriot’ when I refer to both Turkish and Greek Cypriots, and a prefix (‘Greek’ or ‘Turkish’) when this is not the case, most of what follows can only be properly taken to refer to Greek Cypriots, who are the main focus of my study.

2.2 RECENT POLITICAL HISTORY

Cyprus, the third largest island in the Mediterranean (see Appendix 1 for map of Cyprus), is situated 75 kilometres from the coast of Turkey, 100 kilometres from Syria and 400 kilometres west of the Greek island of Rhodes. This strategic maritime location has resulted in a turbulent history, as it attracted a succession of empires, of which the Greeks and the Turks have remained most engrained on the island’s social and cultural fabric (Joseph 1997; Pantelis 1990).⁷ Hence, geographically Cyprus’s location is ‘stable’ and quite easily established. However, Cyprus is positioned

⁷ Some 3,000 years after the Greeks began settling on the island, Cyprus fell to the Turks as the Ottoman Empire conquered the ruling Venetians and annexed the island in 1571. Although Cyprus was controlled by various Empires (including the Persians, Romans, Byzantines and Venetians), the influence of the Greeks and Turks became the most rooted in the island’s social and cultural fabric. In 1878, the British took control of the island from the Turks (Joseph 1997).

differently on the maps of Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot official publications; as stressed by Papadakis (1998: 149), 'semantically it "floats" closer to either Turkey or Greece respectively'.⁸ This discrepancy is linked to the rise of Greek and Turkish nationalism since the British colonial period, which began in 1878 (after three centuries of Ottoman rule) and ended in 1960. Greek Cypriots strove for *enosis*, the union of Cyprus with Greece, whilst Turkish Cypriots initially preferred the continuation of British rule and later called for *taksim*, the partition of the island.⁹ This opposition, and the British policies of aggravating divisions, led to violent confrontations between the two major ethnic groups (Xydis 1973). The end of British colonial rule led to the establishment of an independent state, the Republic of Cyprus, with a population of 80% Greek Cypriots and 18% Turkish Cypriots, 'as a compromise solution reflecting the opposed interests of the two antagonistic ethnic groups [...] and of foreign powers that included Turkey, Greece, and Britain' (Papadakis et al. 2006: 2). However, this was hardly a solution to the growing ethnic discord and both ethnic groups continued to pursue their separate political objectives. Consequently, three years after the island was declared independent, inter-ethnic violence erupted throughout the island, lasting until 1967. During this period, the Turkish Cypriots suffered the greater losses in terms of casualties. Many abandoned their homes and were displaced to areas that gradually became armed enclaves under Turkish-Cypriot administration (Papadakis 1998; Pursell 1969). United Nations peacekeepers came to Cyprus and have stayed ever since, guarding the 'Green Line' – strictly speaking 'a

⁸ On the map of a back cover of a Turkish-Cypriot publication (North Cyprus Almanac 1987), Cyprus is depicted as lying off the coasts of Turkey, Syria and Egypt: the vertical dimension is dominant in this map. On a map distributed by the Greek Cypriot Public Office, a small insert depicts Cyprus' position in the Eastern Mediterranean. In this case the horizontal dimension is dominant and the map stretches from Cyprus on the far right enough to the left to include some of the Greek islands. In the standard map used in schools throughout Greece and by Greek-Cypriots the problem of distance between Greece and Cyprus is resolved by placing Cyprus in a box at the bottom right-hand side of the map, thereby positioning it alongside Greece. In Turkish and Turkish-Cypriot histories of Cyprus, by contrast, the island is frequently introduced by a note that geologically Cyprus 'belongs' to Turkey (Papadakis 1998: 149; 2008).

⁹ From 1955, the Greek Cypriot *enosis* struggle brought about an armed uprising led by EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters), whilst in 1958 Turkish Cypriots established their own armed organisation, TMT (Turkish Resistance Organisation). From then onwards another violent – and largely unacknowledged (Papadakis 2006: 3) – conflict started taking place, which persisted for much of the rest of the 20th century, this time within each ethnic group, between forces of the Right and the Left (see Papadakis et al. 2006).

territorial void, also known as the “Dead Zone”, where there is complete absence of common ground between the two sides’ (Papadakis et al. 2006: 2).¹⁰

By 1967 the Greek-Cypriot leadership began to gradually distance itself from the aim of union with Greece and started moving ‘toward the goal of re-establishing political stability in Cyprus and safeguarding the island from secessionist Turkish-Cypriot demands’ (Papadakis et al. 2006: 3). Later that year, however, intra-ethnic conflicts were rekindled when a pro-enosis military junta took control of the government in Greece. Along with radical Cypriot pro-union factions (calling themselves EOKA B), the Greek Junta staged a coup against Archbishop Makarios, then the president of the republic, on 15 July 1974. Five days later, Turkey intervened militarily. The invasion divided the island and Greek Cypriots fled en masse to the south whilst Turkish Cypriots subsequently moved to the northern third of the island, which was now under Turkish occupation. This time, Greek Cypriots suffered the heavier human loss, as thousands of people were killed, missing and displaced. In fact, the number of displaced people accounted for almost one-third of the total Greek-Cypriot population (Loizos 1981).

Since the events of 1974 Turkey has established a strong military presence in the northern part of the island, taking over much property, land and resources (Navaro-Yashin 2006: 89). There are said to be 40,000 soldiers from Turkey still in northern Cyprus; however as the exact number is not officially revealed (Navaro-Yashin 2006: 88), the speculative figure tends to fluctuate somewhere between 30,000 and 60,000 in everyday discourse. Furthermore, thousands of settlers from mainland Turkey have been brought over to bolster the population in the territory marked apart after Turkey’s military invasion. The Turkish Cypriots initially rejoiced over the arrival of the Turkish soldiers, because they thought they would protect them from the Greek-Cypriot nationalists. However, they gradually began to feel uncomfortable about the soldiers’ presence – which turned out to be much longer and much more complex than Turkish Cypriots anticipated at the time – as well as about the presence of the Turkish

¹⁰ The name ‘Dead Zone’ is a direct translation of the Greek Cypriot term ‘*Nekri Zoni*’.

settlers (Navaro Yashin 2006).¹¹ In November 1983, the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was established, which has not been recognised by any country except Turkey. The Greek-Cypriot governed Republic of Cyprus has remained the only internationally acknowledged state in Cyprus. To date, the capital city of Nicosia is the last divided capital in Europe.

Despite a severe drop in the GDP, a sharp rise in unemployment and widespread poverty following the 1974 events, it was the Turkish occupation which, by default, created the preconditions for rapid 'modernisation' and economic development in southern Cyprus (Trimikliniotis 2001: 10), while the inhabitants of the Turkish-Cypriot northern 'side' found themselves living in isolation and poverty (Papadakis et al. 2006: 4). Cheap labour, initially provided by the Greek-Cypriot displaced persons who fled from the north and settled in the south, presented the opportunity for labour-intensive development. This fact, together with a coordinated effort by the government, political parties and trade unions, created the conditions for the impressively high level of development that was subsequently experienced in southern Cyprus (Trimikliniotis 2001: 10).

From the tragic events of 1974 until 2003, cross-border travel was virtually impossible for both sides, although there were some isolated instances of small groups of Greek Cypriots being allowed to cross to visit sacred sites and relatives (there is still a very small number of Greek Cypriots living in the north) and Turkish Cypriots being allowed to visit sacred sites in the south (Webster and Timothy 2006). Yet in April 2003, in a surprise move, the Turkish-Cypriot authorities decided to ease border restrictions, allowing all Cypriots to cross the border in both directions at a small number of designated crossing points. Immediately after the 2003 announcement, Greek and Turkish Cypriots began to flood across the border in both directions; to take their children back to their former houses and villages, out of curiosity to explore the 'other side', to revive old friendships, or simply to do some shopping (Dikomitis 2004; 2005). Furthermore, many Turkish Cypriots nowadays cross to the south everyday for

¹¹ Turkish Cypriots often slant or confuse the settlers with soldiers from Turkey, not differentiating between these two social groups in their representations (Navaro-Yashin 2006: 88).

employment as the Republic of Cyprus still considers them to be its citizens, and many Turkish Cypriots have applied for Cypriot/EU passports (Webster and Timothy 2006). On the other hand, many Greek Cypriots refuse to cross to the 'other side' as they feel that they should not have to show their passports to visit 'their own country' (see also Dikomititis 2004; 2005). On 3 April 2008, during my fieldwork, a further crossing was opened: the Ledra Street/Lokmaci crossing in the commercial sector of Old Nicosia. Though Nicosia already had two crossings open since 2003 – the Ledra Palace crossing in the buffer zone immediately west of Nicosia's walls, for use predominantly by pedestrians, and the Agios Dometios/Kermia crossing in the western outskirts of Nicosia, for vehicle movement between the two sides – this new opening was of high symbolic significance, being north and south of the 1974 cease-fire line, which is regarded as the birthplace of the division. This event has also had an economic significance, as Ledra Street was traditionally Nicosia's main commercial area. Unlike the two other Nicosia crossings that opened in 2003, which are far from busy and not in densely populated parts of the city, the Ledra Street/Lokmaci one is located in the heart of Nicosia. When it was opened in April 2008, it was the first crossing to be opened that directly connected residential and commercial areas of the same municipality, an area that had been particularly badly affected by the division in recent decades. Because of its unique characteristics, the opening of this link had an impact on the immediate surroundings of Old Nicosia and revitalised Nicosia's old commercial centre, both to the north and to the south (Jacobson et al. 2009).

Despite the lifting of restrictions on movement in 2003 and 'the absence of ethnic violence since the border opening, [which] has been noteworthy' (Papadakis et al. 2006: 4), the division of Cyprus continues, politically, militarily 'as well as in the minds of Cypriots' (Jacobson et al. 2009: 29). The largest international effort since 1974 to solve the Cyprus Problem took place in April 2004. 'The Annan plan', which proposed the creation of a federal, bizonal 'United Cyprus Republic', was put to public referendum on 24 April 2004. The plan failed as it was rejected by the Greek-Cypriot side by a strong majority of 76%, although 65% of Turkish Cypriots voted for acceptance. The Republic of Cyprus' entry into the European Union a few days after the failed referendum meant that effectively only the Greek-Cypriot side became part

of the EU, while the Turkish Cypriots remained outside. Consequently, 'the Green Line of Cyprus became the EU's uncertain border in the East' (Papadakis et al. 2006: 4).

2.3 CYPRIOT MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN THE UK

Cyprus has historically been a country of emigration. As a former UK colony, many Cypriots migrated to the UK, as well as to other commonwealth destinations including Australia, South Africa, Canada and the United States. It is estimated that the number of Cypriots living abroad approximates half the population of the island (Anthias 1992; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2007). According to the 2001 British census, the total Cyprus-born population in the UK was 77,156. This number demonstrates a slight drop in the population since the 1991 census, which showed 78,191 Cypriots living in the country.¹² However, estimations of the size of the UK Cypriot *community* fluctuate from lower figures of 160,000 to 220,000 (Anthias 1992; Costantinides 1984; Oakley 1979), to upper estimates of 250,000 to 300,000 (Papapavlou and Pavlou 2001).¹³ The National Federation of Cypriots in the UK, an umbrella organisation representing the Cypriot community associations and groups across Britain, claims to represent more than 300,000 people in the UK of Cypriot ancestry.¹⁴ Hence, although the numbers are not clear-cut, it is fair to say that the number of Cypriots in the UK is substantial.

Though a small number of Cypriots settled in the UK during the 1930s, the bulk of migration took place during the 1950s and 1960s. The UK was a preferred choice during this period of post-war emigration for various reasons, such as familiarity with the colonial power and the economic boom in Britain at the time, whilst Cyprus was moving into a sphere of greater political uncertainty and experiencing rural economic deprivation. The majority of Cypriot migrants to the UK came from a rural background, where family loyalty was paramount (Oakley 1979).¹⁵ Many had been forced to

¹² http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/born_abroad/countries/html/cyprus.stm

¹³ The registration of Cypriots in the Census includes only people born in Cyprus and not British-born Greek Cypriots that these estimations try to include.

¹⁴ <http://www.cypriotfederation.org.uk>

¹⁵ As we shall see later on, this rural origin and family solidarity of the first-generation migrants had a profound impact on how the second generation was brought up in the UK, and this background also

internally migrate to urban areas in Cyprus due to the depletion of agriculture, following the failure of the colonial government to provide ample resources and staff for the mechanisation of agriculture. However, the government's support of local industrial development failed too; hence the high levels of unemployment and the instability in the urban labour market incited the Cypriots to seek material improvement elsewhere (Anthias 1992). The migration reached its peak around 1960 and started to decline after the Commonwealth Immigrants Act. Whilst economic motives were the main push factor for migration from Cyprus during the 1950s and 1960s, a third wave of migration took place after the partition of the island in 1974 (Anthias 1992; Oakley 1979).

The overwhelming majority of Cypriot migrants, both Greek and Turkish, settled in the Greater London area, mainly north of the river. Over time a shift took place northwards from north-central London into the outer suburbs (King and Bridal 1982). Others settled in – or dispersed later to – other cities in the UK, like Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow, but also cities in the South East and South West (Anthias 1992).

The following quote from one of my key informants in London – a Cypriot-born scholar who migrated to the UK when he was a teenager during the 1960s – captures those factors that, at the time, incited many Cypriots to migrate:¹⁶

[It] was quite a typical pattern of parents migrating. My father came with my older brother, and then we came [later] with my mother, my sister, my younger brother and me. [...] I guess the big issue that forced us to migrate at that point was what one would call economic issues, and about education, of us as children [...]. There was also, like in many villages, quite a lot of things going on with, erm, politics, before '66 there was lots of pressure on father because his politics were on the left and the village had been mostly quite right wing [...]. So I am sure there were lots of issues that made my parents migrate, but, certainly in terms of our own consciousness as children at the time, it was really mostly to do with the fact that it was quite a poor village, a lot of people migrated, and people wanted, you know, to educate their children to enhance their position, and coming here was in a sense quite a good option because it was near to Cyprus, not as far as Australia, which was the other option that was discussed in the family [...] The village [where I grew up] as it was then, [I have] an image of a very small

affected how both first- and second-generation returnees were viewed by the rest of the Cypriot population.

¹⁶ Personal meeting, 19 November 2007

village, erm, you know, just a traditional kind of village. [...] I do remember a lot of other things, about school, and growing up in the village, and things like that. So I do remember a lot about Cyprus, yes, and a lot about traditional aspects of the village, in terms of family, and relatives, and things like that.

About two thirds of the women who came from Cyprus to the UK were already married at the time of migration, whilst just less than half of the male migrants were. Initially many of the married men came to the UK on their own, with their wives joining them once they had settled and found work (Oakley 1979). Up to the early 1960s the arranged marriage system, called *proxenia*, was common practice, so for those who were not married, brides were often brought over from Cyprus (Anthias 1992). However, women not only came to Britain as dependents. Many single women from poorer families were encouraged by their parents, unable to 'establish' their daughters in Cyprus, to migrate to Britain. Hence these girls, in the 1960s, were often sent at a very young age, to work, save for their dowry and find a marriage partner within the Cypriot migrant community. Therefore, female migration from Cyprus during this time 'needs to be seen as a form of labour migration which was also linked to material relations of the dowry, of marriage, and the family' (Anthias 1992: 7).

The forms of employment the Cypriots took on were those least attractive to the indigenous population and those where few English language skills were required, as is often the case with migrants. Many of these first-generation UK Cypriots – i.e. the parents of those who participated in my study – were initially involved in the catering business, working long hours as kitchen staff and waiters in hotels and restaurants. Others used skills traditionally practised in Cyprus, such as tailoring and dressmaking, and became economically active in the clothing industry. Other typical examples were hairdressing and shoe-repairing. Later on, many managed to use their savings to set up their own restaurants, cafés and small factories. In fact, the 1971 census revealed that, in the self-employed category, Cypriots out-performed the general population by far, with 23% of them being self-employed compared to a much lower 9% of the total British working population (Anthias 1992: 53-54). In her 1977 study, Pamela Constantinides stressed the occupational mobility of Cypriots, willing to experiment with a wide variety of jobs and small businesses beyond the clothing and catering trades, including 'cake shops, travel agencies, dress shops, furniture stores, television

and radio repair shops, butchers, builders, hairdressers, grocers and greengrocers, fish and chip shops, bakeries, dry-cleaners, mini-cab offices and estate agents' (Constantinides 1977: 280). Overall Cypriot employers tended to employ Cypriot workers (both Greek and Turkish) and in turn the Cypriot workers preferred to work for Cypriot-owned firms. The same went for everyday activities and social life, with shops, banks and restaurants announcing themselves with Greek signs; banks, doctors, dentists, driving schools serving Cypriots, both Greek and Turkish; and Cypriot grocery stores selling traditional Greek and Turkish-Cypriot food and staples (Anthias 1992: 113). This wide range of goods and services supplied by the Cypriots reached beyond the occupation of a so-called 'ethnic economic niche' whilst strengthening their 'internal economy' (Constantinides 1977: 281). At the time, Robin Oakley stated that 'almost anything one Cypriot needs can be bought from another', enabling Cypriots in the UK 'to meet their needs without leaving the bounds of their own community' (Oakley 1970: 101). The latter statement, however, slightly eroded as time passed. The majority of Cypriots found themselves living in the UK for many years and having children who were born and raised in the UK, 'the second generation' (Constantinides 1977: 281).

The above-described picture draws mainly from sources about Greek Cypriots, partly because most of the limited literature on post-war Cypriot migration to the UK is about Greek Cypriots (the main exception being Ladbury 1977). Yet most of the portrayal I have given applies equally to the settlement and characteristics of the Turkish Cypriots at that time. However, a couple of distinguishing remarks are in order. First, since Greek and Turkish Cypriots migrated to Britain in roughly the same proportions as their demographic weight in Cyprus (i.e. about four to one), Greek Cypriots were very much the majority community. This, combined with the fact that they tended to be less poor than the Turkish Cypriots anyway (reflecting again their pre-migration situation in Cyprus), gave them slightly the 'upper hand' in Britain; so it was, at least in the early years, a case of Greek Cypriots employing and renting to Turkish Cypriots, rather than the other way around (Ladbury 1977). On the other hand, this 'inferior' relationship was reversed when other 'Turkish' migrants arrived after the Turkish Cypriots, coming this time from mainland Turkey and including many Kurds. In this case, as the

'pioneers', Turkish Cypriots were able to trade on their earlier-established presence and their knowledge of English, turning this to their advantage in setting up businesses catering to the rapidly growing Turkish and Kurdish populations, especially in London (see King et al. 2008a; 2008b).

As stressed in studies on the settlement of Cypriot migrants in the UK (Anthias 1992; Constantinides 1977; Ladbury 1977; Oakley 1970, 1979), their everyday lives were very much centred around a strong ideology of economic and material betterment, particularly for their children, a goal towards which most worked very hard and single-mindedly. With long working hours, often six or even seven days a week, leisure activities were not amongst their top priorities. Many participants in my study stressed how any leisure time that that was available was largely spent with the immediate family, with wedding parties being one of the most important social events. Children of Greek-Cypriot migrants were often encouraged to attend weekend classes in Greek language and culture (see also Constantinides 1977). Life in the UK was very much focused towards future 'rewards', such as retirement or holidays (in Cyprus). The general perception amongst the first-generation migrants was that there was little to enjoy in the UK, where life was associated with hard work and economic improvement. With 'life in Cyprus being the life to enjoy', Floya Anthias observed that '[m]any Cypriots say they only "live" when they are on their yearly holiday in Cyprus' (1992: 58). Though for the earlier Cypriot migrants to the UK such holidays were initially rather rare, from the 1970s, with the increase in air travel combined with the growing prosperity of Cypriots in the UK, return visits to Cyprus increased progressively, and many bought houses, often in one of the rapidly developing urban or tourist areas rather than their own villages, especially if their villages had become inaccessible through the 1974 partition of the island (Constantinides 1977: 292). I will enlarge upon these holiday experiences, particularly those of the second generation, in Chapter 4, which discusses childhood memories of the parental homeland.

Though it has been some decades now since Cyprus developed from a primarily rural agricultural state to a highly diversified and urbanised economy, most of the Cypriots who emigrated to the UK grew up in village communities which required commitment

to a set of social practices and values associated with village life and, above all, family life of that time (Constantinides 1977; Loizos 1975; Oakley 1979; Peristiany 1965). Central to this social reality was the nuclear family, which was inevitably entwined with marriage practices. This family-based rural society was highly gendered, particularly characterised by the importance of female sexual purity combined with a good dowry (Anthias 1992; Constantinides 1977). Men, on the other hand, were not expected to be 'sexually pure' and 'there [was] an encouragement to find sexual outlets to prove their manhood. This usually mean[t] a resort to prostitutes or to the few girls who have a "low" reputation and are regarded as outcasts, or to foreign girls who come as tourists or to work' (Anthias 1992: 80). The concept of honour was, and still is today to a certain extent, applied to men too, albeit in a different form. While for women honour was associated with sexual innocence, obedience and domesticity, for men it meant the demonstration of their masculinity through the control of their family and household, steering clear of 'feminine' tasks such as childcare, cleaning and washing (Anthias 1992; Markides et al. 1978).

Hence, when Cypriots migrated to the UK they brought with them a certain set of gendered social practices and values formed within the Cypriot 'traditions' at the time. This background constitutes an important factor in how Cypriot social customs and beliefs have been perpetuated, or modified, in the UK setting. Another is the fact that so many Cypriots arrived over such a short time period; and a third aspect is the rather balanced sex ratio amongst the Cypriot migrants at the time (Constantinides 1977: 275).

Meanwhile in Cyprus, corresponding to ongoing political developments, the Greek-Turkish-Cypriot divisions became ever more important. And yet, it has been noted that such distinctions seemed less relevant in the UK (see for example Ladbury 1977). Particularly in terms of workplace and business relations, interactions between Greek and Turkish Cypriots reportedly remained good, even in 1974, immediately after the Greek-engineered coup and the resultant Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus (Anthias 1992: 115). Common origin and common working conditions in the UK provided for a greater shared outlook amongst the Turkish and Greek Cypriots in the UK than could

be achieved in Cyprus itself after 1963. Whilst hostility, feelings of insecurity and resentment increased between Turkish and Greek Cypriots back in the 'homeland', the two 'communities' in Britain maintained work and business ties with one another. The vast majority of Cypriots of both backgrounds had arrived before 1963; hence they had not experienced the inter-communal hostilities in Cyprus first-hand (Constantinides 1977; Ladbury 1977). Real or intense social interaction between the two 'communities' in the UK is rare though, as noted by Floya Anthias (1992: 114), at least amongst the first-generation Cypriot migrants. This statement, however, was countered by a number of Greek-Cypriot migrants I met in London, who spoke about the social interactions they had with Turkish Cypriots at places like Cypriot community centres and coffee-shops, a point which is also stressed in Myria Georgiou's (2001) study on ethnic identity construction in a Cypriot community centre in North London. In the following quote one of my key informants in London remembers his parents' interactions with other Cypriots, both professionally and socially:¹⁷

My mother came in '66, she went straight to work in, erm, in sweat shops, so, most of the people she worked with would be Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots [...] so she would have mixed a lot with people who were Greek Cypriot probably, erm, and probably spoke Greek, or Turkish Cypriot, and they also spoke Greek. [...] My father's work environment though [was different], he worked really in factories with mostly English people, so his networks were somewhat different, English, broadly defined of course, because most of the people he worked with would be migrants of one kind or another, but not Greek-speaking migrants. So their networks would be quite different in some ways, because he didn't work so much in a kind of Cypriot or Greek-Cypriot environment [...] But I think a lot of the time he would end up going to the coffee-shop, to mix with his friends, play *tavli* [Greek/Cypriot backgammon] with his friends, who were often both Greek and Turkish Cypriot, you know, so he would have networks within the Cypriot community as well.

In addition to stressing the relatively good individual and working relationships between Turkish and Greek Cypriots at the time of her research, which was the early 1970s, Constantinides (1977) briefly touches upon the matter of intermarriage or co-habitation between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots. She stressed that, despite the fact that such relationships are more common in the UK than in Cyprus, they were generally frowned upon within the Greek-Cypriot community. Sarah Ladbury (1977) emphasised a similar discourse with regard to the Turkish Cypriots in the UK, though

¹⁷ Personal communication, 19 November 2007

she did mention that she came across three such 'mixed' Cypriot marriages during her fieldwork in London in 1975-76. However she stresses the rarity of such events, stating that generally most relationships of this kind do not get far and 'the problem of marriage to any non-Turk, let alone to a Greek, never arises' (Ladbury 1977: 317). Also the Greek Cypriots in the UK, at least at that time it seems, preferred a Greek-Cypriot partner. Although, as Constantinides noted (1977: 277), there was some degree of intermarriage with British and other national groups, which incidentally outnumbered the intermarriages between Greek Cypriots and mainland Greeks, such unions formed a relatively small proportion of all marriages.¹⁸ From my own, more recent, inquiry – based on interviews and informal discussions with Cypriots in London as well as websites dedicated to the Greek-Cypriot population in the UK – I can suggest that romantic relationships outside the ethnic community are quite common today, particularly amongst the second generation. One of my key informants in the UK – a first-generation migrant and president of one of the organisations for Greek Cypriots abroad – told me that he believes that about half of the Greek Cypriots in the UK today are married to partners with no Greek-Cypriot ancestry, which he considers to be 'a natural development given that our children grow up in a multi-ethnic society'.¹⁹ This development is also reflected in the narratives of the second-generation returnees who participated in my study, as we will see later on.

2.4 THE SECOND GENERATION

With this historical background in mind, I now focus on the migrants central to my study: second-generation British-born Cypriots. Research conducted from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s found that, although second-generation Greek Cypriots in the UK retained their sense of ethnic identity, kinship and family (see for example Oakley 1979: 16-17), their practices and values had been noticeably altered, particularly those related to engagement, marriage and the dowry. In the 1970s, in contrast to what was happening in Cyprus, the formal dowry began to disappear amongst UK Cypriots and

¹⁸ It is revealing, however, that Constantinides never quoted any figures for the proportions of endogamous and exogamous marriages relating to Cypriots, so we have no real idea of the scale of 'in' and 'out' marriages amongst the Greek Cypriot population in the UK.

¹⁹ Personal communication, 28 June 2007.

there was a growing tendency for engagements not to be blessed by the church, as well as an increase in registry-office marriages (Constantinides 1977: 294-296). On the other hand, however, norms of reputation and female sexual modesty remained as important amongst UK Cypriots as they were in Cyprus at the time of the first generation's departure. In fact many claim that such values had loosened up, or were no longer found, in urban Cyprus, but were maintained amongst Cypriot parents in the UK (see for example Anthias 1992; Charalambous et al. 1988; Josephides 1988). This was also confirmed by many of my second-generation returnees, as will be revealed in more detail in my empirical chapters. Nevertheless, unions outside ethnic boundaries did take place – albeit sparingly – amongst the first-generation migrants, and appear to have increased amongst their offspring. Constantinides (1977) argued that the initial 'rise' in Cypriot men marrying English women took place during the early period of Cypriot migration, due to an unbalanced sex ratio, but that as soon as the Cypriot population grew in size young men were 'no longer frequently "lost" to non-Cypriot women' (1977: 298). She stressed that marriage patterns amongst the second generation were largely pan-Cypriot as nearly all young people who participated in her study preferred to marry another Cypriot (1977: 294, 296). This view, however, seems to be challenged by other research findings and statements of Cypriot representatives, like the one we heard earlier. In Papapavlou and Pavlou's 2001 survey on British-born Cypriots between the ages of 12 and 18, half of the participants said they would like to marry a UK Cypriot, whilst a quarter of the participants stated that nationality is not an issue in choosing a spouse.²⁰ The various key informants (both first and second generation) I interviewed during my preliminary fieldwork in the UK during 2007 emphasised how 'the community has become a lot more diverse with lots of mixed marriages' and that 'there is more mixedness involved with the second generation [as] they either are the product of a mixed marriage or are in a mixed relationship themselves'.²¹

²⁰ Interestingly enough, very few said that they would like to marry a Cypriot from Cyprus (8%), an English person (4.7%) or someone from Greece (2.6%) (Papapavlou and Pavlou 2001).

²¹ Personal communication with two community leaders, 30 October 2007 and 16 November 2007. However I think it is fair to say that issues of heteronormativity remain more firmly entrenched amongst British-based Cypriots than attitudes towards 'marrying out'. For instance, as a public figure George Michael has repeatedly remarked on how his 'coming out' was delayed and constrained due to ethno-national/family 'values'. Thanks to Anastasia Christou for pointing this out.

Issues of 'mixing' and the (actual and potential) intermarriage of their offspring were also hot topics amongst visitors at the community centre in Georgiou's (2000) research, where their at times ambivalent feelings of 'being torn' between two 'sides' were captured in expressions like: 'Sometimes those English [women] are better than our own. My son's wife is a very good woman', and 'my two daughters are married to Cypriots. My two sons are married to English. At first we were cold to the idea, but then we got used to it'. Upon which another man replied: 'Well, if you have many children you don't mind if one marries a foreigner, but otherwise it is a problem'. 'Contradictory talk and ideology is often the outcome of the Greek Cypriot experience', Georgiou (2000: 12) states after describing one of the conversations on marriage outside the Cypriot community. But are the internalisations of both 'sides' necessarily contradictory? For the second generation this certainly does not always seem the case. A British Greek-Cypriot youngster, interviewed by Anthias (2002: 505-506), expressed his passion for his 'motherland' Cyprus, his desire to return some day, and his connection to his English girlfriend in the same answer, without making it sound contradictory. This idea of the second generation being stuck 'between two cultures' (see for example Constantinides 1977) was also critiqued by various British-born Cypriots who attended the 1988 conference 'The Cypriot Community of the UK: Issues of Identity' (Charalambous et al. 1988). As one British-born 24-year-old male participant (Lambrou 1988: 13) at the conference stated:

One interpretation of the lives Cypriot youth live in Britain, which unfortunately is a widely held belief, is that we have a confused sense of belonging. That by and large Cypriot youngsters residing in Britain lead double lives. It is suggested that this double life is split between being either Cypriot or British, that we are Cypriot with our families and in other Cypriot circles, and English when in the company of British friends at school or work. This account suggests that Cypriot youth have an acute identity problem [...] In my view such an analysis is deeply faulty [...] We all adapt our behaviour to suit the particular situation we are experiencing. Even with the sphere or association with Cypriots, we behave differently with our cousins or friends, than we do with our parents. The ability to alter our actions when appropriate is a valuable social skill and essential to fitting in anywhere. I feel it is not a case of falling between or torn between two cultures, but more that Cypriot youth develop a personality; a sound one, our own individual body of culture drawing from all influences.

The contributions to the above-mentioned conference showed that Cypriotness *is* important to the new generation of British-born Cypriots, but that they are ‘more outward looking’, whilst ‘the first generation, on the other hand, appeared more concerned with the role of identity in reproducing the ethnic group and gave the impression of an insular approach to identity’ (Josephides 1988: 68). The point made at the very end of the above quote, about the development of a new ‘body of culture’ which draws from a wide variety of influences, is an important one, and is also prominent in the narratives of belonging of my British-born Cypriot participants in Cyprus, as we will see in later chapters.

One of my first-generation key informants, a prominent member of the UK Cypriot community, expressed his disappointment that the first generation has not been able to prevent the gap between the two generations: ‘my main concern is the lack of effort we [the first generation] have put in keeping the community linked with each other’, which he mainly puts down to poor communication (‘the first generation often don’t speak English well whilst their children are more comfortable with English than they are with Greek’), as well as ‘professional gaps’.²² Another of my key UK-based interviewees, himself a second-generation British-born Cypriot, reflected on the gap and frictions between the generations in the following terms:²³

I think that there’s an increasing gap between the generations and our outlook to life, ‘cause it’s influenced by different things. I guess we [the second generation] have similar Cypriot cultural influences, but our political outlook, our broader world view, where we are within the world is so much different [from the first generation]. We live in a big city, with a population of, you know, twenty times the size of the island. We are used to living with people that are very different from ourselves, doing a much wider range of things and activities.

He continues by reflecting on the ‘insular’ lifestyle of the first-generation migrants in the UK, their isolation from both British and Cypriot ‘mainstream’ society, and how this causes Greek Cypriots in Cyprus to view the British Cypriots as ‘backward’:

Actually the perception of Greek Cypriots in Cyprus is that the way we are is backwards, which is very interesting [...] Our parents came over here from the villages, you know the traditional way of life, very particular things, the family structure... Actually in a

²² Personal communication, 28 June 2007.

²³ Personal communication, 16 November 2007.

sense our community, the first generation, [behave] in the same way as when they came over, they are preserving the traditions much more rigidly, and are much more conservative around their values, and that brings friction with the younger generation who are growing up in a much more liberal culture where the British conservative attitudes have dissipated, much in the same way as Cypriot conservativeness has dissipated in Cyprus. So you got this situation where certain traditional or conservative values are dissipating in the mainstream and then you have this Cypriot diaspora who are clinging [onto it]... I think that Greek Cypriots [in Cyprus] view us a kind of backwards in that sense. And I, from a young [British-born] Greek Cypriot's perspective, appreciate the conservative context of our parents, maybe that influences us in a sense.

Next he recalls memories from his childhood visits to the island, how 'backward' life over there seemed at the time, and comments on the rapid economic development in Cyprus in recent years, which he perceives to have happened at an 'unnatural' pace. His commentary reveals the complexities and contradictions in how individuals from – supposedly – the same ethno-national and religious background, but across various generational and geographical settings, view one another:

But [the Cypriots in Cyprus] are living in a multicultural democracy, which engages in huge complex social issues, their lives are very complex, and I guess in our minds from when we were children, we used to go to Cyprus, I remember they had one TV channel, the TV was black and white, it started at 6 o'clock... you couldn't find Mars bars in the country, you'd struggle to get fresh milk, you know your perception of Cyprus from a young age was [that it was] very backwards. But Cyprus has really caught up, sped up, dramatically... and my perception is that they need longer to adjust, in terms of shock, the amount of work and wealth that has been dropped into people's lap, the speed, the technological progress, all of these things... For us [British-born Cypriots], we were brought up from day one in this environment, for Greeks in Cyprus [it went very fast], in terms of the stock market, the property market, it's a question of cultural maturity. Cyprus is one of the new members of the European Union where you have very rapid economic development, and in terms of infrastructure, and what that causes those populations to do and how they react, that's the underlying difference. It took the UK 400 years to go from an agricultural society to an industrial revolution to a service based economy, the last bit they've just achieved in the past 25 years; Cyprus went from an agricultural country to a services country in the space of 30 years. You cannot compress 400 years, or 300 years, of economic and social progress into 40 years, into one generation, it's huge...

The different 'wavelengths' of the first and second generations in the UK were also ably stressed by Floya Anthias (1992). She observed the tension between the first generation on the one hand, who are mainly concerned with maintenance of ethnic identity through 'the upkeep of language, religion, and sexual and family values, of

customs and traditions’, and the second generation, on the other hand, who ‘want to build a Cypriot ethnicity that shares an ethnic minority identity with Turkish Cypriots and other “black” groups’, but, ‘most of all want to redefine the ways in which they can be Cypriot in British society’ (Anthias 1992: 131-132).

Also in terms of education and employment some important shifts have taken place, as many migrants came to the UK with the wish to obtain a better education for their children (Oakley 1970). Though the available literature provides little insight, it has been noted that, generally, Cypriot girls in the 1980s did not take on the same work as their mothers (in catering or dress-making), nor were they encouraged to, but went into clerical jobs, as well professions like beauty therapy and hairdressing (Anthias 1992; Josephides 1988a). Anthias (1992: 120) observed that, although many second-generation UK Cypriots went ‘through a stage of rejecting their Cypriotness’, once they became more aware of their difficulties in terms of economic and social integration, there was a tendency to choose employment within the Cypriot community. This was particularly the case for young men, even those with degrees, who were inclined to work at their father’s shops, cafés and factories, or work for other Cypriots (see also Constantinides 1977). Furthermore she noted three different ‘behaviour tendencies’ amongst these Cypriot youth, which she stresses is class-related. One tendency, particularly amongst boys who are not involved with ethnic organisations and come from families of shop and factory workers, is to get involved with certain youth subcultures and reject parental values and authority. A second tendency, amongst both boys and girls, is to identify strongly with their ethnic category (generally after a period of rejecting it). Many of these youngsters are children of shopkeepers and/or organisational activists, who are sent to Greek classes and clubs. Finally, she notes that ‘there is a small group who move away from Cypriot identity and social life. They are more likely to have “made it” in the educational system – that is, have achieved extremely good examination results and have become professional workers of one type or another – lecturers, artists or doctors. However, not all such achievers lose their ethnic identity’ (Anthias 1992: 123-124).

The class issue, and its influence on involvement in the UK Cypriot community, was also a topic of debate during a group discussion I organised in London between two middle-aged second-generation Cypriots and one elderly first-generation immigrant.²⁴ In contrast to Anthias' observation, the older participant believed that those who are involved in 'the community' *are* the ones who have 'made it', whilst those who did not 'succeed' are ashamed and 'living far away from the community':

The ones who are not doing well [...] they suffer and they are not part of the community [...] They are living far away from the community in a secretive life, they don't appear in the functions [...] When I go canvassing, in Hackney and Islington, I spoke to them they said 'no, leave me alone, I don't want to know any Cypriots, I am living on my own, leave me alone.' They didn't succeed so they are living their life alone not disturbing anybody, there are around 80-90,000 Greek Cypriots in the vibrant part of the community, they go to Cyprus two, three times a year, they go to events and functions, then another 200,000 Cypriots they live their own life...

Of course the above quote is a personal observation of one individual, and hence holds no objective value, but nonetheless it is a viewpoint that should be taken into account. However, it seems to be a common discourse, amongst Cypriot migrants in the UK, that the second generation is well-educated, because the first generation – who started 'at the bottom' and worked so hard – wanted to make sure that their children get a higher education. Subsequently, The Association of British Cypriot Professionals (EPISTEME) was founded, which is 'a network that brings together educated professional British Cypriots and organises events in various areas, such as politics, businesses, professions, art, culture [...] with a priority to attract members of the new generation who are educated and get them to contribute and engage with the community in different ways, and bring about a sort of renewal'.²⁵

As a relatively new and unexplored phenomenon, the earlier studies mainly, and understandably, focused on the first generation. However, current research on the Cypriot presence in the UK remains scarce, and still the focus on the experiences of the second generation is very limited. Exceptions include Constantinos Phellas' (2005) paper on the influence of cultural and historical factors in the development of Anglo-

²⁴ Focus group with Cypriot professionals, 30 November 2007.

²⁵ Personal communication with the president of EPISTEME, 30 October 2007; permission granted to use this interview quote.

Cypriot gay identity, and John Nassari's (2007) autobiographical account, in which he discusses the concept of 'postmemory' through the examination of his personal experiences as a British-born Cypriot travelling to his family's former village in northern Cyprus. Both focus on a narrow (and personal), yet fascinating, angle of the British-Cypriot experience. Another recent study which discusses Greek Cypriots in the UK is Kathy Burrell's (2006) book *Moving Lives*, in which she explores the everyday experiences of Polish, Italian and Greek-Cypriot migrants in Leicester. While the Italian and Polish samples are mainly made up of first-generation migrants, the Cypriot representation is evenly divided (7 first-generation and 8 second-generation). However, the experiences of second-generation Greek Cypriots as such are not discussed in depth, and there is a further problem with the small sample in Burrell's study.

Anthias' (2002, 2006) more recent research provides a more in-depth insight into the lived experiences of British-born youngsters of Cypriot background. Her study, which explores the ways in which these young people articulate experiences of 'race' and ethnicity, moves away from the pre-given set of cultural identifications associated with ethnic categories like 'Greek Cypriot'. Rather, stressing the importance of the context, time and situation in which narratives of (un)belonging are constructed and narrated, she puts forward the concepts of location and positionality. Her findings show that many feel 'other' in the contexts of both England and Cyprus and that belonging was often expressed in terms of what one is not, rather than a clear affirmation of what one is. Notions of gender, ethnicity, national belonging, class and race, or 'categories' like 'Cypriot', 'English', 'European', 'White' or 'Black', involved shifts or contradictions depending on the context within which they were used, and served more as explanations for the experiences they had, or as descriptions of lifestyles (such as determined by strong family bonds), rather than forms of proclaimed identity.

Although in the above-mentioned research by Anthias essentialised views of identity and home seem to be challenged by more fluid and fragmented processes of identification and belonging – an approach favoured by postmodernist scholars (cf. Brah 1996; Hall 1990, 1996, amongst others) – overall, most studies concerned with Cypriots in the UK have focused on issues relevant to the experiences of the first

generation, such as settlement patterns, economic development and the maintenance of ethnic and family ties. Consequently these issues have been carried over to be the central topics in some descriptions in the literature on the second generation. Hence, rather than focusing on the experiences of British-born Cypriots *per se*, their experiences seem to be examined in comparison to – or as an extension of – those of the first generation. Furthermore, studies on UK Cypriots tend to be conducted in settings where a high concentration of Cypriots can be found in relatively restricted areas, such as a big city with a large Cypriot population (mainly London), in a neighbourhood or community centre. Of course this is understandable and often necessary, in terms of feasibility. However, undoubtedly there is a significant number who live – or consort – outside such settings, away from the ‘obvious’ spots, and whose voices are difficult to include.

2.5 RETURN MIGRATION TO CYPRUS

While the importance of the homeland and potential return is emphasised in most of the published work on Cypriot migration, research on the actual return to Cyprus is lacking, for both the first and the second generations. One of the few mentions of return migration to Cyprus refers to the years of 1965-1975, during which ‘many Cypriots, particularly men, obtained scholarships to study in East European Universities, mostly in Romania, Czechoslovakia and Russia, where they got married and returned to Cyprus with their [non-Cypriot] spouses’ (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2005: 9). Another small ‘wave’ of return migration is mentioned by Bertrand (2004: 99) when referring to the economic boom of Cyprus in the 1970s and 1980s. Also Mark Thomson (2006: 2) points out how the growing national economy – particularly in tourism – encouraged emigrants to return to the island. However, these return movements are merely mentioned, rather than discussed and investigated in depth.

With regard to second-generation return, a few studies have focused on educational issues concerning British-born Cypriot youngsters, with the main emphasis on linguistics, both in the UK and in Cyprus. Papapavlou and Pavlou’s (2001) survey, conducted with 274 UK Cypriot youngsters aged 12-18, suggests that although Cypriot

youth in the UK are aware, and in tune with, their distinctiveness (in both linguistic and social behaviour), they do not like to be placed in 'traditional' cultural moulds. Furthermore 32% of the participants in their survey expressed a desire to return and settle in Cyprus. Christodoulou and Pavlou's (2005) study, which focuses on the educational issues school-age second-generation returnees face once *in* Cyprus, suggests that British-born (or raised) youngsters in Cyprus experience various problems upon repatriation, mainly due to their limited proficiency in Greek, which often obstructs their smooth transition and acculturation into school and Cypriot society as a whole. However, there are no studies discussing the experiences of second-generation *adult* returnees. It should also be noted that a large number of young returnees attend private English (or international) schools, because their limited competence in Greek prevents them from attending public schools, or because their parents prefer them to be educated in a more international environment. These points are further elaborated in my empirical material, revealing new insights and nuances.

From my interviews with key informants in London, I infer that those of the first generation who return to Cyprus do so to retire, or live an easier life, often after having sold, or passed on, their businesses in the UK. Now, as Cyprus is part of the EU, it is easier to repatriate and take pensions to Cyprus, at least for Greek Cypriots returning to the southern part of the island. People return for financial reasons as well as to receive more inclusive health care services. Some return for tax purposes and establish their place of residence in Cyprus. Many have second homes in Cyprus, and divide their time between the UK and Cyprus, particularly if they have children and grandchildren in the UK. However, opinions do differ over exactly who returns. Two middle-aged, second-generation, participants in a focus group believed that those who go back, apart from the retirees, tend to be people 'who are not doing particularly well' while those who are well off 'don't move back to Cyprus, they may go and stay in Cyprus for two, three months but they don't live there, they come back to England, they may pay their taxes in Cyprus [...] but their money is usually made here'. The older, first-generation, participant in the group, however, disagreed, maintaining that the opposite is true:

Many [first-generation] Cypriots [...] sold their properties [in the UK] at their peak of the period and they went to Cyprus and they live there very comfortably, because when they were at the top of their business, the rag trade, groceries, restaurants and so on, they sold them. The ones who did not succeed, who came [to the UK] with pride and to earn money *stayed* [in the UK]. Go to Cyprus, you will not hear of any Cypriot who tried to come to the UK and make his life [but failed], they are all buried in the Southgate Cemetery in London [meaning they never returned to Cyprus].²⁶

As for second-generation return, the common narrative that I gleaned from interviews in the UK is that their desire to move to Cyprus is more related to professional opportunities, better climate and quality of life, rather than ideological reasons, such as in terms of ethnicity or culture. This argument was sustained in many of the narratives of the returnees *in* Cyprus, as we will see in due course.

Although it has been suggested that in recent years there has been a high immigration flow of persons of Cypriot nationality or of Cypriot descent who have returned to settle in Cyprus (Pavlou and Christodoulou 2003), there are no official figures on second-generation returnees in Cyprus, who are a hidden group in censuses and population statistics. The Statistical Service Department of the Republic of Cyprus (CYSTAT 2009), which is responsible for demographic reports, provides information on numbers of short-term (less than a year) and long-term (more than a year) immigrants. 'Repatriates' are included in these statistics, but their exact numbers remain unclear, as many are hidden within the numbers of people of various nationalities who chose to reside in Cyprus for a longer period.²⁷ Hence, a British-born returnee is most likely to be included in the *total* number of immigrants coming from the UK. Pavlou and Christodoulou (2003) point out the discrepancy between the official and actual numbers of repatriated Cypriots. Drawing on a study by Paschalis (2000) they conclude that in 1992 the actual number (4,351) of repatriates was at least four times higher than the 1,014 reported in that year's statistical report (Pavlou and Christodoulou 2003).²⁸ As for the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', the numbers appear to be more concrete. There has also been a significant increase of British-born Turkish

²⁶ Focus group, 30 November 2007.

²⁷ The term 'repatriate' refers to a person of Cypriot nationality or of Cypriot descent who returned to settle in Cyprus after a long period abroad.

²⁸ Government figures also contradict the unofficial figures quoted by the associations of repatriated Cypriots, which estimate the number of repatriates to be approximately 25,000 for the years 1981-1992 (Pavlou and Christodoulou 2003).

Cypriots returning to the island, as stressed by Mete Hatay (2007: 39), who points out that 2,435 British-born Turkish Cypriots were counted in the TRNC census of 2006 compared to 1,322 in 1996.

2.6 MIGRATION REVERSAL: FROM EMIGRANT TO IMMIGRANT STATE

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Republic of Cyprus has recently transformed from a country traditionally exporting migrants into a society which hosts immigrants from different countries, who occupy a range of employment positions, from labourers to professionals and entrepreneurs as well as retired persons.

Mass tourism, the expansion of the service sector, including offshore companies, and considerable financial investment from Lebanese refugees drove the economic growth experienced in southern Cyprus during the 1980s and 1990s; an 'economic miracle' which was partly made possible by the cheap labour supplied by the Greek-Cypriot refugees, who were expelled from the northern part of the island. Cyprus' transformation to a prospering service society led to a demand for menial, low-pay labour that exceeded the supply of the native population. Consequently, since the 1990s, restrictive immigration policies have been abandoned and Cyprus started granting a large number of temporary work visas to foreign workers (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2005).

Additionally, there are political and global factors that opened the doors to migrants. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought many Eastern Europeans, both business people as well as temporary workers, to Cyprus – which was linked with the migration of a large number of Pontic Greeks from the Caucasus region who received Greek nationality and were, thus, able to migrate to Cyprus with minimum formalities.²⁹ Russians, Yugoslavs (primarily Serbs), Bulgarians and Romanians were also attracted to Cyprus because of their common religion (Christian Orthodoxy). The war in Yugoslavia in 1999 also brought a significant number of Serbs to Cyprus. A small number of the

²⁹ Greek citizens (including Greek passport holders of Pontic origin) enjoy permanent residence rights as well as the right to work in Cyprus.

Eastern Europeans in Cyprus are wealthy businesspeople working in offshore industries, residing under a temporary residence permit, which is easily renewable provided that they operate or hold a position in a business enterprise in Cyprus. Furthermore, the unrest in the Gulf region and in Israel and Palestine contributed to the influx of both economic as well as political refugees from these regions, many of whom were very affluent (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2005, 2007). Finally, it is important to consider Cyprus' colonial history, which has contributed to the large British expatriate community on the island, including the military staff of the British sovereign bases.

Today the total number of resident non-Cypriots is estimated to be 128,200 or 14.5 percent of the total population which resides in the south of the island (CYSTAT 2009). Female migrants from South and East Asia (especially Sri Lanka and the Philippines) are mainly employed as domestic workers whilst Asian men tend to be employed in agriculture, construction or manufacturing. Migrants from Eastern Europe – mainly from the Balkans – generally work in the trade and catering business and agriculture, or females as 'artistes/dancers' (prior to the collapse of the Eastern European regimes the latter occupation was dominated by Filipino and Thai women). Workers from Middle Eastern countries are concentrated in production, services and farming, with the exception of the Lebanese (and to a lesser extent the Jordanians), who include a large proportion of managers/qualified personnel and technicians. The figures for irregular migrants are inherently hard to obtain, but it is estimated that there are between 10,000 and 30,000 undocumented migrant workers. These include people from Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Romania, the former Yugoslavia, Russia, the Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, amongst others), South-East Asia (particularly women who are employed as domestic workers), China and the Middle East (Syria, Lebanon, Iran, to name a few) (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2005).

Cyprus' eastern Mediterranean location, at the doorstep of the Middle East, and, later on, its entrance into the EU have supposedly made the country an attractive

destination for migrants and asylum-seekers,³⁰ and ‘the response of policy-makers was to keenly transform themselves to “border-guards of Europe”’ (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2005: 10). Cyprus is a perfect example of a southern European country which ‘functions as the “entrance hall” to the EU, and often serves as a “waiting room” for many migrants who have the Northern European countries as a destination’ (Anthias and Lazaridis 1999: 3).

Patterns of ‘racialisation of migrant workers’ (Trimikliniotis 1999), discrimination, and an overall social tendency towards unwillingness to welcome immigrants, have been stressed by several authors (see for example Anthias 2006; Thomson 2006; Trimikliniotis 1999; Trimikliniotis and Pantelis 2003). Violation of rights is reported in a number of studies that focus on female migrants (Anthias 2000, 2006; Lenz 2005; Trimikliniotis and Fulas-Souroulla 2009), which stress the domestic workers’ complaints about work overload and underpayment, bad treatment and sexual harassment by employers, and the exploitative relations concerning employment and residence conditions of women in the ‘sex industry’.³¹ Trimikliniotis and Demetriou (2007: 11) suggest that Cyprus ‘remains a largely racist and xenophobic society and at a structural, institutional, and political level, vital changes are required to address this problem. Third country migrants are routinely dehumanised and are reduced to mere economic instruments performing menial tasks that Cypriots will not perform’. Furthermore they stress that the debate on multiculturalism in Cyprus, which only very recently began, ‘is still at an infancy stage and is more geared towards *acceptance* and *tolerance* rather than *civic participation* which, as a concept, is located at a stage several steps ahead from tolerance’ (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2005: 4, their emphases).

³⁰ Asylum applications rose by 363% between 2002 and 2003, while in Europe as a whole they fell by 20% (Source: UNCHR News Stories, ‘Cyprus: The twisted reality behind the statistics’, by Emilia Strovolidou in Nicosia and Rupert Colville in Geneva, 13.01.2005 - Accessed from [http://www.unhcr.org/41e690364.htm] on 8 December 2009)

³¹ ‘The migrant women working in this sector are found under the classifications of “artistes”, “dancers” and “musicians” mainly working in “clubs” and cabarets or more exactly, cabaret-type venues. Also migrant women working as waitresses or barwomen in bars, pubs and beer shops are likely to enter into prostitution, sometimes being forced by their employers. The “entrepreneurs” of “this industry” (i.e. pimps) are mainly Greek Cypriots’ (Trimikliniotis and Fulas-Souroulla 2009: 175).

This ‘migration reversal’, from emigrant to immigrant state, and all its consequences, provides an important setting for the experiences of the second-generation returnees. It is not just about the turnaround from emigrants leaving the island to new immigrants, of different nationalities, arriving; my participants are *active participants* in this process, being part of a substantial flow of return migrants. The inter-migrant encounter between the second-generation returnees and the wide variety of other immigrants residing in Cyprus, the participants’ opinions on the different positions of migrants in Cypriot society, and the way these recent developments have influenced the returnees’ feelings of belonging in Cyprus, are all points that will be discussed throughout the empirical chapters.

2.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The role of this chapter has been to provide important general contextual background to the narratives and ethnographic data collected in Cyprus and presented in the remaining chapters. I have pointed out the political, economic and social tides that have shaped the Cypriot migration experience: the Cyprus ‘conflict’; the economic and rural deprivation experienced in Cyprus during the 1950s and 1960s; the ‘familiarity’ with the colonial power; the patterns of settlement in the UK; the perpetuation and transformation of ‘homeland’ practices; the levels of ‘intercommunal’ interaction; the intergenerational interaction; and the migration ‘turnaround’ from emigrants leaving Cyprus to new immigrants arriving – all are aspects that will serve as reference points when reading my participants’ narratives. Furthermore, by combining relevant literature with my own empirical data collected in the UK, I have shown the importance of focusing on the *new* generations of British Cypriots, and their development of a ‘new body of culture’, which draws from a wide variety of influences and cannot be perceived as simply being torn ‘between two cultures’. For now this new cultural expression remains an indication, a hypothesis, derived from my preliminary fieldwork with Cypriots, first- and second-generation, in Britain. However, as I hope to show later on, this hypothesis becomes crucial when shaping an

understanding of the return experiences of these second-generation British Cypriots, demonstrated in the empirical presentation of their journeys 'home'.

Chapter 3

Conducting Ethnographic Research with British Cypriots

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodological and ethical perspectives in which the research was conducted, analysed and written up. It provides a detailed description, justification and evaluation of the research design and methods of data collection used: life-narrative interviews as the core research instrument, complemented by other forms of ethnographic data. I also emphasise the reciprocal approach I adopted throughout my research process and data analysis. From the outset, I highlight my position as a researcher, which gives the chapter a rather ‘personalised’ feel. This was a conscious choice in order to set the ethnographic scene and to acknowledge the different lenses through which data is filtered. My fieldwork, as Yang noted, ‘was my own life and the lives of others in which I had an active part’ (1972: 63). However, unlike some reflexive ethnographies, my experience as a researcher is not one of the prime features of this thesis. Hence, though I maintained a reflexive stance throughout the writing process, in the chapters following the present one I will predominantly be present in the background. Yet, I *will* let my own personality and positionality surface when necessary, whether for methodological clarification or in order to provide a better understanding of my interpretations.

3.2 PILOT STUDY IN CYPRUS

My empirical experiences with British Cypriots started late summer 2007, when I went to Cyprus – Nicosia to be precise – for a month-long ‘pilot study’. I arrived on a steamy hot August afternoon. The city felt like a ghost town. ‘What are you coming to Nicosia for at this time of year?’ the taxi driver asked me whilst driving through the scorched landscape from Larnaca airport to the campus of the University of Cyprus, where I had arranged a room to stay for my few weeks in the island’s capital. Having lived in Israel

for a number of years, I was quite familiar with the extreme summers in this region, especially in the urban areas, so his inquiry made perfect sense to me; perhaps more than it made sense to him that I – a blonde fair-skinned Dutch woman – had come to Cyprus during the hottest time of the year to study his British-born counterparts. And although things didn't quite go as I had imagined them that afternoon in the taxi, I don't regret having chosen that hot summer month in 2007 for my pilot visit. Though I didn't learn as much Greek as I had hoped to, on my summer course at the university, and I wasn't able to interview as many people as I thought I would during my pilot study, as many desert the city during that time of the year, this visit allowed me to familiarise myself with the city and the island, make practical arrangements, talk to some locals and conduct well-prepared pilot interviews with a small number of participants, allowing me to test and sharpen my research instruments. In the end I believe that this initial trip gave me just what I needed from a pilot visit: an opportunity to get to know 'my field' and my way around, to orientate myself and collect just enough data to reflect upon and help me prepare myself for the main fieldwork ahead. Had I dived raw into the main data collection I would have undoubtedly passed over an important stage of reflection. Hence, although my pilot study was fairly small and short, it confirmed – in its own modest way – what a growing number of scholars assert regarding the importance of pilot studies in qualitative research and ethnography (for example Kezar 2000; Sampson 2004), namely that 'a person must have a practical sense of the domain within which a phenomenon is situated in order to develop understanding' (Kezar 2000: 385).

3.3 FIELDWORK IN THE UK

One of my objectives – before returning to Cyprus for my main fieldwork and the collection of my core empirical material – was to conduct 'key interviews' with various members of the Greek-Cypriot community in the UK (i.e. the 'source' place for the returnees). My aim was to collect useful background information on my topic of research – like eliciting attitudes towards return, sentiments towards the 'homeland' and feelings of solidarity and belonging – as well as to familiarise myself with the wider Cypriot community and build a contact network. During the autumn of 2007 I

conducted a total of 14 'key interviews' in the UK, mainly in the Greater London region, though a few meetings took place in Brighton, Portsmouth, Southampton and Nottingham. I have already made extensive reference to these interviews in the previous chapter.

Both the 'key' in the interviews as well as the number of participants should be perceived as something rather fluid. Though all my interviewees and the information they shared with me were 'key' in the development of my perceptions and insights into the Cypriot community in the UK, as well as in the development of my network, their roles and positions varied significantly. My informants ranged from leaders of various organisations representing Cypriots in the UK and the wider diaspora, to businessmen, to Greek school teachers, to academics, to individuals in the arts sector, including a visual artist and a novelist. As for the number of interviews, some of them turned out to be 'key group meetings' rather than 'key interviews', meaning that I would start a conversation with one person, but through the course of the interview family members or friends would join in for a certain length of time, hence a sort of 'focus group discussion' would arise naturally from what started as a one-on-one interview. In other cases the interviews would lead to 'observations', like when I interviewed a teacher at a Greek school that was housed in a church, which led me to attend their Christmas play and Sunday service.

Hence, rather than preparing myself for my ethnographic research in Cyprus, I found myself – initially unwittingly – conducting ethnographic research from the moment I embarked on my empirical data collection in the UK, *before* starting my core fieldwork in Cyprus, interweaving interviews with observations and participations. So I was fairly well warmed up for my research in Cyprus, where I was to continue my ethnographic experience, which, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 1),

involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in peoples' lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research.

3.4 MAIN FIELDWORK PERIOD IN CYPRUS AND THE ISSUE OF SAMPLING

The second time around I arrived on an afternoon in early 2008, January 3rd to be precise, in much more pleasant and cooler temperatures than during my previous visit. After putting my luggage in my flat in central Nicosia, which was going to be my home for the next ten months, I went on a little explorative stroll around my new neighbourhood. Later that evening I had a drink in a nearby bar, recommended by one of my contacts in London. I got into a conversation with Nicholas, the British-born son of Cypriot immigrants to the UK who returned to Cyprus when he was in his early teens. A week later I interviewed him in a coffee shop in the old town of Nicosia, a place quite popular amongst some of my participants, as I was to find out later. And so my main spell of fieldwork in Cyprus began.

The above account describing how I met my first 'participant' was not unusual during my fieldwork. I initially set off by using the 'sample-as-you-go' technique, i.e. snowball and convenience sampling. In practice this simply meant asking those I had already spoken to if they could put forward someone else for an interview (snowball), or being 'chatty' whilst shopping or going for a meal downtown (convenience). Hence, at the outset of my fieldwork I met many participants by simply 'hanging out' and 'wandering about', which was not only important for the development of my network but also in terms of my settlement into town and beyond, in making 'the field' – the island – my 'home'. Lisa, for instance, I met whilst buying shampoo at the hair salon where she works, Dinos joined me between the soup and the salad I was having at the lunchroom he managed, whilst Marcus and I got talking as I was enjoying one of the beautiful teas at his shop. My initial sampling approach was particularly useful for getting a feel for 'what's going on out there' (Bernard 1994: 96); however, since I had a simple but clear set of 'characteristics' of my potential participants in mind ('second-generation Cypriot', 'British-born') I was not in any danger of what Bernard describes as 'grabbing whoever stands still long enough to answer your questions' (1994: 96). So although many of my initial encounters with participants were accidental, I had a clear purpose in mind when addressing them. Hence this particular sampling approach would be best described as a combination of purposive/convenience sampling.

Purposive sampling became more key as my research proceeded. As both my ethnographic data and my knowledge of the field grew, so did my need for more purposive sampling. In order to provide a broadly representative sample – which would later on allow me to take the understanding of the people I talked to and extend it to the people I have not studied (i.e. the British-born Cypriots I did not talk to or ‘observe’) – I continuously modified and extended my sampling strategies in line with the development of my research framework during the course of the investigation (Bernard 1994: 96; see also Flick 2006; Merrens 2004). Though I was aware of the importance of ‘straight-forward representability’ (for example in terms of ‘balancing’ gender, socio-economic status, education etc.), I maintained an open approach throughout my fieldwork, making sure that my wish – for example – to talk to ‘a working-class male in his 30s’ would not overtake the natural flow of my fieldwork and consequently influence the assembly of my sample in an unnatural way. These things I learned in the field, as I went along, through experience and judgement. Hence the reason why another term for purposive sampling is ‘judgement sampling’ is self-explanatory.

3.5 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the overarching aim of my fieldwork was to explore the second generation’s return to Cyprus and their often complex and ambiguous views of home, identity and ‘where they belong’, i.e. to illuminate how the returnees’ social realities are constructed and given meaning to. My aspiration to provide a comprehensive account of such fluid and multifaceted notions like ‘home’, ‘identity’ and ‘belonging’ called for an in-depth qualitative study emphasising the *lived* experience of the migrants (in contrast to quantitative studies, which tend to underline ‘the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes’; Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 13). The implementation of a research strategy that works with a relatively small group of participants and moves away from strictly standardised methods allowed me to be more ‘open’ or *disponible* (Breton 1937) and thus ‘more involved’ with the phenomenon of study (Flick et al. 2004: 5). A more in-

depth and concrete impression of the returnees' experiences and views is far more likely to emerge from narrative accounts, group discussions and ethnographic descriptions than from a standardised questionnaire, for example, as the latter requires certain fixed ideas about the subject of study, while a qualitative approach can be open to the new in the phenomenon of study, or to the unknown in what appears to be familiar (Flick et al. 2004: 5). Our 'age of migration' – where pre-set social worlds and fixed existences are challenged by global movements and mobile lifestyles, and feelings of identity and coherence are constantly (re)negotiated – raises complex questions about self, subjectivity and context (Castles and Miller 2003; Urry 2000). These questions call for in-depth interviews, 'centered on the stories of the migrants themselves', in the form of critical ethnographies (Lawson 2000: 174). The comprehensive and detailed understanding of people's experiences allows us, in turn, to place the findings in a broader perspective.

Ethnographic research methods are extremely diverse and multidimensional. 'For some [ethnography] refers to a philosophical paradigm to which one makes a total commitment, for others it designates a method that one uses as and when appropriate. And of course there are positions between these two extremes' (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 248). Naturally, the various interpretations of ethnography and its attached meanings cause some tensions between the 'classical' ethnographic traditions and 'contemporary' approaches (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994). I do not seek to claim any specific position along this continuum, which I assume derives from doing research in the – inherently interdisciplinary – field of Migration Studies, as well as from my personal dislike of confined 'boxes', but most importantly from the aspiration to justly address the lived experiences of the participants by choosing the right methods, which are determined by the object under study and not the other way around (Flick 2006: 15). Or as Atkinson and Hammersley put it:

Across the spectrum of the social sciences, the use and justification of ethnography is marked by diversity rather than consensus, on that basis it is arguable that it is futile to try to identify different types of 'qualitative research'. Rather one has to recognize different theoretical and epistemological positions, each of which endorse a version of ethnographic work (1994: 257).

I used several methods of data collection, though the core of this thesis is based on 30 life-narratives of British-born Greek Cypriots and 12 of British-born Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus. However, when counting the actual ‘voices’ on the recorded interviews this number is slightly greater as, like my key interviews in England, several of these narratives developed into focus-group discussions, as other family members, partners and friends joined in. My research also included the collection of other ethnographic data over an extended amount of time, such as participant observation and group discussions in various social settings, which likewise caused the total number of voices that this thesis represents to be larger than the actual number of interviews.

Sometimes the lines between methods were blurred or one method would transform into another – for instance, some of my participants would be both returnees narrating their life-story, as well as ‘key informants’, due to their professional or academic position. Furthermore, I met many of my participants on several occasions, allowing me to get to know them better and – in some cases – develop deeper social contacts or even friendships. In addition to the recorded (and transcribed) life-narratives, I also gathered numerous ‘informal narrative accounts’, through the informal conversations that I would have throughout my fieldwork. I immersed myself in the local life, attended cultural and social events, weddings, christenings, quiz nights, festivals, family occasions. I also looked at written work by, or on, British Cypriots, such as articles in papers and magazines, and non-fiction in the form of poems and novels, but also at visual art like photography. ‘Inhaling’ the daily life through interactions with the different groups and individuals (both natives and migrants), allowed for a more ‘holistic’ impression. I believe that those experiences are at least as important as the interviews, and I would not have been able to gain my insights and appreciation for my research area without them. In fact, in quite a few cases the actual interview was an ‘opening’ for an extended contact with the participant, leading to informal and regular interactions throughout and after my fieldwork period. These informal occasions allowed for further illumination of trends that I started to recognise during the course of my study. I would also frequently turn to local ‘key informants’ (such as academics and representatives of various associations) for informal meetings, to aid my understanding as I went along. The totality of the experience is an important source to

draw on, 'which may not, cannot, be cerebrally written down at the time. It is recorded in memory, body and all senses. Ideas and themes have worked through the whole being throughout the experience of fieldwork' (Okely 1994: 21).

Hence, my fieldwork approach, which demonstrates a substantial overlap and interplay between narrative interviews and ethnographic data collection, could best be described as a 'narrative ethnography', a form of fieldwork which has grown in practice over recent years as a result of postmodern recognition of the importance of a plurality of voices from the field as well as of the increasing analytic self-consciousness amongst researchers, particularly in terms of representational practice (Abu-Lughod 2006; Gubrium and Holstein 1999). This approach, which inverts the search for homogeneity, coherence and timelessness, was coined by Lila Abu-Lughod (2006) as 'ethnography of the particular' and proposes experimentation with fieldwork-based narratives that by textual means emphasise the particularity of people's lives and experiences, rather than searching for a common model. The danger is that, by describing the complexity of individual behaviour through predefined categories and formal labelling, the researcher virtually constructs the object in question in order to make it fit the framework. Abu-Lughod furthermore warns against the professional discourse of 'objectivity' and expertise, which, she argues, 'is inevitably a language of power [...] of those who seem to stand apart from and outside of what they are describing' (2006: 160). Within this power relation the hierarchy is inevitably established in favour of the academic viewpoint and against everyday life conversations.³² The life of individuals is a complex process, which is not accountable for by bounded and fixed entities. Furthermore, narratives offer a notion of time that is important in describing relations and the elaborations of these. And moreover, narratives illustrate the unpredictability of the course of a day or a life and at the same time reveal the similarities that lie under the surface of specific labels. According to Abu-Lughod 'the ethnography of the particular' can provide a discourse of familiarity that is defined by human convention rather than professional categories.

³² In fact Abu-Lughod stresses how the work of untrained anthropologists often shows refreshingly unconventional methods, including the ideals that she advocates: more openness about their positionality, less assertive of their scientific authority, and more focused on individuals.

Though my research was – and remains – essentially ‘narrative inclined’ (Gubrium and Holstein 1999: 570), the collection of other ethnographic data was essential in terms of enhancing variety and representation, as the different contexts in which statements were made added to my ability to check their ‘weight’ and soundness. For example, it allowed me to see if statements made by participants in an interview setting were made by others in everyday life, or whether it was a ‘spontaneous’ comment by a participant or ‘engineered’ by me in a specific question (see Bernard 1994: 262).

All interviews, which ranged from one to several hours, were conducted in person by me, at a time and place of the participant’s choice.³³ In most cases I would have met the participant at least once before the official interview, hence they were familiar with me – to different extents – and my area of research. In some instances, however, the interview was our first face-to-face meeting. In those cases, the participant would have heard about me from a mutual friend or acquaintance, and hence was comfortable to conduct the interview during our first meeting. Regardless of whether we had met or not prior to the initial interview, in most cases the contact would develop over the months to follow and there would be frequent points of communication – though some contacts were more frequent or ‘deeper’ than others. Interviews were conducted in an interactive, dialogic manner and – like any other kind of social interaction – structured by both the participants and myself (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 151-152). I would tell the participants that I was interested in their life story, in order to find out how feelings and ideas of ‘home’, ‘identity’ and ‘belonging’ were perceived and shaped amongst British-born Cypriot returnees. Most stories would start off chronologically – place of birth, upbringing, parents’ background – and some participants would continue that way, talking me through their life up to today, pretty much in a chronological order. But most would jump back and forth along the timeline, as memories were triggered and questions were raised. Some participants would produce a monologue and required very little prompting, whilst others needed

³³ All interviews were conducted in English, the first language of all my participants and for many other residents in Cyprus. English is widely spoken and often used as the main language of communication in everyday life in Cyprus due to the island’s diverse population as well as its colonial history. Hence, my initial worry about my limited knowledge of the Greek (and Turkish) language was soon diminished as I blended in with the local way of life and communication.

– and asked for – more exact questions. However, whatever the participant’s style of narrating, the questions would arise from our conversation, not from prescribed enquiries, which allowed the story to shape itself in a most honest and spontaneous way. The participants’ varying narrating styles and levels of articulation naturally caused me to quote some participants more often than others.³⁴ The selection of certain quotes (by certain individuals) as best capturing a particular finding not only allows for a smoother reading of the thesis, it also enables the reader to get to ‘know’ certain characters along the way, developing a feel for their life stories. However, the voices of *all* participants – whether literally quoted or not – were taken into account when analysing my data, and are subsequently represented in this thesis. A list of my 42 main participants, with brief biographical data against their pseudonyms, is given in Appendix 2.

The informal conversation style of interviewing allowed me to – often spontaneously – explore the same question more than once using different wording during the interview, which contributed to the robustness and cross-checking of the interview process.³⁵ The less questions are prescribed and the less enquires structured before the interview, the more there is to be learned (see Goodson and Sikes 2001). The insights concerned migration histories and motives, childhood memories, family and gender dynamics, employment and education, socio-cultural experiences and adjustments, but also hybridised, highly personalised insights and emotions that are not easily classified. Through the life-narratives of these second-generation returnees in Cyprus, ‘unique glimpses of the lived interior of migration processes’ (Benmayor and

³⁴ Overall, this thesis includes literal quotes of approximately three-quarters of the narratives collected (although the length and the frequency of quotes used vary per individual narrative). Although my overall sample was equally balanced between male (20) and female (22) participants, there is a slight majority of female ‘voices’ used in the quotes selected. This was not deliberate, but probably neither was it purely accidental. On the whole women were more ‘available’ to give me longer and repeat interviews, and I tended to form closer friendship bonds with some of my female participants than I did with males – reflecting, undoubtedly, my gendered positionality within ‘the field’.

³⁵ This does not mean, however, that different answers to the same questions or ‘contradicting’ statements diminish their validity. To the contrary, coming back to a similar point more than once allows the participant to reflect on his/her story throughout the narration process. Often participants have never thought about a certain topic until the interview, hence statements are often (re)shaped, (re)evaluated and altered throughout course of the interview, making it a highly dynamic and reflective process. As Kleinman and Copp suggest, good qualitative accounts are complex and offer ‘contradictions and ironies rather than mundane descriptions’ (1993: 53).

Skotnes 1994: 14) were offered and creative insights generated into the linked meanings of 'migration', 'return', 'home' and 'belonging'. A story, a narrative, leads one through time by tying events and the movements in between together, allowing coherence and meaning to emerge, and thus 'can itself be perceived as a form of movement' (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 28). My epistemological stance on the interview as a flexible, collaborative and intersubjective encounter is perfectly summed up by Hoffman:

As the interview has become democratized, we no longer look to experts to learn about social phenomena but go directly to those experiencing the social phenomena themselves. Researchers are more committed to allowing the people involved to speak for themselves in their own way. The interview, therefore, has become the shared task of 'collaboration' (Hoffman 2007: 319).

3.6 POSITIONALITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Clearly, my research did not provide a fieldwork setting according to the 'classical' understanding of ethnography (as traditionally applied especially in the field of anthropology), which used to be associated with the study of 'non-western' or 'non-industrial' societies. In fact, one can argue that the notion of the 'field' is quite abstract, particularly in the case of my research topic. There was no defined 'field' in the form of a town, village or neighbourhood. My participants were from various areas of the UK and had moved to various areas of Cyprus. Throughout my fieldwork (and indeed this thesis) I keep on referring to 'the field' to describe the spaces where I conducted my empirical research, not because I feel that this is the ideal term to use, but rather out of failure to find a better one. First of all, there is the question 'where or what is "the field"?', which is particularly relevant when doing small-scale studies in complex large-scale societies. Is Cyprus 'my field'? Or is the island divided into different 'fields'? Is Europe 'my field'? Or the wider global society? Or perhaps 'the field' is an imaginary place, or 'third space', comprised of all the above; hence 'my field' is the diasporic space occupied by British-born Cypriots. These are questions that are particularly relevant regarding ethnographic research in the contemporary globalised world. As Gullestad suggests, 'one may discern a movement towards new ways of chopping up society and reconstructing the relationships among the pieces' (1989: 72).

However, further – and stronger – feelings of ambivalence towards the term ‘the field’ surfaced as I found myself feeling uncomfortable at times when talking about being ‘in the field’; somehow it sounded authoritative or arrogant. Essentially, the participants and I both occupied the same cultural and social spaces, where we lived, worked and socialised. Furthermore, the epistemology of contemporary ethnographic research depends on ‘the principle of interaction and the “reciprocity of perspectives” between actors’ (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 256), which take place in a mutually shared environment. Atkinson and Hammersley (1994: 256) stress that ethnographers feel ‘epistemological, personal, and moral commitment to the “hosts”’, a concern also addressed by feminist scholars (for instance Stanley 1990; Stanley and Wise 1983). Though I do feel strong moral and ethical commitments towards my participants, and will treat their stories and friendships with the utmost integrity and discretion, I do not think that my discomfort with the expression ‘being in the field’ derives from moral concerns. Perhaps I find the term inappropriate in view of the participants’ *and* my own mobility and ‘cosmopolitanism’ (whether imagined or ‘real’), in which ‘a field’ sounds too ‘fenced’. Or maybe the thought that I am ‘in the field’, whilst they are not, creates an artificial distance in my mind. After all, in these times of increased global mobility and ‘development’, where spatial distances seem to be shrinking and boundaries between cultures are becoming blurrier, ‘what is “home” and what is “abroad” is no longer always clear’ (Eriksen 2001: 29). Having led a rather ‘migratory lifestyle’ since leaving my native country fourteen years ago, and having primarily communicated in languages other than my mother tongue since then, this is certainly something I can identify with. Such dynamics and the heterogeneity of ‘modern’ societies further blur the distinction between ‘self’ and ‘other’, or ‘insider’ and/or ‘outsider’.

Earlier scholarly discussions of the insider/outsider issue perceived the researcher to be either an ‘insider’ or an ‘outsider’, with each status containing its particular advantages and disadvantages (Merriam et al. 2001). From this position I – as a Dutch native without any Cypriot ancestral ties – would undoubtedly be placed in the ‘outsider’ box. However, more recent debates have stressed the complexity inherent

in either status and have acknowledged that the typical characteristics of insider/outsider are far too simplistic and that the boundaries between the two positions are by no means static and clearly defined (Merriam et al. 2001). Eriksen (2001: 30) gives the example of 'a German ethnographer [who] may, in important respects, have more in common with middle-class, urban Kenyans than with neo-Nazi skinheads from his or her own hometown'. Though this example may be rather 'extreme', it illuminates how the insider/outsider divide is being challenged in this era of 'postmodern ethnographies'. During the course of my study I experienced moments of being both 'insider' and 'outsider', depending on a number of factors such as gender, social class, education, interests and overall life experiences. For instance, I felt much more of an 'insider' during a conversation about 'how to balance a career-family-relationship' with Anti, a British-born Cypriot lecturer who returned to Cyprus about ten years ago and now teaches at one of the universities there, than when discussing the exact same topic with one of my Dutch childhood classmates, who lives with her husband and their two children in our small hometown. But then, when the topic of conversation with Anti would change to 'growing up in a Cypriot family home in Liverpool with parents who run a fish and chip business', my position would shift towards what one would call an 'outsider'. Positionality rests on the idea that culture is not solid and that positions can shift. It is important to be open to such shifting of positions when doing fieldwork, because it is only in the actual 'field' 'where these issues are personally encountered in sometimes unanticipated, and often subtle ways' (Merriam et al. 2001: 406).

Having said that, of course 'the field' is mainly an epistemological term, a mindset – and perhaps the closer 'the researched culture' resembles our own, or the more we identify with our participants, the more problematic a term such as 'the field' becomes in the researcher's frame of mind. Hence, my 'issue' with 'the field' appears to derive from one of the typical features of ethnographic research nowadays, which is the recognition that ethnography is not restricted to the study of 'other', non-industrial, and geographically remote cultures and societies, but that it has moved on and also applies to the study of cultures, social surroundings and experiences very similar to our own (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 250).

Unlike in early ethnographic writings, where the researchers as persons were deliberately left out and their voices suppressed as they were perceived to obstruct objectivity (Daly 1997: 352-353; Kleinmann and Copp 1993: 2; Tedlock 1991: 71-72), contemporary social-science scholars often stress the importance of positionality and critical self-reflexivity (see for example Clifford and Marcus 1986; Denzin and Lincoln 1994), or even argue that through thorough methodological practice of reflexivity a credible argument for objectivity can be constructed, rather than the often presumed subjectivism (see for example Marcus 1995: 112). My personal 'life luggage' – in terms of world views, cultural practices and life experience – which I bring into 'the field', undoubtedly influences my views and perceptions of someone else's cultural or social world. Inevitably, a strong autobiographical element drives the interest of any ethnographic researcher as they, as Nader (1972: 303) puts it, 'value studying what they like and liking what they study'. Hence, I will by no means try to misleadingly 'remove' myself from my thesis. I will let my own personality and positionality surface throughout the story, wherever necessary, for 'the purpose of methodological clarification and a better understanding of how the informants' lives were observed and interpreted' (Tsuda 2003: 9). However, I believe there is a big difference between being 'self-absorbed' and 'participant-absorbed', and throughout my fieldwork and writing I have continuously aimed for the latter.

Though the complete self-removal of the researcher from the story is increasingly being challenged by postmodern sensibilities on the importance of self-reflexivity in the final ethnographic account, the emotions and relationships developed during the data collection phase are generally – and quite paradoxically – ignored once it is time to write up as it seems an assumption that data analysis requires physical distance, in order to foster an 'objective analysis' (Daly 1997: 351). This, however, ignores the valuable and vital role participants play in the creation of a credible, multi-vocal (rather than a monophonic) story, on which I will further elaborate in section 3.8, where I will discuss my data analysis.

A major goal throughout my fieldwork and data-analysis was to adopt (within my means and timeframe) a reciprocal research approach. Conducting interviews in an

interactive, dialogic manner encourages self-reflection and deeper understanding on the part of the persons being researched, but also requires a certain degree of self-disclosure on behalf of the researcher (Lather 1986: 266). Answering participants' questions about my own life, or making a comment disclosing a bit about myself, 'humanised' the setting and encouraged a natural flow of the dialogue, which in turn encouraged the depth and openness of the interview. Such an interactive and collaborative approach allows greater mutual understanding. When researcher and participant understand each other through a 'healthy' dialogue, and are able to negotiate meaning, a mature and nuanced representation is likely to emerge. This approach, however, 'is opposed to mainstream interview norms where interview respondents' questions about the interviewer's own life are deflected' (Lather 1986: 266). Furthermore, as I spent a considerable amount of time 'in the field' and I would – as mentioned earlier – meet my participants on different occasions and in different settings, it was a rather natural development that they got to know me beyond 'the researcher'. Occasionally this would lead to questions like 'Am I now talking to Janine my friend or Janine the researcher?', but this was always in a light-hearted way and generally people were very interested in the study and keen to give their input at any time. I never, however, felt uncomfortable about this, neither did I consciously 'switch hats' or feel the need to 'announce' which hat I was wearing (see for example Brayboy and Deyle 2000: 165). Generally, people knew about the research I was doing and if not, it would soon enough come up in the conversation. If I would ask a specific research-oriented question to someone I had just met for the first time, I would clarify why I was asking that specific question and explain about my research. In some settings or situations, however, it was impossible – or would have been rather awkward – to explain myself. For example, when I was at the Nicosia branch of *The Bodyshop* I overheard a personal conversation between two British Cypriot girls, and although I did not approach them, I must admit that the conversation caused me to hang around the shop a bit longer than necessary. Though none of this particular conversation is included in this thesis, it does indicate that it can sometimes be complicated to foresee what sort of data will be collected, which may make it difficult to ask for consent, particularly in public spaces (Flick 2006: 51-53).

It is important to note, however, that in my particular study, participants were unlikely to be in a vulnerable situation, to be oppressed due to the experience of being interviewed or to be rendered powerless. In that sense, no unequal power relations arose during my study, as it did not involve 'vulnerable people' (such as young children or undocumented migrants) or participants who could feel a sense of 'obligation' to take part (as could be the case with students, prisoners or patients for example).³⁶ After establishing the initial contacts with the participants I would provide them with written or oral information on the research and what it involves. Sufficient and adequate information is linked to consent given by the participants and is a basis for the consent to be given voluntarily (Flick 2006: 49). Personally I found informed consent to be an interactive process between my participants and myself, through which I ensured a clear understanding of the purpose of the research and the methods of data collection. As mentioned earlier, my participants were not part of so-called 'vulnerable groups' and were competent to understand my request, reflect and decide to consent or not. However, as I was interested in life-stories, people's reactions when confronted with personal issues could never be totally anticipated. Hence, occasionally there were moments of tension and emotion during the interviews and conversations, sometimes brought on by something 'internal', like a particular memory or feeling that would crop up whilst narrating a personal life story, or by the 'interference' of a spouse who would stir up the conversation. During these occasions, I relied on my own character and experiences, as well as research training, which I trust form a solid base to properly respond to such moments.

As power-based dynamics are inherent in any kind of research, power relations always need to be taken into consideration when conducting qualitative research (Merriam et al. 2001). As an ethnographer you draw on your entire personality during the research process, as the investment of interpersonal skills is at least as important as professional skills. 'For this reason, many emerge from the field exhausted, but with a material of extraordinary richness and depth. At the same time, this degree of

³⁶ Having said this, I do acknowledge that the emotional circumstances triggered by the very narrative process of the life-story may conceivably engender feelings of vulnerability on the part of the participant.

personal involvement has important ethical implications' (Eriksen 2001: 27-28). Not only the intensity and the length of my fieldwork, but also the fact that many of my participants are of the same 'generation' as myself,³⁷ led to the natural development of friendships and confidential relationships in the field, which has led to growth on many levels, academically and beyond. For me personally, ethical principles, whilst doing research, were essentially down to the human values of reflection and consideration. After all, the ability to place yourself in the participant's position and to consider how you would like things to be if you were in their shoes provides a solid foundation in the case of ethical dilemmas.

All information provided by participants or otherwise acquired (for example through 'observation') is confidential and pseudonymised, and any defining characteristics that may inform their identity have been excluded. I am aware that the issue of confidentiality or anonymity can be potentially problematic when using longer excerpts from narratives, as they make it easier to identify a person, particularly since the island of Cyprus is a relatively small place. In such cases, the assurance of the protection of the individual's identity was always a priority. Furthermore, through the involvement and inclusion of my participants during the data analysis – to which I will refer in section 3.8 – I aimed to ensure that the participants are comfortable and identify with the text. This 'other' form of reflexivity – reflecting the research data and its analysis back to the participants – helps further to ease any potential ethical dilemmas as well as any uncomfortable feelings with the representation of the findings. Such a tactic is not only a democratic approach, but also an extra tool of checking descriptive and interpretive validity.

3.7 FURTHER METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

The point is that questions of form are not prior, the form itself should emerge out of the joint work of the ethnographer and [her ...] partners' (Tyler 1986: 127)

³⁷ Many of my participants were born in the 1960s and 1970s, as their parents had moved from Cyprus to the UK mainly in the 1950s and 1960s. Hence here I refer to the understanding of the term 'generation' as 'cohort'.

When I think about my fieldwork period in Cyprus and the UK, I visualise a patchwork quilt, a vibrant collage produced by participants and myself, by stories and conversations, by places and events, by experiences and emotions. Some patches might be more vividly coloured than others, or are made up of a different fabric; some patches occur frequently, while others only take up a tiny fraction of the quilt. However, each patch – no matter its size, vibrancy or visibility – has made its way into this quilt, and hence has contributed to its whole. The biggest challenge for me, as the ‘presenter’, is how to analyse this patchwork without destroying its whole, whilst at the same time respecting and doing justice to its individual patches, whatever their size or vivacity, and their relationship to each other.

Though this study does not start by theories already formulated in advance (i.e. *ab initio* hypotheses) and then testing them, but uses inductive strategies, it was impossible and, indeed, undesirable to totally free myself from previous theoretical awareness or personal anticipations. Hence, prior to my extensive fieldwork period in Cyprus I could not avoid having some visions or perhaps premature ideas of what this patchwork might look like. I believe this was inevitable and vital for my preparation and motivation prior to my fieldwork. After all, it would have been quite challenging to be enthused and inspired about my study on the one hand, while claiming to be a blank sheet of paper, free from any previous understandings, on the other. Furthermore, one should know what one is interested in before embarking on fieldwork, which in my case was – and is – ‘perceptions and feelings of home and belonging amongst British-Cypriots in Cyprus’. Otherwise, ‘one will end up knowing too little about everything rather than knowing enough about something’ (Eriksen 2001: 29). My thesis in particular, needed to focus on certain topics that were broadly decided on the outset, as my study is part of a wider project on second-generation ‘return migration’. However, the breadth of the research areas defined by the AHRC and the flexibility and openness of my team colleagues at the Universities of Sussex and Brighton allowed plenty of space for new angles and concepts to emerge in my investigation. Therefore, the epistemological line of using inductive strategies enabled me to approach the social context with an ‘open mind’, with the aim to discover the new, and develop notions of how the phenomena under study really work from the

perspective of the participants, rather than from critical models or ideology-based theories (see Flick 2006: 12); an approach which, furthermore, encourages an intersection of disciplines and the borrowing of illuminating insights from one another.³⁸ It is this ‘blurring of genres’ that has paved the way for the creation of new disciplines, or, if you will, ‘interdisciplines’ (such as *migration studies*) ‘which are hybrids of intellectual concerns and issues, frequently with borrowed, appropriated, adapted, and *bricoleur*-style methods crafted on the spot for particular analytic tasks’ (Lincoln 2004: 54).

Though I reviewed a wide range of literature discussing the history of migration to and from Cyprus, I made a conscious effort, prior and during my fieldwork period, not to immerse myself in literatures which discuss theories or concepts related to my topics of research. Hence, in that sense my methodology – and data analysis – has been inspired by the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967), in which theory follows data rather than preceding it. However, as for many other qualitative researchers, whilst grounded theory has *influenced* my approach to a certain extent, it has by no means been used in its original form or fully (see Bryman and Burgess 1994). While I adopted the basic principles of a bottom-up approach – such as applying ‘the principle of openness’ (Flick 2006: 98), starting out without an initial hypothesis, and extracting concepts and themes out of the data – I maintained a wariness towards the idea of ‘moving from data to abstract categories’ (Martin and Turner 1986: 147), out of apprehension towards ‘the ways the grounded theory method “jettisons” data’ (Richards and Richards 1994: 150). The research project my participants and I developed called for a ‘post-modern ethnography’ which ‘does not move towards abstraction, away from life, but back to experience’ (Tyler 1986: 135). Furthermore, I do not – and cannot – claim that theory emerged from my data. ‘Emergence’ is a term often used in discussions on qualitative data collection and analysis. This suggests, however, as Daly – guarded like other scholars about the ‘emergence of theory’ – satirically observes, that ‘theory emerges from data in the same way that a picture eventually emerges from one of those three-dimensional posters [...] if you stare at it

³⁸ For ‘blurring of genres’, ‘crossover methods’ and ‘interdisciplinary projects’ see Denzin and Lincoln (2003); Lincoln (2004); Lindner (2004); and Winter (2004).

long enough the real picture will emerge from the random maze of color [...]' (Daly 1997: 348). The concepts materialised through qualitative research, however, form 'the building blocks of theories [though] they do not constitute theories in their own right' (Bryman and Burgess 1994: 220). Along these lines, I hope that the themes and concepts that come forward in this thesis will be 'building blocks' in the development of the (still rather narrow) conversation on second-generation return migration and will contribute to the existing academic discussion on 'home and belonging'.

Throughout the process of data collection and analysis I tried to stay true to the participants' stories and, where necessary, open about my own role in presenting them, in order to preserve the participants' perceptions of reality. As I said, though I adopted an essentially inductive research approach I did not enter 'the field' totally free from anticipations or visions about the period ahead of me. However, quite soon after I arrived and started conducting interviews and immersing myself in the local life, all the prior expectations or preconceived concepts – in academic terms – seemed to evaporate effortlessly. The enticement of the participants' stories managed to pull me in rather quickly and soon enough all traces of theory vanished in order to make space for the participants' perceptions and narrations of 'home', 'identity' and 'belonging'. Being far away – both physically and mentally – from academia allowed me to adopt the interactive, dialogic approach I had hoped for, mainly through narrative interviews and everyday 'observations'.

Before moving on the next and final section of this chapter, which discusses data analysis, I should make a note on my slight feeling of ambivalence regarding the expression 'participant observation'. First of all, the term creates an impression of distance, which in my case would be artificial. I did not sit down to 'observe' my participants from a distance, notepad in hand. The way I learned about their lives and experiences was by attending social events, being invited to their dinner parties or just running into them, whilst wandering downtown – simply by 'just-being-in-the-world', which is, as Atkinson and Hammersley suggest, 'not a particular research technique but [...] a characteristic of [social] researchers' because 'we cannot study the social world without being part of it' (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 249). Of course

‘participant observation’ sounds more academically sound than ‘hanging out’ or ‘socialising’, which I suppose is a justified enough reason to use the former term. Hence, perhaps my thesis will modestly follow Tyler’s idea of ‘post-modern ethnography’, which forefronts dialogue as opposed to monologue and seeks to dissolve the disjunction between ‘observer’ and ‘observed’; ‘instead [there is] the mutual dialogical production of a discourse, of a story of sorts’ (Tyler 1986: 126).

Eriksen has observed that fieldwork in contemporary urban settings tends to be more discontinuous than fieldwork in a more ‘traditional’ or ‘exotic’ village setting, where ‘one is never left alone’ (2001: 25). This discontinuity in a way overlaps with my earlier reference to the ambiguous meaning of ‘the field’. Like there is no smoothly defined ‘field’ – particularly when conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the contemporary world – there is no smoothly continuous ‘work’, in the form of data collection. My interviews would take place in several urban areas across the island – namely Nicosia (‘north’ and ‘south’), Limassol, Larnaca, Kyrenia and Güzelyurt (Morphou), or their suburbs, as these are the places where British-born Cypriot ‘returnees’ mainly tend to settle.³⁹ Though these cities are just a fraction of the size of metropolitan European cities like Athens, London or Paris, and sometimes manifest a certain level of intimacy that may remind one of village life, most of my participants were juggling busy careers, family and social life, like most city-dwellers in the industrialised world. Hence, some of my interviews had to be planned well in advance. Having said that, I must note that most of the participants very willingly made plenty of time to meet up and talked leisurely and lengthily – something that virtually all of them appreciatively attributed to ‘the Mediterranean way of life’ which is ‘a world away from the rat race in the UK’. However, unlike Eriksen (2001: 25) suggests, I did not feel that the contemporary setting of my fieldwork made the ‘continuous immersion in local life difficult’. It is true that – rather than immediately facing ‘the natives’ when stepping out of a hut in some remote tribal village – I would leave my apartment and find myself in a busy street in

³⁹ From my experience, most of the British-born Cypriots who ‘return’ to the island tend to settle in cities – even if their parents or grandparents came from rural areas – mainly for professional reasons. In any case, as in quite a number of cases the (grand)parents originated from ‘the other side’ of the island (i.e. Greek Cypriots from ‘the north’ and Turkish Cypriots from ‘the south’) actual ‘return’ to their ‘place of origin’ would have been infeasible.

central Nicosia, where I quite certainly would not be greeted by ‘a British-born Cypriot’ first thing in the morning; but neither would my participants. Like them I would have to travel – whether by foot, car or cab – to get to our meeting. We would meet in coffee shops, surrounded by the buzz of everyday city life, at offices over lunch break, or in their homes where children would play in the other room and curious family members pop their heads round the door. In the evening I would go to places – restaurants, events, venues – just as the British Cypriots do. However, the clientele or guests in these places would not be exclusively British-born Cypriot – anything but. The crowd would often be extremely diverse: native Cypriots, repatriated Cypriots, expats, migrants, tourists. Hence, during social events or gatherings I was hardly ever in the company of merely British-born Cypriots, and neither were they, apart from the odd quiz night – arranged by a *facebook* group – or a more intimate meeting of family or friends. My feeling is that I *was* ‘immersed in local life’, though, like my participants – a local life where the social and cultural spaces are not just occupied by British Cypriots, but by a diverse range of residents, and where we all, at the end of the day, withdraw ourselves to our private residences and shut the door behind us. After all, my main focus is on the participants’ personal narratives which are ‘[s]tories in, rather than, of the field’ (Gubrium and Holstein 1999: 563).

3.8 APPROACHES TO DATA ANALYSIS

Following informed consent, all interviews and group discussions were recorded and then transcribed at some later point. Ideally I would have produced the transcripts as soon as possible after the interview. However, as I transcribed the interviews myself, which proved to be a considerable task, the time-span between the recording and actual transcription very heavily depended on my schedule and responsibilities at the time. Despite the overwhelming effort of transcribing so many pages, it proved to be a worthwhile effort as the actual time of transcription brought forth the best ideas and understanding of themes. Furthermore, listening to the audio recording brought me back to the actual experiences of the interview, such as the sound of the voice, the image of the person across from me, the rhythm of the interview and the setting. After transcribing approximately half of the recorded material, I was able to clearly identify

certain themes which repeated themselves throughout the narratives, which gave me the confidence to listen to the remaining recordings several times and then transcribe the most significant parts. My data analysis began with what Adair and Goodson (2006) have named 'bathing in the data': extensively listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts until certain themes start to materialise. Hence, my initial analysis follows the basic principles of thematic analysis. Only once saturation occurred for each identified theme, did I move on to the writing of the main empirical chapters, which are built around these themes and were introduced in Chapter 1.

Though most ethnographies today have moved from 'authoritative monologue to involved dialogue between ethnographer and interlocutor' (Lassiter 2005: 3), they still tend to be written in isolation, distanced from the field and the participants. 'Few ethnographers [...] have sought to extend the metaphor of dialogue to its logical next step – the collaborative reading of interpretation, between the ethnographer and his or her interlocutors' (Lassiter 2005: 3). My ethnographic study aimed to take this dialogue to its next step by sitting down with my participants to present and discuss the themes and my interpretations of the data with them. This approach, which has been referred to as 'collaborative' (Lassiter 2005) or 'reciprocal ethnography' (Lawless 1992, 1993) is not the same, however, as asking participants to verify the transcripts, which has become a commonly practised step in most ethnographic research out of ethical or bureaucratic concern, but 'not one that necessarily makes dialogue central to practicing and writing ethnography' (Lassiter 2000: 606). While most ethnographers now acknowledge that the dialogue – and its presentation – is a central and critical element in all ethnographies (see for example Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1973), many give their ethnographic interpretations back to their participants 'after we've finished writing them often hoping that our texts will be liked and appreciated, and our consultants sometimes respond with comments. Positive or negative, however, their interpretations of our interpretations have little bearing on the shape of the final ethnographic product' (Lassiter 2005: 9). Collaborative or reciprocal ethnographers take the emerging analysis back to at least a subsample of participants who offer critique, interpretation and further dialogue, allowing the participants to take part in the decision-making processes that claim to present knowledge about them (see also

Daly 1997; Lather 1986) – or as Lawless puts it rather well and simply: ‘The scholar presents her interpretations; the native responds to that interpretation; the scholar, then, has to adjust her lens and determine [...] in what ways they are and are not compatible’ (Lawless 1992: 310). This is not only important in terms of verification of the interpretation and presentation of the participants’ narratives, but also in terms of rethinking my own memories and interpretations of the total experience, which are – even when unwritten – inscribed in my being.

In order to carry out such an approach a significant part of my data analysis and empirical writing took place in Cyprus, which I revisited and stayed for a few months in my ‘final’ DPhil year. Hence, chapter priorities surfaced through collaborative experiencing, assessment and reassessment. Furthermore, the three main empirical chapters of my thesis were individually discussed with, and read by, a subsample of 10 participants during a follow-up visit to Cyprus in 2009.⁴⁰ Despite my initial feeling of apprehension about this process, particularly in terms of anxiety about the potential reactions, this ‘feedback’ approach was received very positively and proved to be reassuring for both the participants and me as the researcher. After reading the drafts, the participants expressed themselves as pleasantly surprised by my interpretations, which in turn caused me to be pleasantly surprised (and honoured) by their reactions. Their surprise mainly derived from the realisation of how well they could find themselves in the accounts and how certain feelings and experiences were shared by others who they had never met. Some responded emotionally to the interpretations, like one female participant who welled up and stated ‘you really put your finger on things; it feels like my feelings have finally been put into words’. Another participant nodded and laughed out loud when reading the excerpts of his peers and said he was made to ‘feel proud of [him]self and the others’. They showed great interest in my interpretations and asked for clarification about certain concepts or terms that they were not familiar with. They even showed appreciation for those interpretations that did not apply directly to them, as they could often relate them to other ‘returnees’

⁴⁰ These 10 individuals were chosen largely on the basis of their availability and interest in the research, but I do feel reasonably confident that they also represent a fair cross-section of my participants. The subsample was located in Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol.

they know. Frankly, I did not anticipate such a positive response – but it was the greatest reward I could have hoped for. Consequently, my ‘lens’ required minimal adjustment. Of course, not all participants took part in these reciprocal discussions; hence it is possible that others would have been more critical. However, I tried to put together a subsample that reflected the diversity of my overall sample, that is to say in terms of gender, professional background and family status.

The spine of each empirical chapter that follows is composed of pieces of the participants’ stories – either quoted or paraphrased – strung together forming a central theme. Once the ‘themes’ were in place, hence the spine for each chapter developed, I turned to the relevant literature and interweaved the data in order to develop theoretically grounded knowledge. This way a story-line is constructed that helps my readers to comprehend the process, reading and motivation behind the text, whilst leaving them some space to bring their own meaning and interpretation. This ‘postmodern [approach] directs us to drop the pretence of intellectual, objective accounts and formulates texts that keep all voices in play’ (Daly 1997: 356). Hence data collection and analysis form an interlinked element, in which dialogue and collaboration are key words, which not only serves the ethical and humanistic side of this thesis, but also strengthens its scholarly value.

Chapter 4

Childhood Memories of the Parental Homeland

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 1, transnational links of the second generation with their parents' country of origin are little explored in the literature on migrant transnationalism. Even less explored are their experiences of childhood visits to the parental 'homeland' and their more permanent return as adults later in life; and the connection, and contrast, between these two forms of 'return' mobility. Following a chronological biographical sequence, this and the following two empirical chapters aim to provide insight into the lived experiences of British-born Greek Cypriots who have returned to Cyprus. Starting with childhood memories, followed by adulthood experiences, the participants talk us through their lives, until they reach 'today' – the moment of narration – and *their* conclusion of 'who am I today?' Hence, the narration process develops from participants' early memories, mostly descriptive, to a more analytical and reflective understanding of their feelings of 'home' and 'belonging' today. In order to stay true to the participants' narration processes, I try to follow this natural development by gradually introducing relevant literature and concepts to illuminate some of the findings along the way, rather than 'forcing' them in from the outset. In Chapter 6, the third of this sequence of life-story chapters, I make a more concerted attempt to interpret the findings of the three chapters within the relevant conceptual frameworks of home, belonging, identity, hybridity and 'third spaces'. Through the diversity of personal experiences, and ways of articulating them, a shared story-line and conclusion are revealed, as well as a broader problematic that may concern other migrant cohorts today. Chapter 7 then repeats this exercise for the smaller Turkish-Cypriot subsample, telescoping the chronological storyline into one chapter, drawing out similarities and differences with the larger Greek-Cypriot study.

This chapter, then, which sets off the empirical component of the thesis, aims to explore those parts of the participants' life narratives which refer to impressions and images of Cyprus and 'Cypriotness' developed whilst growing up.⁴¹ Of course, childhood boundaries are blurred, and we will hear different interpretations of 'homeland' visits and memories as the child matures into adulthood. Moreover, memories are inevitably reconstructed post hoc. If articulating memory is an act of representation (and of performance in the interview setting), one may question its relationship to 'facts', and to what extent memories are 'real' and 'authoritative' reconstructions of self, home, and history (Agnew 2005: 7). Yet, is this the right question to ask? Rather than a passive collection of facts, memories are continuously made and remade, as people shape the past into a set of meanings that make sense in a changing present (Giles 2002: 23-24). This will be abundantly evident in the narratives included in the following chapters.

The main body of this – mainly descriptive – chapter will address three key childhood-related phases in the participants' narratives: childhood memories of growing up 'Cypriot' in the UK, which overlaps with the second segment of childhood memories of travelling to Cyprus, finally leading to adult reflections on such memories. Attention is paid to the narrations of childhood visits to Cyprus, the role these visits played in the development of views and expectations towards life in Cyprus, and how such views were often challenged or contrasted upon the eventual return later on in life.

My findings show how, in contrast to their 'strict' and protective upbringing in the UK, participants experienced a much greater sense of freedom during their childhood holidays (or in some cases longer-term stays) in Cyprus. In fact, *safety* and *freedom* are terms that stood out throughout the participants' childhood-related memories of Cyprus, both in their own experiences as well as in their perceptions of their parents'

⁴¹ The findings presented in this chapter were presented at the AHRC/CRONEM Conference on 'Diasporas, Migration and Identities: Crossing Boundaries, New Directions', University of Surrey, 11-12 June 2009; and will be published as part of a co-authored paper (King, Christou and Teerling 2011) in *Global Networks*, comparing the experiences of childhood visits to the parental 'homeland' of Greek-Americans, Greek-Germans and British-born Greek Cypriots. A longer, preliminary version of this paper has already been issued as a Sussex Centre of Migration Research Working Paper (King, Christou and Teerling 2009). I acknowledge insights brought by my co-authors in these papers, which have been incorporated into my analysis in this chapter.

attitudes. In nearly all narratives, (pre-teen) childhood return trips to Cyprus with parents are remembered in glowing terms. However, when trying to make a connection between these childhood times in Cyprus and decisions for a more permanent return, later as adults, only a few saw a direct link. Hence, although holidays to Cyprus were frequent and positive events during most of the participants' childhoods, and (at times romanticised) familial narratives of Cyprus tended to be 'recycled' in the UK (cf. Panagakos 2004), the potential hypothesis that childhood visits were instrumental in installing a desire for a more permanent return later on in life is only partially supported. Returns took place for many other, individualised, reasons. Nevertheless, even if there was little direct causal connection, childhood memories *did* influence participants' expectations and impressions of Cyprus when returning as adults. Consequently, quite a few participants experienced a sense of disillusionment upon their return, when confronted with a 'homeland' so different from the 'old' Cyprus of their memories. They highlighted the changing relations with family and friends, the impact of recent mass immigration and the increased levels of materialism.⁴² Nevertheless, they see Cyprus as a favourable place to bring up their own children.

Lastly, the findings reveal the complexities involved with notions of 'tradition' and 'modernity', in both Cyprus and the UK, and how perceptions of these notions are constantly negotiated and revised according to time, place and positionality. The nuanced interpretations of 'tradition' and 'modernity' in the narratives demonstrate the 'privileged location' of Cyprus for 'critical inquiry into the meaning of modernity' (Papadakis et al. 2006: 18). The participants' observations and narrations confirm the blurry division and irregular dynamic between 'tradition' and 'modernity' (Appadurai 1996), whilst creating their own versions of these notions in their different localities (Hannertz 1996; Ong 2001), Cyprus and the UK.

⁴² Similar reactions were found in studies of returning Greek-Americans and Greek-Germans (see Christou 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; Christou and King 2006; King and Christou 2010).

4.2 GROWING UP IN THE UK

In her novel ‘Eat, Drink and be Married’ Eve Makis (2004) humorously tells the story of a Cypriot migrant family who run a fish and chip shop on a council estate in 1980s Nottingham, through the eyes of teenage daughter Anna. Being a British-born Cypriot herself who has experienced both childhood holiday visits to Cyprus as well as a longer-term return as an adult, Eve’s account – albeit fictionalised – is to a large extent autobiographical.⁴³ Like Anna, she grew up in a fish and chip shop ran by her hardworking Cypriot parents, who gave her a strict ‘Cypriot’ upbringing. This meant not being allowed to go out like her ‘British’ peers or have boyfriends, being encouraged to work in the family business rather than to go to university, with the ultimate goal of getting married to ‘a suitable Greek Cypriot’. ‘What I knew about Cyprus [whilst growing up], was, you know, church on Sunday, not going out, you know, *that* was being Cypriot, and old-fashioned parents, and over protectiveness’, Eve recalled.⁴⁴ During her childhood Eve developed quite a bit of resentment towards her parents (and towards their generation), but as she grew older her anger slowly transformed into a feeling of appreciation for the way she was raised and the place in life her parents were in at the time:

I think when I was younger I was quite resentful... but as I got older, and started to look back and think of the reason why they were they way they were, then I could communicate with those feelings, from a healthy perspective, they weren’t feelings of bitterness, they were feelings of really understanding the situation... I could stand outside it, as opposed to being in it [when I was younger], and I was angry at the time, I was angry, because I couldn’t analyse why things happened and why that generation had to be the way they were, they *had* to be. They weren’t bad-meaning, but they were overbearing and overprotective... I had many Cypriot friends. We were all in the same place. All exactly in the same place.

As we shall see, Makis’ portrayal of growing up in the UK in the 1980s and being raised by Cypriot parents who had lived in the UK since the 1960s with ‘little heed to what [was] actually going on in the island’ indeed reflects many of the elements that

⁴³During this study I interviewed Eve Makis at her Nottingham family home in the autumn of 2007. I then met her more informally on a couple of occasions in Cyprus the following year. In this particular case, the cloak of anonymity is removed – with her permission, of course.

⁴⁴ Personal interview (26 November 2007).

surfaced in the narratives of those who participated in my research. Many participants described the tightly-knit community and 'close' family life within which they were brought up. Let us now look at some excerpts, taken from the many rich narrative accounts, which describe this family- and community-centred way of life. The first one is from 37-year-old Alexandra, describing her childhood within a close-knit Cypriot community in London:

Growing up, yeah, I was living actually in North London which has a very large Cypriot community, so ... although I did feel that I was different, I also felt part of a ... belonging somewhere. I learned very early on – I don't know how it happened – that er it's better to stick with the Cypriot kids, because they understood us more, we understood each other, you know the background at home. Often our parents were a little bit more strict than the other kids, you know they wouldn't let us do as many things as the other kids were doing. So er, that made me feel a bit left out when I was growing up, so being amongst Cypriot kids made me feel often a bit more comfortable. Having said that though, we also connected really well to the Irish kids ... because we found that their family background was very similar, very family stuck you know, very close-knit and very supportive of each other [...] Parents were often kind of you know ... controlling their kids up to a certain age, whereas other English kids they would be going out and about, at the age of sixteen doing all sorts of things, and I'd be at home, you know, wasn't allowed to go... So erm, that was something that I kind of overcame. I think if I lived in an area where there wasn't any other Cypriots or not that many, I do not think it would have been so easy for me. Because I always felt Cypriot in England, always... er ... always. Um, church had a very big influence in our lives, well not a very big ... we wouldn't go every week, but it was often when there was any weddings and the whole shebang, you know, everybody would get together and it would just be really a very kind of social event. And so our religion featured quite strongly, although it was not something we would keep up regularly. Our parents were working long hours, both of them, so we often had to fend for ourselves.

[...]

If [my mum] went shopping she would go to the Cypriot supermarket; if she went to the hairdresser, she would go to the Cypriot hairdresser; if she went to visit her friend for a coffee, she would go to a Cypriot friend. You know we were living on a street of like 500 houses and we knew every Cypriot who lived on the street, and we didn't know our next door neighbour. We didn't know her. You know, we said 'good morning', and there were two girls living there, they were about my age, I never knew their names. And they were living right next door. We used to call [the other Cypriots] 'theo' and 'thea', which means uncle and aunty. It's funny how you, you know now I am thinking about it, it's funny how you are trying to bring everybody ... together. We knew, we knew where the Cypriots were, we just had to be made sure of it, somehow. Isn't that funny? I didn't think of that before. You kind of, you know, filter each other out ...

Also Vasos – 35 years of age, whose father was a restaurateur and prominent member of the Greek-Cypriot community in a south-coast town – emphasised the ‘very Cypriot way’ in which he was raised:

Very Cypriot. The thing is everybody that left obviously held their values and their belief systems of the... and the language of the time when they left, and they maintained that very rigorously. And so we were brought up in a very traditional way, obviously my parents being, my father’s been Chairman of the Greek Church & Community for 30 years, so he was a leading member within the community, so very traditional way, the Archbishop used to come round to our house for dinner, you know [...], so it was interesting, but they were very traditional, very traditional, yeah, for sure.

The final quote on the importance of Cypriot family ties whilst growing up in the UK is from Maya, now 42, whose family were also in the restaurant and catering business. Here she recalls how her childhood in South Wales was mainly centred around her Greek-Cypriot father’s family:⁴⁵

[My parents] started their own business, opening a restaurant [...] and brought [my father’s] family over, his sisters, whose husbands weren’t able to get jobs in Cyprus, so they came over as well, so I was brought up in a huge extended family, above a restaurant in South Wales, um, it was my father’s two sisters, their husbands, um, and their children, and myself, my two brothers [...] We all lived upstairs, it was huge, it was three buildings, and they knocked it all through and made a huge restaurant, a disco and a bar and a big meeting room, you know conference room, and big kitchens, obviously with the restaurant, um, and we all lived there for 20 odd years, all together, so I didn’t have, my parents were very much in the background really, my aunties, my father’s sisters controlled the family side of it [...] Yeah, they took over and did the matriarchal thing and um, although they were involved in the working they did all that, and my mother and father ran the business, you see, so um, it was very strange but they still kept their Greek [Cypriot] identity, you know, very much, because they brought it with them from Cyprus from the 1970s. [...] They were Cypriot, and brought the language over so I spoke a lot of Greek at home and I was brought up in the Greek... you know, no boys, not many friends were encouraged to come round, church on Sundays... [...] I was not allowed to go on public transport, couldn’t go out to play in the park with my brothers [...] They brought me up as a Cypriot girl [...] My brothers were treated as Cypriot boys and they were allowed the freedom to go out and do things, you know, had a car, had this, when we were older, but I was expected to be at home and to be the daughter [...] I wasn’t encouraged to bring friends around because I had that family, and I was, it was a very Cypriot thing: ‘what do you need friends for? Bringing girlfriends back? Why? Why do you need to go away or invite your friends?’ You know, because you are with the family, that’s enough, you know, it was very, it wasn’t encouraged to broaden my horizons that way...

⁴⁵ Despite having a British mother, Maya’s family life and upbringing were mainly based around her paternal Cypriot family.

Indeed many studies on the ‘Greek Diaspora’ (both mainland and Cyprus)⁴⁶ have focused on their ‘traditional’ family structure, and the interrelated fixed understandings of masculinity and femininity (e.g. Anthias 1992; Burrell 2005, 2006; Constantinides 1977; Oakley 1970, 1979; Phellas 2005). This notion of ‘tradition’ is subject to some dispute, however. Like many other places, Cyprus has been altered by globalisation, mass tourism and immigration in recent years, and consequently Cypriot ‘traditions’ have undergone considerable change too. Many participants described how the Greek Cypriots in the UK have stayed in what Anthias (1992) refers to as a ‘time warp’. According to Georgiou (2000), visitors to a community centre in North London hold on to traditions that are fading out in the homeland and claim they have kept their values more than those in Cyprus. Phellas (2005), in his study on the sexual identity experiences of second-generation Greek and Turkish Cypriot gay men in London, suggests that ‘the Greek-Cypriot communities living outside Cyprus tend to show greater conservatism and adherence to “old fashioned” ideas than those in Cyprus’ (2005: 67). Similar views are expressed in Anastasia Christou’s study of second-generation Greek Americans who returned to Greece; she emphasises how participants felt that they were raised according to ‘traditional’ Greek values that do not really exist in Greece any more (Christou 2006b, 2006c).

In fact, 38-year-old Anti, who was born in the UK and moved to Cyprus about ten years ago, uses the same term as Anthias – ‘time warp’ – when stating that ‘here [in Cyprus] it progressed, I mean whereas our parents... I mean we were brought up the way that *they* were brought up [...] England had progressed already and also we’d come back [for holidays] to Cyprus [which] was slowly progressing, and we were getting older but we weren’t [progressing], we were just stuck in that kind of that time trap, that time warp, and it was *so* difficult’. In order to maintain this sense of Cypriotness as remembered and brought over from Cyprus by their parents, children were often encouraged to spend time with other Cypriot kids, or even disallowed to have non-Cypriot friends, as in Anti’s case:

⁴⁶ Of course the notion of regarding the Greek-Cypriot Diaspora as ‘Greek’ is disputable: they are separate but perhaps overlapping to some extent.

In a sense I couldn't have any English friends, I couldn't go to their houses, I couldn't have after-school clubs like I couldn't, I couldn't go to music classes, I couldn't go to, I couldn't do anything, it was school, home, school, home, and with my family you know... I was lucky because I had my mum's sister, she had three or four kids around about the same age and so we were always together so I was lucky in a sense that we had that connection and we'd play outside and we'd do things together all the time, but always together... *J: But only Cypriot friends?* Oh yeah of course, and even that, even there they would select, they wouldn't be happy with maybe friends that were a bit more progressed in England. I knew [Cypriot] girls who could go out a bit more and [my parents] didn't like that either, they wouldn't be happy about me having those friends, and you know... it was hard, it was hard.

Experiences similar to Anti's are quite common amongst the participants, though some would describe their parents as 'stricter' than others. However, when reflecting on these memories as adults today, the participants expressed feelings of understanding towards their parents' choices and outlooks at the time. Hence memories are actively reflected upon and shaped into a set of meanings that make sense today, as is apparent in the following narrative excerpt from 38-year-old Evi, who returned to Cyprus in her early twenties:

Even at school we would be a lot more with my Cypriot friends, I had other friends of course, but we tended to be, I guess we gelled more with the other Cypriot kids, [they] used to also go to my Greek school so I knew them from my Greek school or from my Greek dancing classes, I used to do this also. So you know I, um, I think I mixed more with them, and it was my parents also [who] preferred that I mixed more with them. It was also a way for me to go out a little bit more, if I was with my Cypriot friends.... You know [my parents] did have, I wouldn't say like a full-on racism, but they did want [...] us to keep together, they would be a lot more open for me to be with my Cypriot friends rather than with my black friends for example, not because they were racist, it's all to do with fear, I think, you know.

[...]

I wasn't allowed to go out very much. I wasn't allowed really to go out at all, like to clubs or anything like this or parties, it was always a mission, whenever there was a party and I wanted to go there would always be some fight or another because my parents wouldn't let me go to a party or to meet my friends in a mall or um, you know... I know now, I feel now, it's because of fear, they were protecting us, it wasn't because they didn't want us to have fun, but they were afraid that if they let us out of their sight something would happen to us, we would get run over by a car, we would get kidnapped or we would get molested or you know, these were more the fears rather than, um, not having fun. But also, it was also, it's very instilled in us then, not so much today, but by our parents, that we're supposed to be good girls, and um, you know if so-and-so can see us hanging around with boys or having boyfriends it's like it will taint our name, forever. It's also with boyfriends, I wasn't, I couldn't even mention the word.

Participants' parents were generally stricter with their daughters than they were with their sons, in terms of going out, domestic chores and getting an education, and most female participants would comment on their brothers' liberties compared to theirs.⁴⁷ Like Maya, who described earlier how her brothers were allowed much more freedom, 37-year-old Alexandra expressed the frustration caused by the different treatment her brother would get, when recalling that 'he wouldn't participate in any of the chores at home [...], he would just sit there on his bum, doing nothing, which at the time, you know, was really infuriating... [My mum] would ask me to clean out *his* room, and I would be like "you've got to be kidding me! He is sitting right there, you know, there he is!"'.

Though agreeing that they often enjoyed more liberties than their sisters, the male participants too believed that they received a stricter, and more protected, upbringing than their 'British' peers. Here Nicholas, aged 31, recalls the limits his parents – who ran a fish and chip shop in 1970s-1980s Liverpool – had set in their neighbourhood, as to where he could play. Yet he, too, shows understanding for their concerns.

You know, Liverpool during the Margaret Thatcher years was pretty depressed, economically, so being self-employed – or being from a family of self-employed – and being a migrant, I think my parents were definitely more fearful, er, than English parents, about where their kids could go, so we weren't allowed to play too much... I had a limit as to where I could go, within that limit I used to hang out with friends, and then when they would go one block too far I had to go home, because I was a good boy *[laughs]* [...] [I]t wasn't justified really, but I understand where they were coming from because, erm, well you *are* different, you know.

The narratives discussed so far are from participants who were raised in what can be described as a 'Cypriot environment'. However, a significant number of participants grew up in a slightly different setting, for example in areas where there was no significant Cypriot population, or extended family, nearby. Others were brought up by 'mixed parents', with one parent being Cypriot and the other from another ethnic or national background. It was quite striking, however, that in those so-called 'mixed

⁴⁷ This resonates with other studies on gender relations within immigrant families, where daughters are generally expected to remain virtuous (in direct contrast to the more 'loose' daughters of parents native to the host society), whilst the same discipline is not applied to sons (Pessar and Mahler 2003).

families' the Cypriot element was often strongly present, as we saw in Maya's narrative earlier on, who, despite having been born to a Welsh mother, described how her family life and the way she was raised very much reflected 'Cypriot values'.⁴⁸ As an example of someone who was raised outside a 'typical' UK-Cypriot setting, let us look at some excerpts of the narrative of 35-year-old Marcus, who grew up in suburban Surrey, where he 'did not have any Cypriot friends', besides his 'best friend at primary school [who] was half Turkish Cypriot and half Irish'. Marcus was born to a Greek-Cypriot-born mother and a South-Asian father, who both migrated to the UK as young adults. However, from the age of eight Marcus was raised by his mum, as his father moved back to his home country following divorce. Although their family life did not take place within a 'typical' Cypriot community, his mum's 'Cypriot temperament', her home-cooking, as well as frequent holiday visits to Cyprus, nurtured a sense of Cypriotness whilst growing up:

Well I grew up in [names place] in Surrey, was erm an area that had five massive Victorian mental institutions, psychiatric hospitals, and at the time, in the late 60s-70s, er, there was a lot of immigrant work forces that were brought over to work in hospitals, either as domestic cleaners, or nurses, or doctors as well. So the area where I grew up a lot of my friends were mixed like me, so there was a lot of Filipinos, Italians, Spanish, Nigerians... so I grew up in an area that was quite mixed. [...] [T]here were hardly any, there was one other family of Cypriots in that area, that I knew of... there were probably two or three, but I can't remember them. Erm, North London was the area that most Cypriots went and stayed, whereas we were right on the other side of town, South London, so there wasn't much contact, culturally, we would go like once or twice a year to my mother's aunt, my great-aunt, who still lives in North London, so we would go and see them, and that was a real nice thing, we would go inside the shops, the small little shops, where there was Greeks, and Greek music playing, and we'd sit around eating Greek food... but no, in the area where I grew up there wasn't much.

[...]

I did [feel Cypriot]... it's erm... a bit ambivalent... er ... yes, because we were coming to Cyprus every year since I was two years old, on holiday, so I felt much more in contact with the Cypriot side of the family than I did with the [South-Asian] side [...] I mean, my mum is a real, erm, sort of home body, she loves doing the cooking and the cleaning, she's really into her gardening, she's always tried to force-grow plants that would be growing in Cyprus in the cold English weather, she tried to force olive trees and all that, and there was always good home cooking, I remember we would be going to school

⁴⁸ I do acknowledge here that, by interviewing participants who have relocated to Cyprus, I may be getting a biased perspective on this question, since 'mixed' families where the Cypriot element was less dominant may not have fostered the ethnic and transnational links favouring an ultimate return.

and we would have like these amazing sandwiches with halloumi and all of these things and my friends would go 'what is that? I want some'. So we would always have things like Greek food, Greek music, I remember waking up on Sunday morning and listening to some Greek church thing my mum was listening to ...

[...]

[W]e weren't having any pork when we were growing up, so all the pork dishes, all the pork food that you would have as a Cypriot, we weren't allowed. Well we would have them secretly and then my mother would like clean and bleach everything, spray chlorine everywhere, so it wouldn't smell. But yeah, that... but there was a lot of Greek culture around, there was the furniture, the music [...] But my father at the time was a non-practising Muslim, I mean he wouldn't eat pork, but he wouldn't go to the mosque [...] and the same with my mum, she wasn't like a complete church-goer. I think that they realised that after they got married that religion was kind of incidental.

[...]

[After the divorce] there was lots more pork, *loads*, which was excellent [*laughter*], which was excellent. Was it more Cypriot? ... I think a lot of the people, especially some of the few Cypriots that were around us, they kind of picked and chose which part of their Cypriotness they wanted to hold onto [...] so a lot of things that were instilled by their parents, they would still keep... but there's a lot... again, for me it was a lot about the food, my mother was strict in her sensibilities, but not strict to the stage of 'you're not going out'.

Though a certain sense of 'Cypriotness', whether in an 'essentialised' or more 'free floating' form, was experienced by nearly all who participated in this study, there are always exceptions. For instance, 37-year-old Lisa was brought up in Buckinghamshire, in an area with 'virtually no other Cypriots', by a Greek-Cypriot father and a British mother. Nevertheless, she moved to Cyprus in her early twenties and her parents followed some years later, after their retirement. Here she touches upon the 'lack' of Cypriotness during her upbringing, her father's disillusionment when returning to Cyprus, and her regrets that her father did not raise her to speak Greek or instil more awareness with regard to her 'mixed roots':

Ok my mother I mean she's white, I mean now she speaks Greek, some Greek I mean, she had to learn [but] we weren't brought up in a Cypriot way at all, nothing apart from, my mother cooked maybe some Cypriot food sometimes, [...] when she came [to Cyprus] she was taught by [my father's] family and so at home she'd sometimes make some Cypriot food. [...] [W]e only went to Greek church occasionally, maybe to somebody's wedding or something, or later for special things like maybe Easter or you know. At Christmas we went to um, well it's a bit weird actually because my father isn't very er, I mean he doesn't go to church very often either, um, I went to English church, even though we were christened in the Greek church, because near us there

was not a Greek church, the nearest Greek church to us is in London which is like 45 minutes in the car. *J: And did you feel Cypriot in any way when you were growing up, or ...?* No the only thing is the name 'cause, you know, obviously the name's not English [...] So actually no, when I was growing up I didn't feel Cypriot, nothing, I felt English, but then not even English sometimes [...] it's a bit hard, I suppose as children as well, you want to be something, I don't know, I think I thought of myself as English really [...] But I knew there was something a bit different because I wasn't exactly the same as [the other kids].... [We would go on holiday to Cyprus] at least once every two years. [...] Here... well when I was younger I felt it was, it felt nice 'cause obviously when I came on holiday it's different to living here, so it was nice, we were going to the beach [...] we had very nice memories, and of course all my father's family, you know, we were young and they had older children they made special fuss of us and everything so you know I felt nice but I did feel a bit um, definitely did not feel Cypriot.

[...]

[M]y parents, they're retired here [to Cyprus], my father went to England when he was 21 and he was there for about 35 years, so he became very English and he even, I remember when I was young, I remember him speaking English and he had an accent, a Cypriot accent, but at the end, obviously over the years he didn't... now when he speaks English he doesn't have it, no, any accent or nothing, no. And when he came here he was like thinking it's the same place as when he left it you know, and I'm trying to say to him 'no father it's not like this, it's changed now'...

[...]

[Y]ou know when you are a child it's very easy for you to learn a language; when I came here when I was 21 it was more difficult for me to learn, so, I was thinking ... 'you know my father is an intelligent man, why didn't he [teach me Greek]?' [...] I know growing up as a child, children they want to [...] feel that they belong or to really know who they are, I suppose it's part of growing up isn't it? But if you're like from two different nationalities or whatever, I think it's nice to have a mix of both in your home, and not to make a big deal about it [...] you know to be comfortable with it, but I think for me it was hard when I was younger [...] 'cause I didn't feel like English but then when I came here I didn't feel Cypriot either which kind of... you don't want it to, but it is actually upsetting. But really, and I learnt on my own afterwards, I realised on my own, I didn't need to be upset because it didn't really matter, but you know maybe children should be told that that it doesn't really matter...

Having given an impression of the various experiences of growing up in the UK, I now proceed to discuss the participants' childhood memories of travelling to the 'homeland', Cyprus. These holidays – or in some cases more extended periods – spent in Cyprus often played a vital role in their childhood recollections. Indeed, many were remembered vividly, albeit idealistically at times.

4.3 HOLIDAY VISITS: FREEDOM AND FAMILY WARMTH

The earliest memories of Cyprus amongst the participants were of family holidays to the island. Most remember returning every year, for an extended summer break, or even twice a year, adding an extra trip at Easter or Christmas. Return visits, at least since the 1970s, were by air, which meant that for 'older' participants, those older than about 50, regular childhood visits were not very common. For example Mike, aged 57, remarked that, when he was a child, family holidays were to Brighton and Hastings, not to Cyprus. And 55-year-old Alexia explained that her family's economic situation was tough and that, despite having grown up in a dense Cypriot community in London, the idea of a holiday to Cyprus was never brought up. In fact, it was well into her adulthood, after divorcing her first, British-born Cypriot, husband that she visited Cyprus for the first time in her life, with her second husband, who is British and with whom she moved to Cyprus several years later.

However the majority of my study's participants are now in their late 20s to mid 40s and *did* experience childhood visits to Cyprus, which mainly took place in the 1970s and 1980s. Hence, the historical time at which the childhood of this particular 'group' occurred is important as this is linked to the stage of economic, social and cultural 'development' Cyprus was in at the time when childhood visits took place.

When asked about their memories of growing up in the UK, recollections of trips to Cyprus were often naturally interwoven in their narratives, as they were generally considered to be a very significant, and often pleasant, part of their childhoods. Childhood memories of such visits were almost always very positive, especially during the pre-teen years, and the question of how they experienced those visits was answered with expressions like 'I loved it here' and 'we'd count the days to come over'. Having spent many months indoors in the UK, often in bleak urban areas, they were often thrilled to go on this long-awaited holiday to Cyprus. When remembering those times, frequent references were made to sun, sea, beaches, outdoor play, idyllic villages, nature and the countryside, and a warm welcome by family members (cf. also

Wessendorf 2007: 1087 on Swiss-Italian children's holiday returns). Here is a rather typical quote, from 37-year-old Alexandra:

In the meantime though, as we were growing up, every summer, *every* summer, my father would bring us over to Cyprus for holiday. [...] Oh, it was fabulous. Fabulous, I mean imagine growing up in [London]... school, at home, sitting around, watching TV, reading your books, doing your homework, and that was it, you know, we were used to it. And then they say 'ok you come to Cyprus', and they were 'go on then, go outside and play', and you were like 'what?', and we just disappeared for the whole day, you know, especially in the village, we would go up to the village, my mum's village, where all the other kids were out, and it was just like we were set free [we were like] 'see ya!'. And it was just great, there was so much freedom, and I loved it, I just loved the feeling of being not afraid to go out and not worrying.

A number of elements in the above excerpt are quite striking. First of all, note the patriarchy, as Alexandra states that 'father would bring us over to Cyprus', something that was also evident in the narratives of many other female participants – a theme which comes back in some of the other quotes as well, as we will see later. Secondly, and most significantly, was the expression of the feeling of **freedom** and **safety** when in Cyprus, terms used over and over again in virtually all narratives. Participants stressed how their parents seemed more relaxed during those holiday times and how their attitudes towards their children changed when in Cyprus. In contrast to the strict and highly protective attitude the parents tended to have whilst living in the UK, when on holiday in Cyprus the children were permitted much more freedom to run about without being watched, to stay out late, and to do things they were normally not allowed. Let us return to 42-year-old Maya's narrative, who earlier stressed the strict upbringing she experienced in South Wales:

It was weird because I was allowed so much more freedom here [in Cyprus], I mean, I was kept on such a tight rein [in Wales], I remember being 14 and coming out here... and I was allowed to go to night clubs, you know, and go out with my cousins in Paphos, because we all stayed in Paphos then for holidays um, go to bars, go to have ice cream outside, you know, in a restaurant at 12 o'clock at night [...] it was very odd. My parents were around in Paphos having a night out and they'd let us go off and wander around... I suppose it was just safer for them, and they had more time, I don't know, perhaps they were just more relaxed you know, being out here, um, and they trusted people that were around you know [...] my parents would go out and eat out in a restaurant and I would go another two blocks up, you know, they knew where I was, they trusted who I was with, um, you know, it was so much easier and I don't know, they were just, had a better handle on being parents here than they did in the UK, it was quite weird.

[...]

When I was very small [and visiting Cyprus] I used to go to the shops and stuff in [names village] and ask for things and walk down there, be a Cypriot, and my father was someone of, not importance, but someone of recognition in the village and they always knew who I was and they said hello to me, so I felt a big part of all that was going on... My father you know, would invite all his friends back to the house and we'd have big barbeques and meet all his family, his friends, and really have a nice [time].... and the music, a lot of music everywhere, yeah, and I enjoyed... I learnt more about my parents on holiday than I ever did living with them eleven months of the year in the UK!

[...]

Looking back now, how my cousins [in Cyprus] were, um, they've had a far easier life than I did, I was so restricted at the time, um, but it was all I knew then, you know, um, and so I didn't really rebel much, but looking back at my cousins and thinking... they had a far more Western upbringing really than I did.

The sense of community and friendliness (especially in the villages at the time) expressed by Maya, reveals the all-encompassing feeling of freedom experienced during these visits. Furthermore, many participants, particularly the female returnees, emphasised the important role of their Cyprus-based cousins, in terms of accessing the 'freedoms' the island had to offer. In a way, cousins were ascribed the role of 'chaperone', looking out for their UK cousins whilst out and about. The following excerpts, taken from the narrative of 28-year-old Theodora, perfectly capture those elements and illustrate the contrast between the 'two worlds' of her childhood, the UK and Cyprus, as she first describes her upbringing in London and then switches to holidays in Cyprus:

Growing up in London was... when you're like me, my generation – like you said, second-generation – our parents, because they were fresh from Cyprus and they came to a strange land, they stuck with their communities a lot... We lived in Palmers Green, which was a very Greek area, still is, but in those days it was a very very Greek⁴⁹ area... I was brought up quite strictly, because I was a girl, I was the baby, the youngest. My brother could go out, he could play, do whatever he wanted but I had to stay at home, I wasn't allowed out. I had to be escorted by my brother while I was going out, stuff like that... My parents brought me up, or tried to bring me up, with our traditions and within our culture... I had it embedded in me that I was Greek, that I was Greek-Cypriot... I had friends in school, but I wouldn't go round to their houses... it was more like every Sunday we used to visit an aunty, I really socialised more with my cousins

⁴⁹ Theodora, like several other participants, used the term 'Greek' and 'Cypriot' interchangeably.

than I did with my friends, and if I had a friend from school they'd have to be approved by my parents... my mother'd have to meet the parents... she was just so worried... I had a really good friend at primary school and she was Italian and my mum got on with her, 'cause we're quite similar... And she'd always say to me, you know, 'not that I don't trust you, it's just that I don't trust everybody else'... I was driven to school to my embarrassment up to the age of 15 [laughs out loud], in a battered Mazda, oh it was really embarrassing... whereas my brother could go on his own... And I, er, was encouraged to do chores around the house, whereas my brother didn't have to do it 'cause he's a boy and I'm a girl, and I'm supposed to know how to do it, 'cause I'm gonna be a housewife, and all that kind of rubbish... and that's it... oh yeah, the school slumber parties, so I wasn't allowed to do that, 'cause I wasn't allowed to stay at somebody else's house overnight, my mum didn't trust so much, like an English family or whatever...

[...]

And the funny thing was that when I was on holiday here in '95, you know 15, mid-teens or whatever, the first time I went out was actually in Cyprus... My cousins here – this is when I found out 'wow, we really are so different' – so we were like 'yeah, we're going go out', and for some reason, as strict as my mum was in England, she would let me do whatever I wanted in Cyprus, it was so bizarre... And, you know, *she was different*, like the doors wouldn't be locked, whereas in England we would always lock the doors twice. Everything was so open in Cyprus... In England if I wanted to go down to the shop I wasn't allowed, but here I could just roam around and do whatever I wanted... so I kinda enjoyed the freedom of the holidays. And my cousin was going to take me out, and my mum was like 'alright as long as your cousin looks after you'; even though she was three months younger than me [laughs] she was looking after me, 'cause I was from England and I didn't know my way around [laughs]. And that was the first time I went clubbing, it was in the tourist district [of Limassol], it was really funny, I just wore something normal, you know, not super-trendy, just something to go out in, and my cousins were with their mini-skirts and they had a full face of make-up on, they had their highlights, and I was like [mimics shocked expression] and I felt like a baby actually, I really felt like a child, even though I was 15...

Again, Theodora's narrative emphasises the parents' perceived safeness of the Cypriot family and community in the UK, in contrast to the 'mean world' out there that could not fully be trusted, a scenario that dramatically changed when the family would go on holiday to the freedom and openness of Cyprus. This narrative also provides insight into the gendered upbringing of sons and daughters in the UK, as well as into the various relations with cousins in both London and Cyprus. However, Theodora's narrative too reveals the ambiguity involved with notions of 'tradition'. As we will see in the following excerpt, the understandings of the terms 'traditional' and 'modern' are tricky and subject to a variety of interpretations and nuances. Though it has been stressed, by participants and scholars, that Cypriots in the UK remained in a 'time warp'

made up by the 'traditions' of past times, while Cyprus, and its inhabitants, 'modernised' and Europeanised, the lived reality seems more complex. Theodora again:

So there was a difference there, the safety and security, and whilst I was brought up so strictly and thought that everyone else was like that, the reality was, and that's why they called us villagers and stuff, that they looked down on us, the Cypriots here looked down on us, because they saw us as villagers... I always enjoyed seeing my cousins over here and stuff, even though I got teased as well – they used to take the piss out of my Greek [laughs]... They see us as villagers 'cause we went, or people left after the war or whatever, and they kept their traditions as tightly as possible... and most of them were village traditions, because they were brought over from the village, whereas they [the Cypriots in Cyprus] had become Europeans, they'd become modern, and progressed, and they see us as being backwards a bit, which I actually find hilarious, 'cause it's the other way round. The thing is that actually we are more open-minded, more worldly, than they are. But the other thing I was seeing when I was aged 15... was the materialism over here, which again was, you know, 'cause my parents were brought up in the village and... my mum used to buy me clothes from Marks and Spencer's that I hated, but I was thankful that I had clothes to wear [laughs]... whilst here, they wanted designer brands ... You know, I'm 28 now and I've moved over here and have a career, and I know people my age that are still getting money from their parents... So these are like major, major differences that I see.

The above excerpt shows that perceptions of 'traditional' and 'modern' are not straightforward, and that growing up in two places adds some extra twists and nuances to the understanding of these terms. Despite being raised in a 'villagey' Cypriot way in the UK, whilst her cousins in Cyprus were exposed to designer brands and a glittering night life, Theodora believes that her childhood in the UK has given her a more open-minded worldview and sense of independence, in contrast to her materialistically 'progressed' cousins. Once again, there are interesting issues raised here in relation to understandings of 'modernity' and 'tradition', which will resurface throughout this chapter. For now, let us hear one more 'narrative of freedom'. Although, in light of their gendered upbringing, many of the most striking memories were narrated by female participants, male participants expressed, at least to a certain extent, similar contrastive experiences. They too enjoyed more freedoms whilst being in Cyprus, and their holiday visits were also often associated with significant events which embodied such lack of restrictions, whether it was a first night out in town as a teenager, or learning to ride a bike as a child. In the following excerpt 29-year-old Harris recalls his earliest holiday memories:

Oh yeah, I remember coming over, my first holiday I remember, I was six, I remember the beach of course. Cyprus was very different back then. I remember the beach, I remember staying in the village, we had a house in the village, I remember staying in the flat here in Limassol... I remember my cousins, playing with my cousins. I remember the food of course... Cyprus was brilliant because you got to play without any restrictions... you don't have to be home by a certain time, my parents felt safe leaving me out with my cousins, they'd never have to ask where we were. I remember I learnt to ride a bicycle in Cyprus and as soon as I learnt I was out everywhere, whereas in England I wouldn't have dreamt of getting a bicycle. I remember I wasn't allowed to play anywhere apart from our garden in England, whereas in Cyprus as long as there's someone that they knew with me I could be anywhere... I felt a lot freer as a child in Cyprus.

Hence, when remembering childhood holidays to Cyprus, **freedom** and **family** are words that figured prominently in virtually all narratives. The relatives' homes, villages and towns are remembered as sites and spaces of consumption, gifts, hospitality, food and family warmth. The role of the extended family would stand out in the participants' narrations of the childhood visits, and references were often made to times spent with their numerous cousins (first, second *and* third!), who were the obvious same-age kin members to play and 'hang out' with. Some more quotes on family warmth and hospitality:

It was always a fantastic experience, because I came here and I had aunties and uncles and cousins and they adored me; you know I was their brother's son or their sister's son, and they'd spoil me and give me a lot of attention (Angelo, 36).

Loads [of family]... yeah they're like cockroaches... my mother is one of nine children, and there's lots of aunts and cousins and extended family, great-aunts, and even neighbours that we'd call uncle and aunt [...] Everybody making such a fuss of you, all aunts and uncles, pushing money into your hands, that was always a good thing *[laughs]* ... and eating everywhere you went [...] In Cyprus you get that sense of welcome, you must sit down, you must eat... (Marcus, 35).

The above-described 'sense of welcome' was often sparked by actual sensory experiences, whether it was the taste of a home-cooked meal, like in Marcus's case, or the 'embrace' of the homeland climate, as remembered by 57-year-old Mike:

Every time I got off the plane and that heat hit you in the face, and the smell of Cyprus, the dust, it was strange, very strange, I can't describe, you know, it felt like I'd been away and come home, instead of the other way round...

Participants remembered the ancestral homeland of their childhoods in a physical sense (through concrete references to actual places), and as a personal space of identification and comfort (through references such as family relations, freedom and nature) as well as occasional alienation (cousins ‘taking the piss’). For Mike, the *physical* interaction with the Cypriot landscape brought about a very *personal* feeling of belonging. Memories of smells, sounds, tastes and sights were important geographical elements in the narration process, not only adding a sensory zest throughout the narratives, but also capturing the fusion of the physical and the emotional. Such *feelings* extend beyond an understanding of place in its natural physical setting, suggesting that ‘place should be understood as “imaginative ground”’ (Christou 2006c: 33-34).

4.4 CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN CYPRUS: HOME OR HOLIDAY?

Being of Cypriot parentage, born and raised in the UK, travelling to the ‘homeland’ of Cyprus whilst growing up, raises the question as to whether these childhood trips were associated with feelings of ‘home’, or ‘holiday’, or something else, and whether these visits played a role in later-life decisions to relocate to Cyprus longer-term or for good.

Mike’s remark at the end of the last quote reveals that, for him, Cyprus has always been home, despite being brought up in London and not making visits to Cyprus until his late teens (in an earlier quote he spoke about being taken to holiday in English seaside towns as a young child since visits to Cyprus were not feasible in the 1950s). Mike stressed how he had always felt Cypriot and always knew that one day he would come and live in Cyprus, yet this did not happen until the age of 53:

[Growing up in London] I felt Cypriot in every way, in every way, although to listen to me I’m very English [...] Cyprus was always a good destination for a holiday, I mean although you’ve got the pick of the world I always wanted to come to Cyprus, ‘cause I liked – I’m talking about the ‘60s and ‘70s when Cyprus had villages, you know – and I just loved that way of life. It’s gone now... I mean, to find it now you have to go up into the mountains, it’s just losing its... which is sad. I knew that one day I would come and live in Cyprus, it’s something that’s been inside, I didn’t know when or how but I knew.... I knew I would eventually settle here...

Mike's view of himself as essentially Cypriot, and of Cyprus as his home, did echo in some other narratives, as did the nostalgia for a rural way of life that is no longer there. Mike was raised with a sense of Cypriotness which was disconnected from the physical Cyprus. Rather, for many years his imagination of Cyprus was based on family stories and on the representation of Cyprus and Cypriotness in the tight-knit community in the UK. Other forms of such 'essentialised' views could be heard in some of the other narratives too, albeit each reflecting different circumstances and different links between childhood experiences and the subsequent return to Cyprus. Familial narratives often included a desire to return, as stressed by 37-year-old Alexandra in the following quote:

My father would bring us over [for holiday], he has eight brothers and sisters, my mum has six, and most of them were living over here. So he would take us around the whole of the island, you know, meeting them, making sure we knew our roots, and knew our family, knew who we were, you know. And that was what did it [made my mind up about moving to Cyprus]. I never wanted to go back home [from these visits], never; whenever we were leaving I'd be, like, 'oh I'm so sad, I don't want to go, let's stay here' ... So I always wanted to [move to Cyprus] one day, yeah, yeah, I did. My mum and dad, you know, I think every Cypriot family over there [in England] always says, you know, 'once we get ourselves [this or that], once we get enough [money], once we're old... we'll go back'; it's always like that, I think it's inside them somewhere... they always want to go home.

Hence Alexandra's parents passed the desire to return on to her, and indeed she did move to Cyprus in 1993, which she says was partly due to the fact that her husband is a native Cypriot, 'but mostly it was these holidays as kids' that drove her to turn her parents' dream of return into her own reality. However, though their children may have returned to Cyprus, many parents themselves did not return, and if they did, their return generally occurred after their children's. In this sense, narratives such as Alexandra's echo some of the findings in Tracey Reynolds' (2008) research on second-generation return to the Caribbean. Reynolds stresses how the family narrative around the 'myth of return' is integral to the British-based second generation's return orientation, as such narratives 'act as important social resources in sustaining the second generation's emotional attachment to the family homeland or country of origin, and represent an important consideration in influencing the decision to return alongside other pragmatic and practical reasons' (Reynolds 2008: 2). Yet, although for some a direct causal connection between parental return narratives and their own

decision to return was obvious, in many other cases such direct links were not evident. A case in point is Angelo, who – although stating that many of his ‘happiest times as a child were spent in Limassol’ and that a future return was ‘something that was placed in our minds by our mother, who always wanted to come back’ – does not see a direct link between childhood memories and his adult relocation to Cyprus. Instead, his reasons were rather practical and pragmatic:

I was planning to get married, and my wife is from Egypt, so we thought ‘why not give Cyprus a shot’, it’s still in Europe, it’s close to Egypt, forty minutes by plane to Egypt, that’s why we chose to give Cyprus a shot [...] Practical reasons, also, I happened to get a job, I just happened to get a job, just at the right time here.

Such non-essentialised reasons for return, and the subsequent adult experiences, will be further discussed in the next chapter, which deals with the participants’ everyday lives as second-generation returnees in Cyprus. Let us now return to the question of whether childhood visits to Cyprus were associated with feelings of ‘home’ or ‘holiday’. Angelo stated that he ‘never felt like [he] came home’, when on holiday as a child, but that ‘it always was a fantastic experience’, which is a feeling experienced by many other participants. Their accounts suggested that it was difficult to define the nature of their visits to Cyprus, which was essentially a holiday, but not one that other children at school shared. Furthermore, notions of belonging (or not) in Cyprus were also challenged by the realisation that their Cyprus-based cousins were so different from themselves. We see this in another of Theodora’s recollections:

This was a holiday... you’re not home, but... You know it wasn’t a holiday like I was staying in a hotel, and it *was* a holiday, ‘cause we had our own place over here, we had an apartment which my parents bought in 1980 when I was born. And I had my grandparents, so I would stay with my grandparents, I would stay with my aunty... it was different, but it wasn’t like [the kind of] holiday like my friends would talk about when they went to a hotel, and they went on a cruise, and they did this and they did that... it wasn’t like that... [...] But yeah... I did [enjoy it] [...] But there was always this thing, I would look at my cousins and [think] ‘wow we’re so different’, I mean we’re the same, our mums grew up together and stuff, but we’re just so different. And er, they used to call us ‘Charlies’, yeah you know, or ‘Bubbles’.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ These are typical names used by ‘native’ Greek Cypriots to refer to ‘British’ Cypriots visiting or living in the island.

Generally it was quite complex for the participants to recall sentiments of 'home' and 'belonging', as such, when going back to the feelings of their early childhoods. The childhood experiences, as felt and understood at that time, were more dominated by 'pure' emotions that were not over-analysed (as is inherently the case with children). This is clear from the above excerpt. It was only later on in life that they developed a strong reflexivity towards such feelings, as will become evident in Chapter 6, which is an in-depth discussion of the participants' feelings of 'home' and 'belonging' as experienced today, whilst reflecting on their lives so far. In fact, participants would remind me – at times ironically or tongue-in-cheek – that children do not analyse or term things as we do as adults.⁵¹ As Nicholas simply but sharply pointed out when replying to my question as to whether, as a child in the UK, he thought about a future life in Cyprus: 'I didn't think so much as a child *[laughs]*, things just happened!' Also Angelo emphasised that as a child he did not have a conscious sense of identity or belonging as such: 'I don't know if anybody does at the age of, you know, seven or eight, really do they?' He was concerned with being accepted by his peers rather than with the question whether he was British or Cypriot, and found football to be a form of identification: '[I was] into football in a very big way, and wanted that to be of part of kind of my peer group, football became my means by which I could become accepted'.

Hence, whether the visits to Cyprus were remembered as 'a holiday', as 'a homely feeling' or as something that 'just happened', childhood memories of such trips were generally positive. For some, however, during the later teenage years, views of Cyprus were more mixed. Particularly in the villages and away from the towns and beach life, Cyprus seemed a duller place with not much to do:

I enjoyed it in terms of we used to go out and walk the sheep or pick the fruits in the fields and things like that, so that was interesting to be running about all day, but as an older child [not that much]. So as a young child it was great, we just, you had freedom to do anything you wanted, to run about with all the kids, but as I got older I wanted to go to other [more 'exciting'] places (Vasos, 35)

⁵¹ This does not mean, however, that children are incapable of having political lives, or unable to talk about them. Research on young children as social actors is an important, and neglected, area (see Spyrou 2006). However this thesis focuses on the voices of adults, who in this particular chapter reflect on their childhood memories – a focus on children's voices describing their realities of today would be an interesting research topic of its own accord but reaches beyond the scope of this study.

In other cases, interviewees realised that the trips were a chance for family members to introduce them to a potential marriage partner, which they generally did not appreciate:

Yeah, we came here every year for about five-six weeks and we loved it, I mean up until I was about 13 or 14 I loved it, we'd count the days with my sister to come over, because we were freer here... we used to go to my mum's village in the mountains and we'd just run around all day with other kids... But when we started getting teenager-ish and we wanted to go out, they were a bit stricter; that's when I started to hate it... I didn't want to come here any more (Anti, 38).

The first time I came I was six, in 1965, and then I came again in 1972... and '74... and I didn't come back for eight years after that, in '82, yeah... I didn't want to come here when I was older ... because there was pressure from my father's family, that they were gonna marry me off here, and I just did not want that (Tania, 48).

4.5 OTHER TRANSNATIONAL CHILDHOODS

Amongst the study's participants there was a minority – small but significant – who spent longer periods of time in Cyprus as children; hence their childhood experiences of Cyprus were less fleeting than short-term holiday visits. In these cases the entire family returned to Cyprus, where the children (i.e. this study's participants) – who prior to the return would visit Cyprus for holidays – would continue the latter part of their schooling. Children would generally attend international (English) schools in Cyprus, hence were raised in English or bilingually within an international environment, in which they created 'multicultural' friendships. This distinctive feature was also part of the lives and social networks of those who returned as adults, as we will see in the following chapters. It is not possible to categorise these childhood returns as 'positive' or 'negative', not only because of the small numbers involved, but also because of the highly diverse and personalised circumstances and relations beyond the immediate migration story. However, like in the memories of holiday visits, terms such as 'safety' and 'freedom' kept coming up when referring to these more permanent returns, both when describing their own experiences as British-born Cypriot children living in Cyprus, as well as their parents' motives for return. The latter surfaces in the following excerpt

of 29-year-old Harris, who returned to Cyprus at the age of 8, in which he describes what incited his parents' decision to move back to Cyprus:

It was a steady build-up, um, two years before our house had been robbed three times in a period of six months. [...] My dad wanted a fresh start. He got sick of his job, my mother quit her job to raise us. A lot of our other family, my mum had a few friends, but most of her friends were her cousins that she grew up with, second and third cousins, they all left to go to Cyprus, so it just seemed like a natural progression, and like I said after discussing it for a few months, my father just said, one day he came home, and said 'that's it, we're going!'. My mum, she wanted to go from a while ago, to raise us in a safe environment, that's the important thing I think for them and um, yeah so, within three months we'd sold the house, packed up and left.

A direct connection between holiday childhood visits and an independent adult return cannot be made for these participants, as the transformation from childhood into adulthood took place whilst living in Cyprus rather than in the UK. However, they too came to a point in their early adult lives where they had to decide whether or not to live in Cyprus. Though the decision to return was initially made by their parents, later on in life – often after having spent some years attending university and working in the UK, or elsewhere abroad – they had to make the decision whether to go back to Cyprus or not, and if so, how to live their lives in Cyprus. Hence, these participants returned to Cyprus twice: the first time as children following a decision made by their parents, and the second time as adults following a decision that was taken autonomously (or in some cases with a partner). The experiences following the second decision to return to Cyprus are included, and further elaborated, in the next two empirical chapters, which deal with adult experiences. Let us now look at another example of a childhood return. The following set of excerpts is from 31-year-old Nicholas' narrative and illustrates the pattern of childhood return with his family. Born to Cypriot fish-and-chip shop owners in Liverpool, and raised within the Greek-Cypriot community there, Nicholas moved to Cyprus aged 12. Disillusioned by the deteriorating quality of life and security situation in the UK, his parents' decision to return was accelerated by the theft of a plant pot from their front garden. He then spent his university years in the UK before returning to Cyprus in his twenties to find work as a journalist; this time the return was an adult decision. His narrative starts

with growing up in Liverpool and the events leading up to the family's return to Cyprus in 1989.

My parents were thinking of moving back, and I think the final straw, er, we had some plant outside our front door, and two months before, the house next door got broken into, a burglary, and we were in our house at the time, and we didn't notice that the whole house was gone, they managed to take everything out, right under our eyes, so that unnerved them a bit. And the final straw as that plant pot – yeah – whoever stole that plant pot was the reason *[laughs]*... because after that they just decided to sell up, pack it in, and go back to Cyprus.

[...]

When we moved here in '89... for me it was easy because I went from an industrialised, bleak, depressed, high crime city to, er, a very bright, open, free – there was very little crime here – place where I could, you know, from being indoors most of the day I could, all of a sudden, I was out playing basketball until the sun went down, in the streets you know, and nobody cared where I was or what I was doing, nobody feared for my life, it made a huge difference... How can I put this?... It's like taking someone from Siberia and putting them on a beach in Havana you know... So I had a great time: I went from a government school in Liverpool to a private school [an English-speaking school in Cyprus] with swimming pools, a running track... you could say I jumped up... I jumped a class *[smiles]*.

[...]

My dad was very happy with the move and very happy about staying [in Cyprus]. When my parents came back it was fantastic for them – because don't forget we moved because of the plant pot – and then when we came here we never locked the car... the windows were left open, the ground-floor windows, and you slept and let the draught go through... and, er, for me too, from a material point of view, my life really changed...

[...]

Here [In Cyprus] they completely lost all fears, yeah, I mean, like I said, from being indoors to being outdoors all day – and without, before mobiles *[smiles]* where you can track by GSM where your child is going – I was just going, wandering the streets, and there was no fear. That was great. I even started going out pretty [young]... I went to a club at thirteen I think *[laughs]*. Yeah I had my first... yeah... erm drink, and then I used to go out, when I was sixteen I used to go out every week, which I wouldn't have been able to do in Liverpool until I was much older [...] Yeah they trusted me completely. In Liverpool it wasn't that they didn't trust me, it was that they didn't trust, erm, like the environment.

Again, here we see the familiar contrast between the levels of *freedom* experienced as a child in Britain and in Cyprus; however this time the temporary freedom of the holiday was extended to a permanent childhood lifestyle in Cyprus. Note how the

migration from the UK to Cyprus was not only experienced as movement in the physical sense but also in terms of 'class' – from going to a state school in the bleak, high-crime, claustrophobic environment of the UK, to a private school in a safe, open and sunny Cyprus. This feeling of *safety* associated with Cyprus, or the lack thereof in Britain, played an important factor in the parents' decision to move to Cyprus. This element of safety, as we will see later, also feeds through to the thoughts and experiences of second-generation returnees bringing up their own children in Cyprus. For now, let us return to Nicholas' narrative, where he points out the contrast between his childhood experiences in Cyprus, which resulted from decisions made by his parents, and the years of his early adulthood, which were characterised by a more autonomous negotiation of the places and spaces he inhabited. He touches upon the 'cosmopolitan bubble' of his high school years and his confrontation with the 'real' Cypriot society during his army years. He then hints towards the process of decision making that took place after his university years in the UK regarding the question of where to live his life, i.e. whether to return to Cyprus or not. The latter decision will be discussed more in-depth in Chapter 6, which deals with experiences of 'home' and 'belonging' today.

Actually, I think that when you're in school, especially in that kind of private school, where everyone is like the son or daughter of a diplomat, ambassador, UN [personnel] or Lebanese businessman... you can call it like a cosmopolitan elite... it's kind of like a bubble. And when you leave you realise, not everyone is jet-setting around the world, you know... I went straight into the army after school, and I met people from our society that I'd never had the chance to come across... *Then* you're learning what the country is really about, 'cause you meet people in the army from *all* walks of life. So then you're confronted with... 'Who am I? Do I belong to this group? Do I belong to that group?'... I mean there were hard times... There was an issue, I had to let people know that I didn't like being called a Charlie.

[...]

You're too young then [as a child] to think about these things, later I started factoring in, and especially when I, erm, finished university [in the UK], that was when the actual process of deciding started [of where I wanted to be].

[...]

This is home for me now, even though, when I go to Liverpool, the accent warms me, because I love Liverpool people, you know, and I feel a lot of memories there when I

go back but... erm, this is home for me now... this is my port [smiles] yeah, yeah, I'll end up here...

Although Nicolas' case is obviously unique in its individualised version of a mobile, transnationalised childhood, there are some common threads with others who moved to Cyprus as children. First of all, most of them had parents who came from humble backgrounds and were economic migrants who had climbed the financial ladder through hard work and sacrifices in the host country. And secondly, all of them were able to override the challenges of language and school moves to access university education, and from that a 'higher' socio-occupational class than their parents. In fact, for many the actual move to Cyprus at a younger age was already experienced, as pointed out by Nicholas, as 'jumping a class', in terms of schooling and overall quality of life. Yet, this combined social and spatial mobility has somewhat estranged them, in terms of 'culture' and 'class', from the three reference groups of which they are themselves part – the 'host' society (the UK), the 'homeland' society (Cyprus), and the 'migrant' society (British-Cypriots). Rather, they occupy a space back in Cyprus that is hard-to-classify (yet particular, as we will see in Chapter 6).

4.6 REFLECTING ON RELOCATION: EXPERIENCES THEN AND NOW

In the final section of this chapter on childhood experiences I examine the contrasts the participants drew when they reflected on their childhood memories, and compared them with their experiences of more recent and possibly permanent adult resettlement. We shall see that many participants were confronted with a different 'homeland' than the one they remembered from their childhood holidays and their family's stories. The main issues that arose in participants' narratives when comparing the Cyprus of today with that of their childhood years were related to **changed patterns of hospitality, migration and materialism** within Cypriot society.

Earlier on I discussed the memories of family warmth and hospitality which were often associated with childhood visits to Cyprus, experiences which some participants expected to relive upon their adult return. However, once resettled in Cyprus they often experienced a sense of disillusionment caused by the discovery that the Cypriot

family members seemed now to be less present than all those years back (cf. also Phillips and Potter 2009: 246, referring to 'Bajan-Brit' return migration). Instead of welcomed and supported, they often felt alone. The following quotes represent such encounters:

Everyone [in the family] seems very busy and I found out very quickly that it's one thing when you're here on holiday and everyone makes time for you, and that it's a different thing when you actually move over here, 'cause everyone just kinda disappears. I didn't get that help, or I didn't feel that hospitality that I got when I was here on holiday, I just felt very, very much alone. And I had no friends, 'cause when I was here [on holiday] I was here with my family, and 'cause I wasn't studying here [i.e. at school or university] I didn't make any friends either. So I was just really really alone (Theodora, 28).

The most exciting thing for me was to see all my family. But none of them showed any interest, and... that ... was a really big shock; to me it was so different from my experiences as a child, which I think I was clinging to, as a means of making my stay here a rationalised thing, the decision to move to Cyprus. So that was what changed: I came as an adult, not as a child, which is very different... In fact it has been good in a sense that it has killed that romantic, romanticised image of mine, that came from childhood... it has brought me down to earth (Angelo, 36).

Though being from a different age group and not having experienced frequent childhood holidays to Cyprus, 57-year-old Mike expressed a similar critique:

[M]y everyday social life is not with family. I've got a lot of family in Paphos, you know it's not like I would nip over for a coffee, um and they don't nip over here. I've got cousins [who] live on the way to Nicosia, it's not that far, they've not come here once, you know, they know I'm here, so I think 'well bugger you'. [...] It is [disappointing], I went to their house and um, saw them after 20-odd years you know, I used to work with them, um, and they were the closest family I had, I told them I'd be moving here etc, and when I actually moved here I informed them that I'd moved here and... [but] that's how it was left, they've got my phone number, they've got my address.

Alexia, aged 55, was brought up with the 'Cypriot values' her parents carried with them to the UK in the 1940s. However, she did not actually visit Cyprus until the age of 34. Although she is overall very pleased with her move to Cyprus, she did express her disappointment with the native Cypriots' reception she experienced upon her return: 'I thought I would be welcomed to Cyprus with open arms – but I am known as a "Charlou" – second-rate!'

Amalia, who is also in her 50s, 'only visited Cyprus twice in [her] whole life' before relocating to Cyprus in 1989 with her husband and two children. She stressed how the reasons that prompted their move, the desire for a safer environment (which will be further elaborated in Chapter 5 where I discuss reasons for return) and the 'romanticised' impression of the country that was being 'recycled' within the family, were also the cause of the disillusionment she experienced upon her 'return':

The decision was made for safety reasons, like most of us romantically assume that you are going to take the children away from the hustle and bustle, from a busy city that is possibly in many aspects, unsafe, and my husband insisted to come because he felt that he wanted to be closer to his parents, so the combination of that and um, the need to provide our children with a safer environment. We thought we would try it out; we came here in the Easter term [on holiday] and I fell in love with the island because of its green fields and the flowers, there were less buildings and cities so it was very, very attractive and it felt comfortable. So the agreement was that we'd give it a go. But upon arrival and henceforth um, there was another identity crisis because we didn't feel we belonged, we were unwelcomed and we certainly didn't behave like we were expected to...

[...]

And that's why we all fall into the trap of wanting to come on holiday, because of this romantic um, series of TV stories that we hear from our parents; it is not real, Cyprus, like everywhere in the world, there's an evolution, we change, and people here moved on, they've had a war, they've had huge economical and historical events that changed them, they've changed from being rural hospitable [people] to living in cities that they've never experienced before [...] Therefore the values that our parents said that this is what we should behave like, or this is what my family in Cyprus behaves like, is no longer there, because they've evolved, they moved on, for whatever reasons, external or emotional, we didn't move at all from our Greekness, our Cypriotness from England apart from the merging in to the British culture and becoming more and more British, but at home [in Cyprus] there are different expectations.

Hence, a considerable number of participants expressed feelings of disillusionment over the rather cold 'welcome' they received from their Cypriot family members, or Cypriot society at large. Again, such experiences are highly diverse, and within participants' reflections on Cypriot hospitality upon their 'new' arrival in Cyprus some extra nuances can be found. Particularly the age of the interviewee, and hence the historical time at which childhood took place, seemed to set some participants' experiences apart from the others. First there were a few women who were, like Amelia, around the age of 50 and married to Cypriot men, whom they had met through an 'introduction'. Like the other participants, these women were not

particularly ‘enthused’ by the ‘response’ they received from family members. However, they described their family as being ‘overly present’ or ‘smothering’, rather than as being absent as described in the earlier excerpts. One particular frustration these women seemed to share was the pressure they felt – particularly from their Cyprus-based in-laws – to live up to their expected position as ‘a good Cypriot woman’, trying to fulfil their ‘roles’ as ‘a good daughter-in-law’ or ‘a good neighbour’. Hence, the experiences of these women show how being part of a particular family structure or belonging to a certain age group may influence the ways individuals experience their ‘reception’ in Cyprus.

The final example of ‘new’ experiences in terms of hospitality, *and* of the nuances which make each one unique, comes from 35-year-old Vasos’ narrative. Like other participants, he too experienced a change in ‘atmosphere’ amongst family and friends while settling in Cyprus and expressed how he initially ‘felt a bit let down’ as ‘they all seemed to have disappeared’. However, he was charmed by the warmth of ‘strangers’ and embraced that positive feeling:

So once you get, once you realise that you can’t rely on those sorts of things then you just go about the process of building your own life [...] I’d say I was discriminated against by the people that I *knew* but the people that I didn’t know actually I felt quite open and warm and if I asked for help they always assisted [...] There was lots of things, I mean reading a simple form, I can’t read Greek although I’m learning now, you know, so I need to find... because I was opening up a business as well, a big business, there’s lots of things, buying property, how you do that, I mean where do you go, I mean no one tells you, there are no signs in Cyprus, everything’s very complicated, you have to [fill out] so many forms so many times [...] I find the people here very nice. I think people respond to how you treat them, if you don’t have too firm preconceived ideas, it’s very hard to have no preconceived ideas, we’re only human beings, but if you don’t have too strong preconceived ideas, you’re flexible in the moment, then erm, of all the places that I’ve been Cyprus people are pretty good. They have some other little intricacies that they can use as everyone does but they’re OK.

Two other, and at times harshly critiqued, themes that were dominant in participants’ narratives when comparing the Cyprus of today with that of their childhood years are **immigration** and **materialism**. Both provide important contexts within which to place Cyprus’ position within today’s changing global map *and* within which to place the participants’ responses.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Cyprus has witnessed a 'migration reversal' from mass emigration up to the 1970s (mainly to the UK), to mass immigration in recent years (from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia). For many of this study's participants, this 'migration turnaround' (King et al. 1997) corresponds with the period between their childhood memories of Cyprus and their adult return. Hence, upon their 'return' participants were confronted with a new social make-up, which included large numbers of new immigrants who contribute to the multi-ethnic society of Cyprus today. Their reactions to this new reality were quite mixed and at times ambivalent (cf. Christou and King 2006, on second-generation Greek-Americans 'returning' to Athens). Let us look at an excerpt from 41-year-old Angela's story, which illustrates this ambivalence:

In Cyprus it has changed quite a lot from a country of out-migration, like our parents who moved to England; now it has lots of new immigrants... I like it, I like it. Um, who am I to say for people not to come into the country – I'm for everyone to live where they want, and I think multicultural places make it very, erm... if it weren't for the crime... 'cause Cypriot people aren't criminals... on the whole there's no crime in Cyprus, and it's now where all the different cultures are coming in, it's becoming more and more... it's gonna spoil it a little bit here.

The ambiguity present in Angela's reaction to immigration can also be found in some of the other narratives. On the one hand such reactions show understanding for the inevitable consequences of globalisation and development, whilst reflecting on participants' own family migration history, and generally they welcome the notion of a multicultural society. On the other hand, there is a sense of reservation concerning the scale of recent migration to Cyprus and its impact on Cypriot society, including negative features such as increase in crime. Note how Angela's account links multiculturalism to crime. Others, however, were extremely positive about the influence and contribution of the various migrant communities to Cypriot society. In an earlier quote 28-year-old Theodora commented that her family's hospitality and presence, as she remembered from her childhood visits, had dramatically decreased once she returned as an adult. Here she describes how she has embraced a new multicultural side of Cyprus instead, which she had never experienced during her holidays as a child, and how being part of this international community makes her feel

at home in Cyprus today. Her quote provides a glance at an important theme of this thesis, that of what I call 'third cultural spaces of belonging', which will continue to run through the empirical chapters that follow the present one:

[My boyfriend] who I've met one and a half year ago was the reason I actually stayed. I found somebody I clicked with. He even introduced me to all his friends and he introduced me to a side of Cyprus that I'd never seen before, even though I've been here on holiday. 'Cause he is Greek Cypriot, he was born and raised in Cyprus, but he went to an English school [...] and everyone who went to [this school] was either a foreigner of some sort, or either from an Arabic family who had moved to Cyprus, or were even born here, like his Lebanese friends or... er German, or English, or basically another Greek family who find it important that their kids go to an international school... like [my boyfriend's] family. And he introduced me to all these people who are Cypriot, but they're from a different background, or even Cypriot parents who sent their children to an English school, they're a bit more open-minded, they've gone off the island to study, whereas some of my cousins haven't even ever left Cyprus to study, they are very, er, narrow-minded, and they sort of go with the erm, they just don't think for themselves [...] they're just sheep, they're like sheep. Even if you're born and raised in Cyprus, but you've studied, you've gone somewhere else, to see another culture or way of living or whatever, you can come back a bit more open-minded [...] So yeah, as I said, I've been to Cyprus every single year, I'm a Greek Cypriot, my parents are from Limassol, I *never* saw this huge Arabic community, there's just this huge foreign community [...] and they are my friends that I have now [...] Not my family... well, I see them, you know... on holidays [...] So the people that make me feel at home here are not actually... well, they are from here, but they are not Cypriot-Cypriot...

Nicholas, aged 31, was particularly enthused by the 'new multiculturalism' of Nicosia:

Nicosia for me is like, the only place [in Cyprus] where you can go and feel multicultural, especially on Sunday, you know, you can walk by and see Bangladeshis playing cricket in the park – or they could be Sri Lankans, I don't know... You see they have picnics, festivals and concerts. Like last Sunday I went to the Nepalese New Year celebrations, that was great, I didn't realise there were so many Nepalese in Nicosia... I mean, for me that was fantastic... A lot of Chinese, we never had so many Chinese, they're not so much... er... they're kind of, not as, er, they don't interact with society in the same way as the other cultures do. Now we get a lot of Russians... especially down in Limassol... you get a lot more English in Paphos [...] But for me, I like the idea of it being multicultural, I do.

Others, however, placed more emphasis on the way these new immigrants from other (mostly poorer) countries are treated within Cypriot society and were very critical of Cypriots' racist attitudes towards them. In the following quote, Anti, a 38-year-old teacher at one of Nicosia's colleges, reflects on the recent immigration to Cyprus. Whilst showing understanding for the country's 'unpreparedness' for it, she

emphasises that, for her, racism towards the new immigrants is one of the things that bothers her most in Cyprus today:

First of all I like the fact that it's multicultural, I like that, erm.. the last year or two though I think most people have got the idea like its getting a bit too much now, in a sense that a lot of these people are getting jobs where they are interacting with the public but they don't speak the language, they don't speak English or Greek and so you know sometimes that can be a bit frustrating, 'cause you are trying to communicate and they don't understand sometimes [...] There's that kind of friction going on and I can see that with people and... I dunno, I don't have a problem with it at all, I mean... I don't like it in a sense that a lot of the immigrants coming in are... they're just workers, you know, they're working in the house, and a lot of Cypriots see these people as just those... and I mean I have students and they're doing hotel management courses and stuff, from India and China, um Middle Eastern countries... they get work placements in hotels and so they should really be working in a management position, a trainee management or you know at least serving, [working] with the guests, and what they do is the hotels will put them in the kitchens so that they don't have contact, um, I find that a horrible thing. And to be honest [that's] my main issue with Cyprus and if I do leave one day it's going to be based on race and the racism that I see, and I find it hard, to accept it. [...] It's just something that I personally have a problem with, and when I hear things I just get really upset, you know, see certain things or whatever, that are just really unjust you know... and then on the other hand you're thinking, you know, 10 or 15 years ago there wasn't that many people, you know, all of a sudden it's happened, very fast in Cyprus, we didn't see any black faces, Chinese faces in Cyprus, 15 years ago, and so on the other hand you know, they're having time, they're trying to adjust to it as well I suppose, I don't know, I'm trying to sort of... I'd never justify racism but I'm talking about people who are trying to adjust to it, who live here, and they're trying to adjust to it... um, I don't know for me this is one of the main, biggest, problems I can see. [...] And they have [migrant domestic workers] in their houses and some of them treat them – well some of them don't – they treat them like slaves, yeah you know, they'd don't even give them their basic rights, you know like the time off that they should have or anything that they are entitled to, and you know, yeah I find this a problem, to me it's a big problem [...] Yeah, for me yeah, really. I can deal with all the other silly things... you know someone says to me 'I come to your house at 8' and they come at 9 or half 9, I can deal with this, even though I have had issues with that as well at the beginning, you know. I can deal with most of the other things about Cypriots but when it comes to that, and sexism... sexism that's changing there's not so much of that these days um, no there isn't so much of that, I think... but yeah to me this is one of the biggest problems on racism.

Later on in her narrative Anti returns to the issue of discrimination and comments that, despite being raised in a stricter and more 'old fashioned' Cypriot way in the UK while her peers in Cyprus became more 'modernised', she does not find the Cypriots quite as 'progressive' when it comes to issues of tolerance of 'others':

I think [homophobia] is another issue, discrimination generally is an issue that we have, I mean it's changing, young people are more accepting, but you still get young people who'll admit they're racist and admit they're homophobes, they'll admit these things like it's ok to walk around and say 'I'm a racist' ... and that's what gets me angry, that frustrates me as well, that you think these are young people and they're thinking this, that is quite sad and quite frustrating... really... [...] Because they were progressing in certain ways but not in others, they're progressing in, yeah, they're going out and having fun, but their mind probably wasn't progressing so much, er.... they're still traditional in their thinking, yeah. I think that might happen, yeah, that might just be because [if] you are brought up in a culture that's, a society that's open-minded, you just pick it up, I don't know, you just pick it up...

Again, the above quote demonstrates nuances in references made to 'tradition' and 'modern', 'challenging conventional assumptions about modernization as a process that progresses in a linear fashion and inexorably replaces tradition' (Papadakis et al. 2006: 18). This view of participants seeing themselves as more receptive towards a multicultural society than the native Cypriots surfaced in other narratives too. Amalia, for example, stated that 'for us [British Cypriots] it's wonderful, you don't consider living in a cosmopolitan Nicosia as a negative, it's a plus, but I think that the major difficulties are the locals, the local Cypriot communities'. Tina, aged 30, also believes that her generally positive view of the new immigrants is not shared by the majority of Cypriots. She links negative attitudes towards migrants with the rapid economic development in Cyprus in terms of materialism and 'new money', which she believes have brought about a certain sense of superiority amongst the Cypriot population:

Generally speaking I would see it as a positive thing, but I don't think the Cypriots take anything from it if you see what I mean, like I think maybe because they've made money as well they have become very arrogant and with that there's a certain element of racism, so it's not like they embrace the people that come to this country, and um, personally I think it's a great thing [...] A lot of the immigrants that come here are not on an equal level in their eyes because they're doing a lot of the work that Cypriot people don't want to do, so I think maybe, some ways it could be that they become more racist because they see these people as you know lower than them, or not as educated, or whatever, which sometimes isn't even true because you find Eastern Europeans who are doctors, and they're cleaners because that's the [only] work [they can find].

Marcus on the other hand does not experience Cyprus as a truly 'multicultural', nor as a racist country. Though he agrees that immigrants are generally treated poorly, he sees racism towards foreigners as unintentional and based on ignorance rather than malice:

... and from a country that's been ethnically cleansed 35 years ago [referring to the Turkish partition of the island and the population exchange of 1974], all these new faces are coming: Nigerians, Cameroonians, Sri Lankans, Indians. It's not so much racism [towards them], it's curiosity and ignorance that provokes this kind of reaction, it's not maliciousness. I don't find Cypriots particularly vicious in their attitudes, just ignorant of other cultures, because they've been divided and they've been kept pure all of this time, and anyone who has been born in the last 35 years has grown up in this vacuum. It's not multicultural, despite the shitloads of immigrants that are in the country, 'cause they're second-class citizens, they're an underworld, they're the cleaners, they're the people that dig up the road, they're not part of society. No [I don't find Cyprus racist], I do find it extremely prejudiced, though. You get looked at and judged from what colour you are, [how you] are dressed ... erm, I wear a suit and I get treated much differently than if I turn up at some kind of business like this [looks at his casual trousers and t-shirt].

The last couple of quotes reveal an interesting pattern that was present in many of the other narratives: the linking of new migration, and the 'treatment' of migrants, to issues of **materialism, status and snobbery**, another theme which resonated through virtually all the narratives. Participants would often criticise Cypriots of their generation, or younger, for being overly materialistic and 'snooty'. One topic that frequently came up in discussions, particularly with female participants, was that of the employment and treatment of foreign domestic workers and caretakers in Cypriot households. Though more and more Cypriot women have been incorporated into the labour market, the gendered division of work within the household and the perceived responsibility of women for the household and childcare continues. The employment of female maids within the households pushes the potential transformation of social roles within the household more to the background. Since few local women take nursing and care jobs and as migrant labour costs significantly less, foreign domestic workers, mainly from the Philippines and Sri Lanka, are employed (Anthias 2006: 187-188). In the following extract 38-year-old Evi comments on this phenomenon, on Cypriots' rejection of manual labour, and on the consumerist cycle they get caught in:

The youngsters of today are the generation of the Filipino, they're the ones that were raised by Filipinos and Sri Lankans, they weren't raised by their parents, their parents were too busy working for the big house that they built and um, you know, so you have a generation of 20-year-olds, 'cause that's when it kind of started, that are um, spoilt... [...] Maybe when they grow up a little bit more they might realise it but... It's like the other girl was saying, she has a sister who is 17 and she said that she is so spoilt because in order for her to eat, the Filipino would have to walk around with the

plate and follow her while she was playing, she didn't sit at the dinner table with the rest of the family, like the rest of the family did when they were young...

[...]

The Cypriots have become a lot more snobs, they won't do the menial jobs anymore, um, you know things like this, so because everybody, most of them, are educated so I mean, you can't expect a boy who has just finished four years in university to come back and be a plumber, or a builder, so who's gonna build the houses? You have to bring in the Romanians so they come and they... or you know, the waiters and waitresses... you know... [The Cypriots are like] 'I'm gonna be seen by people that I'm waiting [tables]... I'm a waitress, oh my god! no, no, no', you know, so this is what has to happen – they could be unemployed for five years you know, but they won't go and... I mean, I worked as a waitress here too, when I needed to, I had three jobs at one point, when I needed to have three jobs I had three jobs, you know...

Anti, who in an earlier excerpt briefly touched upon the poor treatment of these migrant workers by stating that they are sometimes 'treated like slaves' and 'denied basic rights', was frequently involved in discussions with friends, both natives and repatriates, on the way Cypriot society today deals with domestic workers. She would argue that Cypriot mothers see their nannies as a symbol of material affluence, and would criticise them for having hours-long coffee or nail sessions with their friends whilst the foreign nanny runs after the kids: 'you know what they do? when the child hurts itself or whatever, they don't go to the child themselves, *no*.... they don't even pay attention to it, they look straight at the nanny... and then they complain that their children are getting attached to them [the foreign nannies]... and they treat them like shit, it's disgusting'. Anti's observation echoes that of Floya Anthias who points out that the employment of foreign – often exploited – domestic workers is a phenomenon which 'is not confined to families where the women work; women who prefer leisure to doing their own child care and domestic work may also employ an immigrant maid. In addition, more and more women [...] are hiring maids as part of a materialist status symbol' (Anthias 2006: 188).

Hence the above discussion shows how two major developments that participants were confronted with upon their return to Cyprus – new immigration and increased materialism – are intertwined in some of the critical views of Cypriot society today. Let

us pick up Marcus' narrative now, who in an earlier quote also expressed how he perceives today's Cypriots as snobbish and materialistic. Here he returns to this topic:

... one of the things I forgot to add to my hate list – What do I hate about Cyprus? – is that the girls, people generally, from their twenties onwards, erm, let's say from twenty to forty, I mean Cypriots, are very snobby, uptight. It would be nice to find a relationship with a Cypriot girl, but some of them are so Prada, Gucci, Audi, how much money you got... and they're nowhere near as friendly as the English girls, to have a relationship; to be completely cool about something, to go up to a girl in a bar and say 'hi, would you like something to drink?' She'd be, like, 'yeah' and you start chatting away. In Cyprus you don't get that; you get this cold, like this [mimics a snobby look], they turn around, look you up and down, like you're a piece of crap. This is what I don't like about the younger generation in Cyprus. How can a culture that's so warm and welcoming come to split away from that? That hospitality that I experienced as a kid ... seems to get less and less. The young people are more and more snobby, have turned more into materialism and being uptight about things... just not cool and relaxed at all.

In the above quote Marcus expresses various concerns about the native Cypriots of his generation. He criticises them for being arrogant, materialistic and standoffish – particularly the females (an important gendered dimension in terms of social networks which will be discussed in the chapters to follow) – whilst wondering where the warm and 'down to earth' people from his childhood visits have gone. Part of the context for the changes that took place in Cypriot society, as experienced by Marcus and other second-generation returnees, has been the transformation of the Cypriot economy since the first generation emigrated in the 1950s and 1960s. Particularly throughout the past two decades, Greek-Cypriot society has transformed into a rapidly growing service economy and has become accustomed to taking advantage of cheap immigrant labour (Papadakis et al. 2006: 22). No longer poor and rural, Cyprus has enjoyed growth and productivity on a mix of light industry, intensive agriculture, offshore services, property development and tourism, trends well evident before Cyprus joined the EU in 2004 (King and Thomson 2008: 283-287). This development, according to some participants, took place at such an unnaturally rapid pace that 'it went to some of [the Cypriots'] heads' so that 'they don't know how to handle it'. A critique also articulated by Theodora and Nicholas, again making the historical comparison with the years of their childhood visits:

It's all about how you look over here, it's so ... materialistic, and I don't know how they can do it, because it's so fuckin' expensive as well, because coming here on holiday I thought Cyprus was so much cheaper, but actually living here, and now that the euro has kicked in, it's really expensive. But everyone has to have a big house, they have to have their expensive car, they have to have their labels, they have to have their Louis Vuitton, and their Gucci ... even if it's totally tasteless, because they think it's fashionable or they saw someone else with it, even if it's a Russian millionaire who can afford to spend their money on rubbish. But What I've learned is, everyone is sacrificing so much to keep up this image, and basically they all either have two jobs or they are in serious amounts of debt (Theodora, 28).

Did Cyprus change a lot over the years? Yeah, definitely ... it's huge ... I mean apart from development, everything is building, financially like, it was always a place for offshore companies, but somehow they're really come into their own, mainly through Russian money *[laughs]*, there's a lot of that. So the banks are lending like crazy, 'cause it's easy credit, and ... there seems to be a lot more money, but not just that, it's also like ... we're adopting the whole individualistic lifestyle as well, to a much greater degree than before, you know, like ... yeah, you did get the feeling it was friendlier ... fifteen years ago (Nicholas, 31).⁵²

Hence, when comparing the Cyprus of their childhoods to the Cyprus they experience today as adult returnees, participants tend to point out those changes which they perceive as negative. At the same time, some of them, like Nicholas, wanted to distance themselves from the image of 'the British Cypriot who repeatedly complains about the natives', which he expresses in the following self-reflective excerpt:

A lot of British Cypriots were characterised by their own superiority complex... you know... – I can introduce you to a few of them *[laughs]* – No not really... not too many... but er back then, when we would socialise and stuff, and the thing is I didn't, I didn't like the idea – I don't even know, maybe I did it when I was younger, but I seem to have a memory loss *[laughs]* – but erm, certainly now, I would never compare England and Cyprus and say 'ooh bloody Cypros' you know... Yeah yeah, you hear that, like 'oohh... in England they would never do that' *[laughs]* and stuff like that, you know. I mean, I don't know... I might have been like that when I was twelve, but now... I just don't like that attitude, I really don't, because... you're here because you chose to be here, so judge it from within – and get real as well, it's not as if everything is perfect in the place we came from... every country has its plusses and, you know, negatives. So I really hated that, I hate that now. Definitely.

While often expressing critical opinions towards the changed social and familial environment in Cyprus and the rapid changes tied to globalisation and development, participants at the same time seem to see Cyprus as still highly favourable in terms of

⁵² It is worth pointing out here that this interview, like the others in my fieldwork, was carried out a few months before the onset of the global financial crisis.

‘quality of life’. In fact, Cyprus appears to be the preferred place to bring up the next generation: the children of the second-generation returnees. Safety and freedom were the two key elements associated with their childhood memories of Cyprus and remain the key elements today, as adults, when considering the upbringing of their own children.

Theodora, who was rather critical of the Cyprus of today in some earlier quotes, came round, later in her narrative, to a much more positive evaluation of the country as a safe place to bring up children. Her reflection was a rather typical one; like many participants she focused particularly on the safety angle, but also mentioned the quality of life compared to the UK – the freer social life and the physical environment of sea and mountains, ideal for outdoor activities:

Don't get me wrong, I said a lot of bad things about Cyprus, but there is a lot of good things too. Like the safety ... I've reached an age where I am like, 28 and I got a serious relationship, a boyfriend, and if I think about having a life together, about having a family, I'd be ... could I raise a family in London? What life am I gonna give them? I would probably turn into my mum. As much as I hated that she was so strict with me, I would have even more reason to be [strict] with them now... you hear about stabbings go on and all. Whereas over here kids have such a wonderful life, they have a better upbringing – they go to school, half-eight, they finish at midday, they can go to the beach, they have the mountains, they can be safe, you know, as long as you mix them with the right people. [...] You got the sea, you got the mountains, you can go on walks, have activities... weekends away, or day trips away; we're actually going out more than I ever did in England.

The arguments raised by Theodora echo some of the findings on Caribbean second-generation return migration. Both Reynolds (2008: 15-16) and Phillips and Potter (2009: 244-245) suggest that many British-born Caribbeans take their children to ‘the homeland’, or have them there, in order to provide them with a better quality of life and a ‘safer’ environment, an angle that will be further elaborated in the next chapter. Though Reynolds’ sample (2008: 14) included a significant number of single mothers (half of the female participants), which was far greater than the number of single mothers amongst the British-Cypriot participants, there were clear parallels between their motivations for return. Like 39-year-old Marianna, single mother to 9-year-old Christie, who – like the Caribbean mothers in Reynolds’ study – emphasised how

providing her daughter with a safer environment and living in close proximity to her (returned) parents were key factors behind their return:

When my mum and dad decided to come back here... you know – because I’m actually, I’m divorced, I’m a single parent – and because of my daughter as well, every year we were coming to Cyprus for holiday, and my daughter just loved it here, I decided to make the move [...] My parents are here, I also thought it would be a much better way of life for [Christie], it’s a much safer environment, a much better climate... those are the reasons...

And with this ‘return’ of the second generation, plus their children, a new migrant cohort arises: a generation born in Cyprus with their own transnational ties back to the UK, and perhaps elsewhere. Though they are not the focus of this thesis, as time passes these children of British-born Cypriot ‘returnees’ to Cyprus will have their own interesting story to tell. Their migratory, transnational *and* local experiences are bound to broaden our views on lived experiences beyond and across national, ethnic and cultural boundaries.

4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has explored participants’ memories of childhood visits to Cyprus whilst growing up in the UK, and their reflections on these memories as adults living in Cyprus today. This topic of childhood visits to the ‘homeland’ paid by second-generation migrants has been hardly explored in the literatures on the second generation, return migration, and transnationalism (King and Christou 2008). Hence very few comparative studies are available.

Many participants emphasised having received a rather ‘strict’ upbringing in the UK – definitely stricter than their ‘British’ peers – which they resented at times. They were often (though not always) raised within tightly-knit Cypriot communities or families, according to the ‘traditional’ Cypriot values – and the interrelated understandings of masculinity and femininity – their parents brought with them from Cyprus in the 1950s and 1960s. Their parents often perceived British society to be threatening and ‘dangerous’, whilst Cypriot society was associated with safety and security. This may

further explain why Cypriot parents in the UK preferred their children to stay within the safe circles of the Cypriot community, rather than to be out in the 'mean streets' of big cities such as London, Liverpool or Cardiff. However, looking back, despite recalling some feelings of resentment towards their parents for having been brought up in the strict UK Cypriot setting, many participants, as adults today, have developed an understanding and reconciliation of their parents' outlooks and choices at the time.

The association with Cyprus as 'safe' and 'secure' was very evident during family holidays to the island, when children were allowed to do things, go places, and stay up late, to a far greater extent than their parents would have permitted them in the UK. Hence, return trips to Cyprus with parents are generally remembered in glowing terms, recalling the hot and sunny climate, joyous times spent on the beach, family warmth, and above all **freedom**, a term that stood out very prominently in the excerpts on childhood holidays to Cyprus. Of course the contrast between parents' attitudes in the UK and Cyprus could be partly down to the fact that, as for most families in general, holidays are times when the normal boundaries of family discipline are more relaxed. Nevertheless, the narratives revealed that there was more to it than the commonly laid-back mood of parents on vacation. Rather, it can be explained by the generally 'safe' environment in Cyprus, and the surrounding safety-net of cousins and relatives who could be 'trusted' to look after the children, as well as the parents' levels of confidence and familiarity in the homeland. Furthermore, those participants who experienced a more permanent family return to Cyprus as children, and went to school there, emphasised memories of freedom similar to those experienced during the more fleeting holiday visits.

Some participants recalled, however, that during their teenage years holiday visits to Cyprus became less enjoyable and more constraining – yet this too is often the case with teenagers travelling with their parents. For some, Cyprus seemed to be a duller place with not much to do (cf. Levitt 2009, referring to Indian Gujarati return visits). Others felt that they were constantly being watched and judged.

Though family narratives such as the ‘return odyssey’ (Panagakos 2004) tended to be ‘recycled’ within the family, and holidays to Cyprus were frequent during most of the participants’ childhoods, few saw a direct link between their childhood memories and their decision to return to Cyprus as adults. Nevertheless, even if there was no such direct causal connection, upon their return to Cyprus participants *did* have certain expectations and impressions of Cyprus that *were* influenced by the familial narratives and holidays of their childhoods. Remembering the warm-hearted welcomes of their childhood, quite a few participants experienced a sense of disillusionment upon their return, when confronted with the fact that the ‘warm atmosphere’ amongst family and friends, and of Cypriot society at large, had faded. However, some female returnees in their late 40s to early 50s who were married to Cypriot spouses, described the family ‘embrace’ as quite stifling, particularly when referring to their in-laws. Other participants described how they have integrated into a different part of Cypriot society, beyond their immediate family. While each narrative revealed its individual nuances, all participants shared the view that manifestations of hospitality in Cyprus have changed since their childhood visits (or since listening to their family’s stories).

Two other, and at times harshly critiqued, themes that were dominant in the returnees’ narratives when comparing the Cyprus of today with that of their childhood memories, were **immigration** and **materialism**. Immigration to the island, and the subsequent multi-ethnic society of today’s Cyprus, was noted as a recent phenomenon, with varying reactions. Responses to these developments were quite mixed and at times ambivalent, with some participants simultaneously expressing appreciation *and* reservation about Cyprus’ new multi-ethnicity. Others however, were extremely positive about the various migrant communities in Cyprus, though at times rather critical towards the native Cypriots’ attitude towards migrants, which some believed was based on ‘ignorance’ whilst others used harsher terms like ‘racism’. Participants often believed that they are more ‘open’ and ‘tolerant’ towards a multicultural society than their native Cypriot peers. A similar pattern appeared in their views on the rapid development of materialism and consumerism in Cyprus. Whilst acknowledging that their Cypriot peers had experienced a more ‘modern’ upbringing compared to theirs in the UK, and that today they may wear designer clothes and drive expensive cars, many

participants believed that this has brought forth a certain aloofness and shallowness. Some believe that this rapid development may have caused people in Cyprus to be modern on 'the outside' whilst 'the inside' remains rather 'traditional'; for these participants this reflected their own lack of interest in flaunting their wealth or their more 'open-mind' stance towards minorities as signs of 'progress'.

However, despite their at times critical views towards 'modern Cyprus', many participants came round, later in the narrative, to a much more positive evaluation of the country. In fact, when talking about their own (future) children, many believe that Cyprus is a safer and more pleasant place to bring up children than the large cities in the UK.

The above conclusions regarding the childhood memories of the British-born returnees that participated in this study, lead us to an overarching issue that has revealed itself throughout this chapter. Sometimes clearly articulated by the participants, whilst at other times more concealed 'between the lines', the tension between notions of '**tradition**' and '**modernity**', or more precisely the variety of interpretations and nuances these terms depend upon, was a major feature in most interviews. Though the Cypriots in the UK did hold on to their 'traditional' values while Cyprus 'modernised', the narratives show that such preconceived notions are not straightforward. Rather, they are made up of a variety of levels and subtleties, which transform throughout the various life stages and positionalities. What might have been very important or significant during one's childhood may be of less value today, and vice versa.

This chapter has shown the importance of listening beyond labels such as 'tradition', 'modernity', and 'time warp', terms that have many more layers of meaning to them than is initially apparent, particularly in the case of second-generation migrants, and their journeys 'home'. Furthermore, and in line with Argyrou's (1996) observations, it confirms that perceptions and practices of 'modernity' and 'tradition' are reactions to the symbolic domination by the West. Cypriots in the UK tried to hold on to their 'traditions' in order to guard themselves from the 'modernity' of the UK, whilst

Cypriots in Cyprus have embraced the 'new modernity' caused by the rapid materialistic and economic developments on the island. On the other hand, life in the UK brought about an inevitable interaction between the British-born Cypriots and other elements of 'modern' society, which on different levels makes them feel more 'modernised' and 'global' in outlook than their native Cypriot counterparts. Hence, to a certain extent, British-born Cypriots and native Cypriots are divided by their different perceptions of 'modernity' and 'tradition'. This resonates with Argyrou's argument that modernity is 'neither a destination to be reached nor an object to be appropriated. It is a historically constituted instrument of division' (Argyrou 1996: 157). As this research does not focus on the voices of the 'native' Cypriots, their views on the issues being discussed are unfortunately not included. However, it indicates a further need for studies on encounters between migrants (both returnees and 'new' immigrants) and non-migrants, as they are all, as emphasised by Carling (2008), part of 'the human dynamics of migrant transnationalism'.

Chapter 5

Motives for 'Return' and Adjustment upon Relocation to Cyprus

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on **childhood memories**, impressions of Cyprus and 'Cypriotness' whilst growing up, and the participants' reflections on those memories in comparison to Cyprus today. The present chapter looks at **adult experiences**. I look at returnees' motivations, everyday encounters and observations with regard to their current lives in Cyprus. While the core of this chapter is based on the narrative material collected in Cyprus, references to other key studies on second-generation return migration will be interwoven to provide a comparative angle.

Firstly, I explore participants' motives for moving to Cyprus. Although each individual return was incited by unique personal circumstances – whether embedded within wider family dynamics, personal aspirations, or simply related to a chance event or moment in life – several broader pull and push factors can be identified. The main theme running through the narratives was a desire for a better (or different) quality of life, made up by factors like the Mediterranean climate and lifestyle, slower pace of life and a safer environment (for themselves or their children). For some participants, such factors were identified as conscious reasons for resettlement, whilst others only fully grasped their importance once in Cyprus. In contrast to some other studies on second-generation return (e.g. Wessendorf 2007), a desire to rediscover their 'roots' or return to their kin and homeland did not appear to be a key theme in the participants' narratives. This does not mean, however, that the participants did not create a sense of home in Cyprus, which *is* rooted in the qualities that the parental homeland has to offer; or that they were not, on the other hand, critical towards certain aspects of Cypriot life – as will be shown below.

This chapter is structured as follows. After reviewing the participants' motivations for return to Cyprus, I then discuss in turn the experiences of adjusting to the island, settling in, and managing everyday life, particularly with reference to interactions with native Cypriots and Cypriot society at large. Perhaps ironically, some participants claimed that they felt more 'Cypriot' when living in the UK than they do now in Cyprus, where they feel more 'British' or 'European'. Others stated that they feel equally foreign in both places. However, the evidence reveals that what they described as 'feeling like a foreigner' does not necessarily amount to feeling like 'a stranger', a term which often bears negative emotional weight. Rather, participants often found that being 'a foreigner' does not stand in the way of fitting in and enjoying those elements of Cypriot society that incited their move to Cyprus to begin with. This may be linked to the fact that many of the participants did not return out of reasons of nostalgia; hence their expectations were not as emotionally charged as such.

My findings show that several acclaimed quality-of-life characteristics of the island played a vital role in the participants' acclimatisation process, and remain to do so in everyday life later on. Interestingly, these highly valued characteristics of Cyprus, like the slower pace of life or the close proximity between places, are ironically the sources of some of the main everyday annoyances, such as lingering formalities and lack of anonymity. Then again, overall, the advantages that the island's lifestyle has to offer appear to outweigh the simultaneously associated disadvantages. This interesting dynamic can be observed throughout the empirical data that make up the main body of this chapter.

Another aspect that often came up during participants' descriptions of their everyday lives, and their interaction with the native Cypriots, was that of perceived economic and sexual rivalry, something that was particularly common in accounts of female returnees. At the same time, however, participants refer to the socio-economic *advantages* of 'being different' or 'being British', such as being perceived as more professionally adept and socially approachable; perceptions upon which they *do* capitalise.

Furthermore, many engage in ‘strategic switching’ between various Cypriot, British and international sites, both nationally and transnationally, in order to achieve the most favourable ‘lifestyle package’. This is particularly evident when it comes to their children’s upbringing and education. Whilst consciously choosing to provide their children with the Cypriot quality of life whilst growing up, parents often prefer to send their children to international, English-speaking (i.e. ‘non-Cypriot’) schools, albeit *within* Cyprus, in order to later on send them off to universities *outside* Cyprus.

5.2 REASONS FOR RETURN

I would like to be able to say that my decision to come to Cyprus was based on a yearning to come back to my roots – but it wasn’t. I wanted a slower pace of life and I was desperate for a nicer climate and to retire after having worked full-time all my adult life. I was also getting more and more disillusioned with the British way of life, mainly the binge drinking. It seemed that the only way the British people could enjoy themselves was by getting drunk. I just didn’t like it. Here in Cyprus people go out for a coffee, this is practically unheard of in England, going out usually means alcohol. Also, England was just becoming more and more unsafe (Alexia, 55).

It is often stressed in the migration literature that the key motive behind return migration consists of a mixture of positive and negative quality-of-life factors (Boyle et al. 1998; Gmelch 1980; Michalos 1997). I chose to open this section with the above quote from Alexia because, although like all narratives it is highly personal, within a few sentences she captures the essence of many of the participants’ accounts of the motivations behind their move to Cyprus. That is, rather than based on a deep-seated desire to return to one’s roots, their migration to Cyprus often took place for a variety of other personal and mainly pragmatic reasons. I now examine this generalisation in more detail, within the general framework of an answer to the question ‘Why do British-born adults of Cypriot parentage return to Cyprus?’

Many of the first-generation Cypriot migrants in the UK maintained their ‘traditional’ Cypriot values and other elements of the home country, and preferred to raise their British-born children accordingly, as we saw in the previous chapter. Such homeland orientations, combined with a motivation towards monetary accumulation (thus working very long hours), was often based on a desire for an eventual return to Cyprus

(Anthias 1992). However, for many first-generation migrants, this intention to return dwindled, or was put off to 'a later stage', a phenomenon often referred to as 'the myth of return' (see for example: Al Rasheed 1994; Anwar 1979; Dahya 1973; Zetter 1999). Many of my participants pointed out that their parents remained in the UK and either do not have any concrete intention now to move back to Cyprus or keep postponing it, particularly if they have other (grand)children living in the UK. Nevertheless, as stressed by Anastasia Christou, 'if we are to rationalise these desires in order to simplify the reasons behind them, we immediately think of the [first-generation] migrants as "sojourners" who inevitably want, should and will return to their home country'. The second-generation return, on the other hand, she continues, 'is a process that to an extent puzzles us, especially if the returning migrants decide to relocate on their own, without their immediate families' (Christou 2006c: 61).

In the previous chapter, when examining the question as to whether a direct causal connection could be made between childhood memories – both of holiday visits to Cyprus and of parents' homeland narratives – and the independent adult return later on, I stressed that, for many, such direct links were not evident. Though a few said that the desire to return 'was instilled by their parents', others stated that, as much as they enjoyed their childhood holidays to Cyprus, they never thought of moving there while growing up. When asked why she decided to move to Cyprus ten years ago, 38-year-old Liverpool-born Anti explained that she never really considered moving to Cyprus until she got a job offer on the island. She did, however, have a desire to move away from the UK, to a 'more European' place. And since her (UK-based) parents would not have been very pleased about her moving 'to another country', she knew that Cyprus was *the* place 'in between' where her wishes and those of her parents could meet:

[So] I didn't decide, it kind of happened, someone offered me a [teaching] job, and I went to the interview, I got it, and I just made a very snap decision, I'm quite spontaneous in that way [...] and then I came, and then I met my boyfriend at the same college, where I worked, and so that's probably one of the reasons why I stayed [...] Then we split up and things started to change and... so I feel sometimes that my real experiences started when I split up because that's when I was on my own again, I was on my own sort of making friends [...] and that's why I'm at the point where I'm quite happy [...] I didn't connect [in England], I didn't like pubs, even though I was brought up in England [...] I like café society I suppose, more European society, um, and I like the multicultural which you get in Nicosia, especially in my work I mean, I

meet so many different types of people at work [...] we have people there from America, from Germany, from Poland [...] Cypriots who've gone away and come back and... you know so, and all the students as well, they're from all over the place as well now, that's quite multicultural...

[...]

I didn't necessarily like [the idea of moving to] Cyprus too much. [...] I've got to say one of the reasons was to get away from home and I think my parents wouldn't let me go to another country and I was thinking about going somewhere else in Europe [...] Look, they wouldn't stop me, *but*, but they wouldn't be happy and they would cause trouble and I just couldn't be bothered to be honest with you, with the trouble that it would cause, and I thought 'well, if it's somewhere in between, it's not completely on my own where I don't know anybody, [but] I could live on my own and be independent', so it was kind of something in between.

Next, 37-year-old Lisa explains that, although she has 'very nice memories' of her childhood holidays in Cyprus, she never saw the island as her home. Her move to Cyprus 16 years ago was something she never really anticipated. Therefore she does not really have a clear answer to the question of why she moved to Cyprus. Rather, for her, it was more a matter of 'why not?' when an aunt suggested it to her. Nevertheless, once in Cyprus, she realised that she *does* feel connected to elements of life in Cyprus, without having to classify herself as either 'Cypriot' or 'English':

The reason I came to live here, you know, it wasn't actually a conscious decision really, I didn't decide 'yes I'm going to go and live there'. Not quite, um, it was just certain circumstances, I was here on holiday and one of my aunts, my dad's sister, said to me 'why don't you look for a job here and stay here for a while?', but I never thought of this [...] I thought about it for some time [...] and then I thought 'why not?', you know, just for, you know, something different... [...] So I did... and I didn't mean to stay such a long time, I didn't really think how long, I just, you know, thought 'OK...' [...] which er, is a bit of a strange thing to do I think... [...] So my parents they were still in England [...] and so [when] I said to them 'I'm going to go Cyprus' they couldn't believe it [...] they didn't think that I would ever want to live here. [...] Then afterwards, when I came here, certain things *did* make me feel like, um, not like I've come home but kind of like [...] I could identify with [...] maybe behaviour or certain feelings I had, it wasn't actually the way they live [here], it wasn't anything like this, it was more, kind of like maybe characters, you know how people's characters are, maybe like the 'Mediterranean' part of [it], so that made me feel nice. But on the other hand, but that's actually afterwards, then I realised that, what I told you yesterday, I just accepted the fact that I'm not Cypriot and I'm not English and once you accept it then you're OK, then you feel OK...

Expressions such as 'I needed a change' or 'I wanted something different' were quite common in the narratives. For some this was strengthened by feelings of discontent

about life in the UK, particularly the 'rat-race', and a desire for 'a better quality of life', in terms of climate, pace of life and work-life balance. Like Marcus, aged 35, who at the age of 18 ('I really screwed up my A levels'), went to Cyprus and worked a year in the bars and clubs of the seaside resort of Ayia Napa, until a cousin took him aside and persuaded him to go back to the UK to 'get a proper education'. Marcus got his law degree and embarked on a career in London, but in his early 30s he reached a point where he got fed up with the hectic city life and decided to move to Cyprus in 2004:

I got caught up in doing my college diploma, and then I went for a degree, and then I went for qualification, and then I was working in the city, which again was good fun, erm... It wasn't until I got really sick of being a lawyer that I decided to come back [...] I just couldn't stand it anymore, I couldn't stand any more uptight lawyers, I couldn't stand the rotten sewer train in London, and... bad quality food, always grey and miserable, that's the one big thing [...] So ... erm yeah, I decided that I'd risk it, I got some money together, with which I'd decided to buy a house and not found anything in London, 'cause it was so expensive, and decided 'ok, I'll risk my money, instead of buying a house as an investment I'll go and get myself a bar, and invest my money that way' [...] It was six years of thinking 'I want to buy a café, I want to buy a bar'... 'can't do it, can't do it, won't do it', and then [I thought] 'if I won't do it, will I regret it?', and then I decided that 'yes, I would', and then, you know, Cyprus was the obvious choice, I speak some Greek, the family is here, I know the system, kind of... Erm, and the weather is fantastic, I mean, now it's February and it was warm sunshine all day...

Also 35-year-old Vasos, who – although at the time I interviewed him ran his own health club – moved to Cyprus in 2006 with the initial intention to open a bar. He told me that, having spent all his childhood holidays in Cyprus, as soon as he was old enough to choose his own holiday destinations he chose not go to Cyprus anymore. Hence it was only after ten years of not travelling to the island, and pressure by his parents, that he decided to visit again. He rediscovered the place and realised it made him feel good:

As I got older I wanted to go to other places, so actually it got to the point where I became an adult and could choose where to go on holiday, and I said 'no I'm not going to Cyprus, definitely not going to Cyprus' and I went everywhere except [Cyprus]. My parents used to shout at me quite a lot for not coming to Cyprus to see the family or the friends. But in the end I relinquished. They said 'look, you've got to go otherwise you're gonna lose contact with these people'. So a few years ago [...] I came on holiday and actually quite liked the place, [after] probably about ten years of not coming here [...] I came to Limassol on holiday with my father and a friend and I thought 'this place is great'. I was in the nightclub business back in [England], and I said 'right, I'm gonna open a night club here' [...] and then I realised that actually I don't like being in the nightclub business at all *[laughs]* so I left. I wouldn't say [I felt] at home, no, it was...

you know it was a foreign country, but of which I had an insight. I just, I liked the sunshine, I felt that it had good energy, you know, I liked who I was here, it's not that I liked everybody else, I didn't care, you know I just liked who I was, I felt good [...] I just had a lot of energy here. I don't know, maybe it was because I connect with the sunshine, obviously speaking the language at a basic level was useful and knowing where things were, from my time here as a child...

Like the opening quote by Alexia, the last few excerpts reveal an interesting way of reasoning, prevalent in many of the narratives, with regard to the question 'why Cyprus?' The decision to move to Cyprus was obviously based on a connection to the island. However, the motives were not necessarily based on a desire to return to one's 'roots' or 'the homeland'. In fact in most cases this was not the main motivation. Rather it was based on a desire for a different lifestyle and different environment, which could be found in Cyprus. As stated by Marcus, 'Cyprus was the obvious choice' because of his knowledge of 'the system', the people and the basics of the language; or as Vasos calls it 'a foreign country of which I had an insight'. For Anti, as we saw in her earlier quote, Cyprus provided the more independent and 'European' lifestyle she was looking for without going against the wishes of her parents. Once in Cyprus, however, participants often did experience a certain 'deeper' sense of identification with the place and the culture. As Lisa stressed earlier, despite not having the 'I've come home' experience, the experience of feeling a connection to the Mediterranean lifestyle made her feel 'nice'. Like Vasos, who mentioned the 'energy' he has in Cyprus, Angela, aged 41, believes that she has 'become a younger person in Cyprus' which she attributes to the sunny weather and the overall 'Cypriot way of life'.

Quality-of-life issues often played a key role in the decision-making process of the migrants. For some this was directly linked to a desire to improve family life, often following some major change or even a crisis in one's personal life. Maya, aged 42, said that she never thought she would move to Cyprus, at least not until retirement. But when the demanding jobs she and her husband had in the UK started to put a strain on their marriage, it was her British husband who, to her surprise, came up with the idea of relocating to the island 14 years ago:

I was working in the law offices, I was on-call on weekends, I was very busy, he was teaching and was extremely busy, and we were missing each other, and then

basically... we were going to sort of split up really [...] just from being so absent. And he made a decision and said 'right, I want to go abroad and do something else, carry on abroad.' My parents had moved out to Cyprus – I was visiting them and he said 'well, please go and see what's available', so I did and a job came up at the [...] school, and he said 'well I'm going to go for it'. I didn't think he was serious, I really didn't, I thought 'how is he going to cope'? I remember Cyprus as a holiday place [...] I didn't know it as a working place, I had no idea.

Evi's move was also linked to a change in her personal life. After her divorce in 1990 she felt that Cyprus would offer her and her young son a better quality of life:

I got married in '87, I had my son ... and [then] I separated in 1990, and I moved to Cyprus in '92. I just felt it was... first of all I needed to remove myself somehow from the UK. I was living back with my parents at the time and it was you know, being quite an independent person, it was driving me a little crazy you know, then I thought that it's a much better lifestyle to live and with my son growing up [...] I just felt it was a much nicer environment for him too, and that's how come I moved to Cyprus. [My ex-husband] stayed in England, but when we were divorcing, you know with our settlement and things like this, I felt that I could maybe have a nicer life here [...] like I could buy an apartment here without having a mortgage and that type of thing at the time, and you know I would be able to better afford to put my son into private school [...] and I thought it's a change, I wanted to be by myself um, and I also already had friends here...

It is interesting to note that in some of the narratives of the female participants, like Evi's and Anti's, a need to be 'more independent' (i.e. *away* from family) played a significant role in their move to Cyprus, as opposed to kinship or ethnic ties or the desire to be closer to family. For them Cyprus offered an environment that enabled them to find this desired level of distance and independence, yet in a familiar surrounding. This reflection reveals how gender relations can also work the other way around. Unlike some other studies on second-generation return, in which women expressed having to conform with gender relations that are still 'traditional', with controlling relatives and highly constrained expectations of behaviour and employment in the 'homeland' (see for example Wessendorf 2007, referring to the reactions of young Swiss-Italian women going back to southern Italy), these participants see Cyprus as an 'escape' from the gendered claustrophobia of the family-dominated ethnic community in diaspora. This factor is also evident in some of the empirical material on the return of second-generation Greek women (King et al. 2011; Panagakos 2004). One woman in Anastasia Panagakos' paper on transnational family

experiences of Greek-Canadian women, describes the sense of freedom she experienced in Greece, as being *away* from the Hellenic community in Calgary meant that she did not 'have to justify [her] actions to anyone' (Panagakos 2004: 304-305). This observation links back to the discussion in the previous chapter, how 'homeland' societies have changed in the years separating childhood visits and adult relocation.

The view that Cyprus offers a better environment for personal and family life, childrearing, and an overall better quality of life, was often expressed by my participants. In this sense there are strong similarities with second-generation 'islanders' of Caribbean parentage who returned to their home (is)lands (Phillips and Potter 2009; Potter et al. 2005; Reynolds 2008). Second-generation 'Bajan-Brit' returnees refer to quality-of-life-related 'counter-urban' characteristics embodied by the island of Barbados (Phillips and Potter 2009) in ways that are very similar to those pointed out by my participants in Cyprus. However, other reasons for return in the British-Caribbean case, theorised by Phillips and Potter (2009) as the 'lure of home', differentiated theirs from my study. Racial elements of prejudice and discrimination were much less evident in the British-Cypriot motivations for return than in the British-Caribbean narratives. Furthermore, the desire to provide their children with 'Caribbean values' appeared to play a vital role (Reynolds 2008), as well as the presence of kinship ties and a search for identity and ethnic belonging, which did not appear to be the main draw for the British-born Cypriots. Caribbean children in the UK, particularly boys, are believed to be peer-pressured away from studying, or they are stigmatised by the system; whereas education in the Caribbean is seen as more disciplined and accommodating for 'black kids' (Reynolds 2008). Although Floya Anthias (1992: 121-122) briefly touched upon the issue of behavioural problems amongst some British-Cypriot boys in UK schools, this did not seem to be a push factor amongst my participants. While, like the Caribbean returnees, many British-born Cypriot returnees believe that the parental homeland *is* a good place to bring up their own children and that choosing the right education for their children *is* important, 'Cypriot values' or shared ethnic characteristics do not appear to play a major role. In fact, as we will see later in this chapter, many choose to send their children to

international (English-language) schools, where the pupils are from a wide variety of national and ethnic backgrounds.

Pull factors similar to the Caribbean case, in terms of kinship ties and the quest for ethnic belonging, are identified in other studies on second-generation return migration. In her study on second-generation Swiss-born Italians, Susanne Wessendorf (2007) emphasises how the return to Italy is strongly motivated by nostalgia and a longing to go back to their roots, a process which she duly terms 'roots migration'. Also the narratives from the second-generation Greek-Americans who participated in Anastasia Christou's (2006c) study reveal that they essentially came to Greece in search of their 'authentic' homeland, expecting (or hoping) to feel that they were 'returning home'. Several case-studies on second-generation return described in Conway and Potter's (2009) edited collection on 'return migration of the next generations' also emphasise returnees' desire to discover the 'homeland'. In her contribution to the collection, Helen Lee (2009) stresses that for many second-generation Tongan Australians the return was motivated by a desire to discover their heritage and cultural identity, and by the wish to help their country. MacPherson and MacPherson (2009) identify six groups of returnees amongst New Zealand-born Samoans, based on their reasons for resettlement in their parental homeland: 'family carers', 'professionals', 'entrepreneurs', 'cultural heritage seekers', 'social idealists' and 'explorers'. While the first three groups returned for more pragmatic reasons such as their 'duty' to look after family members or economic opportunities available in Samoa, the latter three were motivated by a desire to strengthen their Samoan identity or help transform the homeland. Such a desire to 'help the homeland' was not something I found amongst the motivations of the British-born Greek Cypriots. This, I believe, is not surprising, as Cyprus is generally considered to be a 'modern' European country, whilst countries like Tonga or Samoa are perceived to be generally 'poorer' or more 'disadvantaged' and hence in need of 'outside' help. This does not mean, however, that British-born Cypriot returnees do not contribute to Cypriot society at large. They do have an influence on the everyday make-up of Cypriot society and the various (sub)cultures within, as we will see in Chapter 6, although the extent to which the returnees contribute in terms of civil society lies somewhat beyond the scope of my thesis.

5.3 EXPERIENCES UPON RETURN AND ADJUSTMENT TO THE ISLAND ENVIRONMENT

In the previous section I discussed the motivations behind the participants' decision to return to Cyprus. In this one I will examine experiences of adjustment to the island. One of the striking aspects of participants' narratives was the overall sense of feeling 'more Cypriot' in the UK than in Cyprus, or 'equally foreign' in both places. While still in the UK, being Cypriot was often a strong part of their identity. Their parents' longing for, and belonging to, Cyprus fashioned a particular sense of 'Cypriotness' that often evolved around memories and values of 'the old Cyprus'. Being away from the homeland, the conservation of this Cypriotness merely relied on the Cypriot families (and communities) in the UK. Hence, as discussed earlier, many maintained 'traditional' Cypriot values that had already faded, or indeed did not exist anymore, in Cyprus. This is articulated in the following excerpt of 42-year-old Maya, who was brought up in a 'traditional' family oriented Cypriot environment in Wales:

It's very strange, I felt more Cypriot when I was in Wales than I do now, being in Cyprus, because I had all the old background and history and all the rest of it [in the UK]. Coming here I've become much more Western [...] yeah, the influences are so strong here, um, and I don't see my family, [they] live in Paphos or Nicosia, I don't see them very much at all...

Angela, aged 41, expressed a similar feeling, except that rather than being 'westernised' (Maya, above), she feels that, for her it brings out the European, or British:

Do you know what? In England I felt quite Cypriot because you were always um... sometimes you felt like a foreigner, because of people, the way they treated you [...] but in Cyprus I feel very European, I feel more British than that I do Cypriot here, it's really, really weird, um, because [...] no matter how much I feel I'm Cypriot, coming over here we are completely different, but I *do* fit in [...] wherever I go I don't like to change, I blend in very easily wherever I am...

Statements like 28-year-old Theodora's 'whilst I was in England I felt like a foreigner and I still feel like a foreigner over here too' were not uncommon in the narratives. However, feeling like 'a foreigner' did not seem to equate descriptions of feeling like a 'stranger' for these British-born Cypriots, as was the case for some participants in

other studies on second-generation return. Wessendorf, for example, noted how, once in Italy, second-generation Swiss-born Italians ‘feel trapped in a place which they once hoped would be their homes, but in which they feel like strangers’ (2007: 1097). An American-born Greek interviewee in Christou’s study expressed how he feels ‘like a stranger, like a foreigner in his own country’, which has ‘upset [him], hurt [him], and made [him] angry’ (2006c: 78). From my participants in Cyprus I did not get the feeling that being ‘a foreigner’ in Cyprus was necessarily experienced as something negative or traumatic – emotions that are often associated with the term ‘stranger’. This is reflected in the last part of Angela’s excerpt where she stated that, although she feels ‘less Cypriot’ in Cyprus, she *does* fit in. In fact *none* of my participants used the word ‘stranger’ when referring to themselves and their feelings in Cyprus. This may be linked to the fact that many did not return for ‘essentialised’ reasons, such as feelings of nostalgia or a fundamental desire to ‘return home’ in the first place; hence their expectations were not as emotionally charged as such. Furthermore, Cyprus’ colonial history, recent forces of globalisation, and increased mass tourism, have rapidly ‘Anglicised’ and ‘Europeanised’ the island, and provided many returnees with an accommodating social and professional setting – a point that will be further elaborated later on in this chapter.

So, how did the participants settle in and adjust to their new island environment? In the previous chapter we saw how childhood memories influenced participants’ expectations of Cyprus and how they were confronted with a homeland so different from the ‘old’ Cyprus of their memories. When comparing the Cyprus of today with that of their childhood years, participants often spoke about changes in patterns of hospitality and relationships with family, the impact of immigration, and the increased levels of materialism within Cyprus. However, while these – at times critical – views related to changes in Cypriot society at large, they did seem to view Cyprus as highly favourable at a more personal level, in terms of quality of life and providing a positive environment for their children, which for some played a significant role in their decision to return. On the other hand, in contrast to several other studies on second-generation return, kinship ties were not mentioned as a major pull factor whilst settling in. Rather, participants tend to develop their own ‘hybrid’ social spaces in

Cyprus, as we will see in more detail in Chapter 6. The weather, the general feeling of safety, slower pace of life, and the proximity between places were pointed out by the participants as factors positively influencing their acclimatisation process, as illustrated in the following quotes:

[Moving to Cyprus] was very exciting [...] to come over here to live was a luxury, it was a luxury, and I still find it a luxury after 19 years of being able to sit outside in the winter, and to enjoy the weather and the freedom that I have over here is just amazing [...] [In the UK] you work the whole week to go out once a week, [here] I go out every day, every day I'm in a café, every day I visit friends, and they'll come and visit me, because it's so different, and because of the weather permitting as well, you're not stuck in the house [...] the distances are very short over here as well (Margarita, 43).

On the whole Cyprus is a little paradise, if you know how to actually live here, I mean because in England as you know, to go for a coffee, if you're a working person, you have to plan everything, to go out you have to plan, and where you want to go is never near you, it's always about 40 minutes, [an] hour drive [...] Here we've got it very easy, everything's near, you know, social life here, you socialise more than what you do in England when you're a working person. [Moving here was] a very good choice and I was happy to bring up my children here (Angela, 41).

Another participant, Alexia, was 'oozing' relaxation when I met her one day at a seaside café. She told me that this had not always been the case and how she led a hectic life in the UK until she literally 'could not take it anymore'. In 2007 she and her husband packed their things and moved to Cyprus. Today they live in Larnaca, where her husband combines his small 'handyman business' with his big hobby, sailing, while Alexia enjoys her retirement and has what she calls 'a little cleaning job':

I feel I can't even contemplate to go back to England because I just love to wake up to that blue sky every day, it's just important to me when I wake up. I can't wait to come downstairs to see my cats, I've got two cats, you know, 'cause they're outside going 'meow meow', waiting to come in, and I can't wait to feed them and stroke them and when a cat sits on my lap I just sit there stroking them all day, 'cause I never had time to sit and stroke a cat, I worked all my life, full-time, you know [...] I've got a little cleaning job and I need another little job, but officially I'm retired. I don't ever want to go back into an office, or get dressed up every day. I mean I like this little cleaning job, I go 6 in the morning, I just get up and whatever clothes I was wearing the night before I just put them on [...] I just go in, clean [and go] home, and that's what I like [...] because the last couple of years that I was working, I worked in the city of London, I had to get a train and all the hustle and bustle, had to be at the train station by 6.50 every morning, and I wouldn't get home till about 7 you know, and [my husband] would pick me up at the station, I would just get in the car and I would just cry, you know, I would just burst into tears, just total fatigue, it was an intense job [...] so I was just totally exhausted. Those last 18 months I said 'I can't stand it, I just can't stand it'. It was always the plan to come to a Greek island or Cyprus, I think that 18 months in

London accelerated it, finished me off. [...] I love it [here], you know; like I'm in my garden today and I'm moving this plant from here to there, I got some rocks from the beach, and I made some marmalade yesterday – 'cause the lady down the road gave me some grapefruit – which I've never done before. I looked on the internet, I thought 'I don't like grapefruit' and I thought 'I wonder if you could make marmalade?', so I made some marmalade... [...] I like being in the garden, I like to cook a nice dinner, I like to sit there stroking my cats, and I'm just quite happy, I don't want any more, I don't want any more intense anything...

Though being from a different age group, and hence a different stage in his working and personal life, 35-year-old Marcus expressed a similar appreciation for the Cyprus climate and pace of life. He also comments on issues of safety and security, comparing the UK with Cyprus:

It influences my mood so much to have the sunshine here [...] You know what's really nice here? I've said it to friends before, you grow up in London, and you have a whole sense of as a city person, you don't do certain things, or you *do* certain things, to keep yourself safe, like eye contact, you don't do that, when you're at a cash point, you grab your cash, shove it in your pocket, and walk away quickly; you don't wave your cash in the air, erm... you lock your car, you lock your door when you go out, you're just very aware, there's that constant awareness, which is quite tiring. And you come here, and a lot of my friends are quite shocked by this when they come over, and you don't lock your house – well there's nothing to nick in there anyway [*smirks*] – [they ask] 'you leave your car unlocked?' [I say] 'Yeah!' [...] There's not that heightened sense of awareness, or of safety [here], there's not that sense of fear, you know, that you get in big cities. So Cyprus makes you feel a lot more relaxed, and more calm. There's also this *siga-siga* [slowly, slowly] attitude in Cyprus that I like; it takes a while to get used to... [...] it's nice on the one side, everything is *siga siga*, you know, slowly slowly, 'don't worry about it', [but] it's infuriating if you're waiting for an alcohol license [*laughs*] and you're getting busted by the police that you don't have it, but on the other hand, it's like now, it's a Wednesday afternoon, everyone has off, it's like a Sunday, the shops are closed a certain time, 'cause really, you don't need to be shopping every second of the day...

While the last quote mirrors the overall appreciation for the more relaxed pace of life which was found in many of the narratives, Marcus did briefly, albeit light-heartedly, touch upon the flipside of this *siga siga* attitude, that is when it comes to bureaucratic matters, in his case the arrangement of licenses for his business. Indeed, the slow pace of life found in Cyprus, so often appreciated and cited as a motivational factor for relocating to the island, was at the same time stated as a major cause of frustration (cf. Phillips and Potter 2009: 247). Manifestations of such frustrations ranged from jovial comments, like the one by Marcus, to stronger and more emotional expressions of annoyance. Although there was an overall consensus that bureaucratic activities tend

to move very slowly in Cyprus, individual reactions, as well as opinions on the reasons for this, varied. While describing a similar bureaucratic situation, 60-year-old Michaelis expresses his annoyance but adopts a rather neutral stance without 'taking it personal'; whereas Mike, aged 57, believes that this situation reflects the whole 'general attitude towards foreigners' in Cyprus:

Officialdom is very difficult, you know they have this little piece of paper [you ask] 'can you sign that?'; 'Oh, no, no you have to go and get a stamp for it'. So you go and get the stamp for it: 'I can't give you a stamp because you need to get a form from so and so'. So you go and get a form: 'before I give you that form you have to get a signature from so and so, so they can give me a form so you can get the stamp so you can go and get that thing'. You then come back: 'oh sorry I close at 12 o'clock, I can't do it, come back tomorrow'. So you come back tomorrow, give her that thing and she says: 'Well that was yesterday's date' so you have to go back there, there and there...' That's what they do all the time, they love to carry little pieces of paper, it's terrible but maybe having said that, maybe if I was a foreigner going back to England maybe it would be the same there, I don't know, but generally speaking I do feel that the Cypriots do love this sort of thing... (Michaelis, 60).

What I found difficult was things like anything official, you didn't know where to go, you know. I didn't know you had to go to the hospital and register, and get a pink card to get treatment, I didn't know that, no one told [me] this, you know. I applied for my [Cypriot] ID, that was a nightmare, back and forth, back and forth [...] They've got this attitude towards foreigners, um, including English Cypriots, 'cause they sort of see us a traitor. You know it's like: 'Did you bring your passport photo, and this and this and this...'; 'Yes I did'; 'Well what about so and so?'; 'Well you didn't ask me to bring so and so'; 'Oh well I can't do it if you haven't...' So you go home, get this so and so, come back: 'There you go'; 'What about so and so?' You know they don't tell you, they don't help you, and it must [have taken me] like 10 trips later literally. I took all my paperwork and I threw it at this woman and I said 'I tell you what, keep the paperwork I'm staying fucking English' I said to her 'if this is what I have to go through to [...] get a bit of card...' [Then she] said 'oh no don't be like that' and then the attitude changes. But they push you to the limit. And also when you're just going to get your road tax or anything official, I find [that] very frustrating... (Mike, 57).

The aim of the above quotes is not to examine or discuss levels of bureaucracy in Cyprus. Rather, it shows how different people deal differently with certain aspects of settling-in, and how subjective observations of society, combined with personal character traits, circumstances and expectations, influence individual viewpoints. These narratives illustrate the arbitrariness and influence of a course of a day, or a life, and at the same time reveal a vocabulary of familiarity (cf. Abu Lughod 1991). Most participants *did* agree that bureaucracy in Cyprus is time-consuming and inefficient. However, different contexts allow different responses to emerge. Hence the ways

individuals cope with a certain situation are highly dynamic, variable and relative. In similar situations, some participants reacted irritably while others laughed. Although many participants touched upon issues relating to the treatment of immigrants, and some indeed experienced such treatment themselves when applying for official documents, Mike's reaction to such experiences of bureaucracy was rather extreme. However, having spoken to him extensively and having gained a modest insight into his character, the above quote seemed to reflect Mike's temperament and 'fiery' personality. Likewise, Marcus' light and humorous reference to issues of bureaucracy is very much in line with *his* character, which is more laid-back.

Settling down in Cyprus did involve a change of lifestyle and giving up some of the benefits of living in a large urban society like London, Manchester or Liverpool. Paradoxically, while many criticised Cyprus for its increased levels of materialism and consumerism over recent years, shopping was often mentioned when participants spoke of the things they missed about the UK when they first moved to Cyprus, alongside TV and the variety of choice the UK has to offer in terms of cultural life, such as arts and music events:

I miss the TV, 'cause the TV here is crap, it's so shit. I miss the sense of humour, the British sense of humour. [...] There is a very good sense of humour in Cyprus as well; sometimes a bit off the wall, sometimes I don't get it. Erm, but I really miss the English TV [...] there's just more of a variety of choice there. And, er, the clubs, the music I really miss, the music events that we don't have here. Comedy clubs, there isn't even one comedy club in Cyprus. For a nation that is quite funny they should have produced more comedians. Shops, clothes... all that consumerism, capitalism [*laughs*] ... that stuff... (Marcus, 35)

I miss going shopping, 'cause shopping here is completely different. [...] I miss jazz cafés so much, 'cause we don't have anything like that here. I miss the sheer number of people that you can interact with, and the sheer different types of culture, and the sheer choice you have in a lot of things, but there's also so many things that I don't miss that they'll always outweigh and I'm very happy where I am at the moment. (Harris, 29)

The comment Harris made about the 'pros' outweighing the 'cons' can be found in many other accounts. Throughout their narratives, participants would continuously reflect on their own lives and choices. While pointing out the wider options available in

the UK, in terms of cultural events and activities, many participants realised that they actually go out more and 'do more stuff' in Cyprus compared to the UK. Hence, despite the island's fewer choices in terms of 'big city life', it seems to be more accommodating for making the most of one's spare time. This is captured in the following, typical, quotes:

You do socialise more here, although the sun can make you feel a bit lazy [...] I do actually go out more in Cyprus than I did in England, 'cause I was too tired, and everything was just too far away [...] Like now, it's September, every night something is going on [...] But I miss the fact that in England I always had the option, to go to the West End, to go to the theatres. Sometimes I say [to my boyfriend] 'if I was back in London, I can do everything in London, I can go everywhere'. But then he says 'but would you actually do it when you were there?' And he is right, I never did *[laughs]*, I've never actually gone to a West End show... how embarrassing is that? I never actually went to see a West End theatre production! (Theodora, 28).

I do miss you know the sort of range of things to do like say in England, and the size of England, and the options you've got and places to go and stuff. But having said that a lot of the time we didn't do... we had all of the options but we didn't do them, we didn't move around so much whereas here, I find that, you know, weekend comes and we'll go to [an event] or we'll go to the mountains, we'll go the city [...] I do actually get around a lot more than if I was in England, where in the weekend I might stay in Liverpool or Manchester [...] So there's certain things like that I miss but... it's not that important, because I still get them here, I get them to an extent here. [...] I don't miss the social kind of life in England, I don't like pubs, I don't like drinking culture, it's getting worse and worse... (Anti, 38).

This constant reflexivity and importance of assessing 'the whole picture' was striking throughout the narratives. When talking about settling in and adjusting to everyday life in Cyprus, the participants did articulate their dislikes towards certain aspects of life on the island and expressed feelings of nostalgia towards Britain. At the same time, however, this would often be weighed against the 'plusses', particularly the quality of life in their immediate personal environment, upon which many would conclude that the plusses carry more weight. This is evident in the following quote of 44-year-old father of two young children, Tasos, who touched upon one of the annoyances he and his British-born Cypriot wife – as well as several other participants – share: 'the bad manners of Cypriots':

Certain things annoy us about Cyprus, we might go somewhere, we might have someone across the counter who is like quite rude, we say 'ooh... do you think we'd ever go back to [...] England?' or things like that, you know impolite... [no] 'good evening' and 'good morning', 'please take a seat' and 'how may I be of service?' And

then we look at the other side of England, you know, and we see like stabbings and the drugs [...] always looking back over your shoulder; and going back home and you see a window open and you think 'oh my god, somebody had broken in'; whereas in Cyprus you would say 'ok, who forgot to close the window?' You just take it for granted that somebody has forgotten to close the windows; in England you wouldn't walk into the house if you saw that. And just different stories you hear from, you know, our relatives, our cousins, different incidents that had happened in England, and I think I've grown, gone away from all that [...] I think Cyprus is probably, I'm not gonna say *the* place to be, but for me as a personal opinion, I think Cyprus is a good package for me; my work, my home, the kids, handful of friends, lots of acquaintances, especially in my business now [...] you meet a lot of people, but you only have a handful of good friends, which I would say 99.9% that are expats, that are not Cypriot.

The following quote from 38-year-old Evi has a similar rhythm. Immediately after pointing out some elements that she misses from life in the UK, she reminds herself of what balances out those shortcomings:

I think I have better manners, or I'm a lot more [...] polite, or I'll smile, which may be not [the case for] a lot of Cypriots [...] In the beginning I missed like the shopping, you know these things. And there are certain things like if there's some kind of party [like] my brother did a barbeque in his place and I think 'oh it would have been nice if I was there' [...] But I have good friends here, I just have a very nice comfortable, cosy um, lifestyle. In England it's always such an... I don't know how to explain, it's a lot more... it's far too structured [...] whereas here it's a lot more laid back and um, you know [...] do we need to live at that [fast] pace? I don't know, I don't think it's so necessary [...] I don't like the lifestyle that they have [in the UK], you know like arranging for example to meet someone for coffee, or to go for dinner [...] it's a mission in the UK, if they're free and 'who's driving?' and 'where are we going?' and 'do I need to take the car?', 'can I go by tube?', 'it's like an hour away'..., there's no spontaneity to kind of pick up the phone and say 'let's go for coffee' [...] this drives me nuts, it makes me feel trapped. I see my sister, my sister is in England, she goes to work and by the time she gets home [...] it's dark, she's tired [...] she doesn't want to do anything [...] whereas for us, I mean like something like this [meeting in an outdoor café], how could you do this? In England it would be raining, you know all these things. It's a state of mind; I believe it's a state of mind. [...] I look at the things in my life that are positive and good and give me pleasure, and I live with those, this is what I do...

5.4 EXPERIENCING AND MANAGING EVERYDAY LIFE IN CYPRUS

So far, I have examined participants' motives for return and their experiences of settling in and adjusting to the island upon their arrival. Now I turn to a description of participants' interaction with Cypriot society at large, particularly with the native population. Hence, while the previous two sections of this chapter were mainly

concerned with the direct personal environment and the attached experiences of the participants, this will expand their views beyond such immediate surroundings and examine their experiences within the wider social and cultural fabric of the island.

As stressed by Phillips and Potter (2009: 246), 'research on the adjustment process of return migrants has generally highlighted the difficulties they face'. According to Gmelch (1980), this is because many migrants do not appreciate the extent to which 'the homeland', and the norms and values of its inhabitants, have changed over the period they were away. As we saw in Chapter 4, my participants too were confronted with a different 'homeland' than the one they remembered from their childhood visits and families' stories; hence they too were (to a certain extent) confronted with a feeling of 'disillusionment' when comparing their childhood memories with their more recent adult resettlement. However, my data also showed that not all difficulties in adjustment, or the differences noted when reflecting on their adjustment to their new environment, were measured against memories or prior expectations from the 'homeland'. Rather, many comparisons – positive and negative – were made with the UK, the country where they were born and brought up, without linking it to the 'imagined homeland'. Furthermore, participants would reflect on the attitudes held by the local people from the position of a new migrant, rather than using a 'returnee' perspective. Even when reflecting on the way they are treated as British-born Cypriots in Cyprus, many participants would make this assessment from a 'here and now' perspective rather than from a position of nostalgia. It is important to bear in mind that these individuals, despite having moved to their parental homeland, are in many ways like other migrants, settling in and negotiating a *new* reality.

In the following excerpt, 43-year-old business owner Margarita speaks about some of her everyday encounters in Cyprus:

I had to change my [British] sense of humour and I had to really be careful the way I joked, innuendos and things like that [...] The Cypriots, yeah, I've got to know them over the years [...] Always when you do something, *after* it's completed another person will say 'oh why didn't you tell me, I could have helped you, I could have done a better job, I could have charged you cheaper' and things like that. At the beginning I thought we were very naïve, um, when it came to use things like that, um, they make

out that you're friends, friends, friends... but they're not professional, and I realised that... I was a bit shocked with that as well, going to the banks, I couldn't believe people sitting eating while they were, you know, [while] giving everybody the money and things like that, I found that so strange. Um, authorities, I happened to go to court, for some reason, and I went to the court and I was so shocked the way the policemen were shouting, talking to the lawyers, to the judges, no respect, um. And also I found that coming to Cyprus, if you don't know people, sometimes you can't get any work done, you have to have connections, and everybody knows somebody in different departments [...] Because it's the only way I could have got a job done, so I found that quite strange, very, very strange, but, I've got used to that now, yeah. [But] some people in authority I must admit, um would say something like 'Why don't you speak Greek?' and when I tried to explain to them some people were lovely, they would bend over backwards to help you, especially if I made out that I as woman didn't know anything, use my charms and everything, and they would be great. Some women were bitches I must admit, very cold...

In the above quote Margarita touches upon a number of rather 'typical' issues stressed by the participants. First of all, the perceived 'lack of professionalism' is something that she, both as a business owner and as a consumer, struggled with. In the earlier section I already touched upon issues of bureaucracy, both when setting up a business and whilst settling into Cypriot society at large. In the remainder of the chapter we will see how local levels of interaction, both professional and social, affect the returnees' everyday life. While earlier we heard Margarita stress the benefits of living in a place where everything is in close proximity, here her account demonstrated another, less welcomed, consequence of living in a small island community: the need for connections in order to get something done. Indeed, the narratives showed that some of the very pull factors that brought the participants over to the island, or made them stay, simultaneously embodied some of their main annoyances when coping with everyday life in Cyprus. Margarita speaks about the ways local people react to her, and the gendered element to such interactions, which will be further expanded later on. But let me first elaborate on the experiences in the participants' professional lives.

While reflecting on the first job she had in Cyprus, back in 1993, 37-year-old beauty therapist Alexandra told me about the difficult relationship with her female colleague at the time, who she believes felt threatened by her:

Finding a job was difficult, even though it is a universal vocation, being a beauty therapist, you can work in any place [...] I *thought* I spoke the language, until I came here. And then it was just ridiculous [...] My first job was the most difficult thing I think

[...] It was a slimming centre [...] and they wanted to bring in a beauty therapist, so they interviewed me and I got the job [...] And they had this little evening, where they had invited all of the lady ... clients if you like, to introduce me to, and the way [my colleague] introduced me, I will never forget it ... this woman who was working there, she was also a beauty therapist, but she was trained in Cyprus. I think she had a bit of a chip on her shoulder about the fact that I was trained in the UK [...] Erm, she just, I think, looking back at it now and knowing how the Cypriots work a little bit more, she just wanted to put me in my place: 'well I know that you're this fabarooney English-trained beauty therapist, but you just sit right there little missy, because I am the boss', you know that's kind of what she wanted to do. So she introduced me to this room of twenty-five women, and she said 'this is *Alexandra*' she said 'and you'll *know* that she's from England' she said 'as soon as she opens her mouth' [...] And 'she is an English Cypriot but she is one of the good ones'. And I was like [*mimics a shocked face*] oh my... It's difficult because people in Britain don't talk that way, you know, they don't. They are all like 'please' and 'thank you', and everybody is so over-polite over there...

Such rivalry was experienced by other participants too, both in professional and social settings, as we will see in some of the later quotes. However, having left her job at the slimming centre and started her own salon, Alexandra realised that her 'British' background, and her perception of what Cypriot professionalism was lacking, could actually work to her advantage. The way she eventually settled into Cypriot working life, by embracing the benefits of her background, is illustrated in the following excerpt:

So then I went and had my own salon for a while. And that worked well. And then I started discovering that it was to my benefit rather than to my demise, if you like, that I was actually from Britain [...] Having my own salon I found that it benefited me that I was from the UK. So, once I understood that, I started showing off a little bit about it, you know. I would say 'when I trained I did these sort of things to my clients', so I kind of gave them the impression that they were visiting a salon that had higher standards, a better level of professionalism. Because at the time, like I said, in Cyprus things were not as available, and most Cypriots would just make do with whatever they could get, you know. So the salon that I had was kind of like a little British salon, if you like, with the hygiene and the cleanliness, and the uniform, and the whole, you know, image. So that worked to my benefit, and I thought 'ok, this is what I am going to do, I feel good here, this is ok'. And it quickly became quite successful, which was good for me, it boosted my confidence [...] So that was great, that was good, that was a good life, four or five years of doing quite well. Er, and then I got a call from the college, one of my clients was the PA to the executive dean of [*names college*], and she said 'have you thought about teaching before?' And at the time I was so busy, I didn't get the chance to see my baby, I was getting quite frustrated by the whole thing [...] So er, I got the job. And I set up the program, completely from scratch [...] I had my contacts, I knew all the people inside, in Nicosia who provided machines, products, you know, I got to know them from my salon. So I contacted them all, and we got it, set it all up. We started out with 12 students and I've been there for 10 years now. So, my job is what's keeping me sane I think. I speak English all day. I teach in English.

There are strong parallels between arguments, like Alexandra's, and findings by Potter and Phillips (2009: 84-85), who stress that 'a superior "British" way of working' counts in favour of second-generation returnees to Barbados.⁵³ The following quote from 57-year-old Mike highlights a similar view of the professional advantage of being British:

I work with a Greek [Cypriot] company and they know I'm English Greek and they use that 'cause they'll take me to a house and I've got a team of painters that I have to look after and they'll say 'Mike is from England', you know, 'so he's good', you know, it means you must be better 'cause you're from England, you know, 'Mike studied painting in England' type shit, 'so don't worry' you know, its rubbish, I mean well the Greek [Cypriot] builders are not the best builders in the world but [they're] not that bad [...] My boss he thinks I know everything [because] I've got tools that they've never heard of or seen you know, they think it's amazing. So that's a positive. 'Oh, ask Mike, he'll know' [...] Or if we get an English customer, they love it, they've got a bloke they can speak to.

As the last couple of excerpts indicate, participants are aware of the professional advantages of 'being British' and indeed some use these advantages to effectively negotiate their position in the employment sector (cf. Potter and Phillips 2009: 86). However, Anti, aged 38, believes that such perceptions of 'a superior "British" way of working' cause a degree of resentment amongst the native Cypriots. Note the gendered dimension, as she points out that the resentment is not only over 'getting their jobs', but also over 'getting their men':

I think a lot of Cypriots kind of resented a bit us coming over and getting their jobs and you know getting their men [...] but I didn't experience a lot of that personally, I was ok 'cause I think my environment [at work] was ok, you know, again a lot of those people weren't Cypriots as well, so I was in a nice environment there [...] I did sense a bit of resentment from some people, um, I think they just thought people preferred us for jobs rather than them [...] I know we are perceived differently... it depends, some people think it's nice some people don't, actually *the men* think it's nice, I think they quite like it [...] We're a bit more open-minded, because a lot of the female, a lot of the girls in Cyprus are quite um... they're a bit... I'm trying to think of how to express it, I mean, um, they're not so sociable; they're not so friendly sometimes. They can be like, a group of girls can be quite standoffish [when] someone approaches them, you know, they can be quite rude sometimes, yeah [...] not everyone, you know I'm not saying everyone, *some*. And I think people prefer the fact that we're a bit more open and sociable, we don't take things the wrong way if someone talks to us or whatever, so I think um... generally speaking though... yeah we are treated slightly different. I think sometimes [...] maybe they'll expect us to think differently, it's acceptable for us to

⁵³ Interestingly, this similarity is found within the postcolonial island settings of Cyprus and Barbados in the Caribbean, and is not apparent in other studies on second-generation return.

think differently or even things like wear something different or do something unusual, even like something like me drinking coffee on my own in a café. It's not something that a Cypriot girl would ever do. Nor Cypriot men even, but I can do it because I'm a Charlie and that's why, do you know what I mean?

Once again, the arguments raised by Anti echo some of the findings on Caribbean second-generation return migration, which stressed that 'being different' caused sexual rivalry with women while drawing attention from men (Potter and Phillips 2009; Reynolds 2008). In fact, Anti's opinion expressed at the beginning of the excerpt is almost identical to that of one of Potter and Phillips' female informants, who stated that 'Bajan women think that you are going to take *their men* and *their jobs*' (2009: 88; emphasis in original). As in the Caribbean case, my female participants in Cyprus generally found it difficult to establish friendships with local (indigenous) women, whilst friendships with males were overall perceived as much easier to develop. This was stressed by several female participants, like 28-year-old Theodora, who furthermore believes that it is not just the British Cypriots, but female migrants in general, who form a potential threat to the native Cypriot women:

It's actually cool going out with our [international] kind of friends 'cause we are actually having fun. What's happening here [...] and I actually don't blame them for that, the Cypriot men are going for the foreigners, they are going for the Polish ones, the Russian ones. But why is that? Because [the Cypriot girls] are too uptight, they're too snooty, and they demand too much [...] And because of that it totally backfired on them. And because [the foreigners] are more pretty, and more this and that, or they are more slim, or they look after themselves more or whatever, [the local Cypriot women] are now trying to catch up. [Local] Men... like me, [local] women... hate me. I think that's the more general way to put it. [...] I'm a bit more relaxed. I don't have any inhibitions to go out and talk to people. I think I'm a little bit more open than they are. And also I got a lot of male friends. [...] Men love me, because I'm different, I'm Cypriot, but I'm different than the women here.

It is not only the female returnees, however, who perceive everyday interactions with local women to be difficult. Theodora's opinion, that men generally find it easier to approach 'foreigners' than they do local Cypriot women, was also shared by some of my male participants. In the previous chapter we heard Marcus' comment on 'the younger generation' in Cyprus, particularly in relation to the local women's 'cold attitude', whilst wondering where 'the hospitality from his childhood' had gone. Here

we hear 29-year-old Harris, whose view is quite common amongst male participants, especially those in their 20s and 30s:

It's strange I know but, I find it easier to approach foreign girls and English-Cypriot girls than I do just Cypriot girls, I think [other British-born Cypriots] will tell you the same thing. There's seems a barrier there, we find that there's that barrier. I find Cypriot girls very cold, very harsh, to actually see from a distance. They're always within a circle of friends; [if] you are not part of the circle and you don't know anyone in that circle you are immediately a threat. I find Cypriot girls very judgemental; they'll sit in a café for hours and talk about other people. I find them very close-minded in a lot of respects, I find them extremely hypocritical [...] I just don't find them as fun as other people, other cultures. Um, we've all said this, as Cypriot males, Cypriot native girls have gotten a lot more pretty in the last 5, 6 years and we put that down to a competition from other cultures [...] So I don't know if you've seen a lot of Cypriot men, they're all going to the gym, they're all dressing [up], something that we look at and laugh [...] Everyone's taking more care of themselves and becoming a lot more arrogant in their appearance, which I think is a good thing.

Harris' account suggests that native Cypriot males, too, seem to have changed their attitude towards their physical appearance due to 'competition from other cultures'. It is interesting, however, that such pressure does not appear to affect the British-Cypriot males I spoke to. Rather, they seem to observe it, as Harris noted, 'as something that we look at and laugh'. Interestingly enough, male participants did not tend to describe problems of rivalry with local males. However, they *do* feel they have more in common with 'foreign' women (as indicated in the last quote) and, as we shall see in the following chapter, their social networks and friendships appear to be more international. On the other hand, the pressure on Cypriot women to 'look good' is not only felt by native Cypriot females. Also my British-born participants said they felt such peer pressure:

I'd go like this [*points at her casual sporty clothes*] somewhere you know, to a café or somewhere, and I always feel underdressed, and I always feel like, you know, 'oh my god everyone is fully made up and fully dressed to the nines', and I'm like 'come on it's only going out for a coffee' or 'it's only going over to a friend's house' you know (Dina, 32).

I think I have more peer pressure over here [...] than I do in England, 'cause in England we used to just hide ourselves, we used to work basically, and go home, and go out once or twice a week or go on holiday two weeks of the year. Over here it's like continuously, so you're always under pressure, pressure to look nice all the time. We

do our nails, our hair, I didn't have that in England, and I can see that it's very materialistic, I'd say more materialistic than we were in England (Margarita, 43).

In the UK you could be anonymous. I wouldn't be able to walk out of my door in Cyprus without feeling that I'm dressed ok, or that I look ok because I don't know who I'm gonna bump into. I could bump into an ex, and of course I don't want an ex to see me, look at me and think 'oh my god, what's she become', you know [...] however shallow that may sound [...] Since the Russians have come [...] women have become a lot more self-conscious about what they look like [...] People have made a lot more of an effort because there's a lot more competition (Evi, 38).

In the above excerpts certain typical, and often-cited, characteristics of life in Cyprus are emphasised. However, the outdoorsy social lifestyle and the smaller scale of the island – generally perceived as important attractions and highly valued in terms of quality of life – are shown here to have a downside too. First of all, spending more time outdoors seems to be linked to an increased pressure felt by my female participants with regard to their appearance. Secondly, living on such a relatively small island increases the chances of running into people you know, and hence decreases one's sense of anonymity, which in turn increases the pressure 'to look nice all the time'. Such a link between lack of anonymity and physical appearance is also noted in Tracey Reynolds' (2008: 22-23) study on second-generation Caribbean return migration, in which one female returnee states:

Sometimes I run to the corner shop with my old shorts and jeans on but I know if I'm seen out like that people will talk about me and what I'm wearing, when I say people I mean the women because they are very judgemental and always in each other's business. [...] What I miss about my old life in London [is that] you are anonymous and there's not this pressure to look good all the time.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Alexandra:

I was going from being anonymous living in the UK, because you are anonymous, nobody cares which car you bought, or what colour you dyed your hair, or why you are wearing that top, or where did you get your shoes, and you know, what's going on with your brother, or whatever, you know, nobody wants to know over there. Over *here*? Oh my god! It was just in your face you know ... everybody, *everybody*, people you don't even know! [...] They give their opinion, you don't ask for it [...] and they'll be like 'ah, I don't think you should do your hair that colour again, it doesn't suit you at all', and I am like 'well did I ask you?' you know. They are just really in your face ... they're just like that, you know, at first it would just drive me *mad*, completely mad. I mean, I've always been slightly overweight, many many times, people – you know I have two kids – would be like 'oh, you're going for a third one!' And I am like 'you don't do that', you know, as far as I am concerned *you don't do that*. You know, it's

just something you don't do. Is there some kind of universal etiquette that they've missed out on or something, I mean, what is that? *[laughs out loud]*.

I would like to stress that many of my participants recalled and shared such experiences in a rather humorous way, often accompanied by quite a bit of laughter. While I hope that such expressions are manifested in the narrative excerpts, I find it important to emphasise this point, in order to avoid creating an unjust image of 'migrants in distress'. Most participants seemed highly capable of putting things into perspective, even if it involved a bit of self-mockery:

At the end of the day, what do we want in life? We want to be happy, we want to be content, um, so if we're trying to... if we're living in this place and this is where we've decided to make our home then we should expel from our lives all the negativity and take all that's good about it. So you know I don't think about the things I don't really like about [life in Cyprus] you know, because it's not important. I don't like the fact that I am single... But it's not easy to meet people, to meet men here because, um, especially when you're my age, those that are my age are either married and if they're not married, they're with a Russian you know *[laughs]* so what do I do? I'm gonna sit and cry about it? [...] You know, it's not the most important thing in my life, so I live my life the way I want to live my life and if a man comes along then he comes along... (Evi, 38).

When it comes to the education of their children participants also demonstrated a hands-on approach. Although for many the decision to move to Cyprus was based on the belief that Cyprus offers a better quality of life, both for themselves and their children, certain features of their British (or international) background played a vital role in providing their children with an optimum upbringing. In order to provide their children with the best overall 'package', they often pick and choose from a variety of Cypriot, British and international elements. Perhaps the most typical example is the fact that many participants prefer to provide a home and raise their children within the 'safe' setting and Mediterranean environment of Cyprus on the one hand, whilst, on the other hand, choosing to send them to an international (or 'English') school in Cyprus. The latter is often with the thought in mind that their offspring will go off to study in the UK, or elsewhere abroad, for which they believe the international (private) schools in Cyprus provide them with a better basis. While 48-year-old father of two, Apostolos, emphasised 'the better quality of life' in Cyprus, and strongly believes that it is 'a much better place for the kids' and that in the UK he 'would be much more

worried about [them] than in Cyprus', he was less enthused about the public education system on the island (to which he mockingly referred as 'public indoctrination'). Hence, he chose to send his children to an international, 'more neutral and open-minded', school.

International (or 'English') schools are often seen as an extension of the international (more 'worldly') way of life valued by the parents. Also, many of the participants' relationships could be classified as 'mixed' (whether with a native 'Brit', a native Cypriot, or someone from another national background), which draws them to schools that reflect such a disposition. Daphne, aged 37, explained to me that she and her British-born Caribbean husband chose to send their two girls to a private English school, as they feel that the international atmosphere, and the presence of other 'mixed' children, better suit their children. Furthermore, as English-speaking parents, they believe they are better able to support their children with school work and get involved with other school activities.

Such conscious selection of a variety of sites and locations in order to assemble the most favourable lifestyle package coincides with Ley and Kobayashi's (2005) concept of 'strategic switching'. Drawing from the experiences of returned Hong Kong Chinese immigrants from Canada, they argue that return migration represents one stop in a transnational sojourner's journey. Being pulled to Hong Kong for its economic advantages, and being drawn back to Canada because of its favoured quality of life, these migrants capitalise upon one site or another at different stages of their life-cycle. A similar pattern can be observed in the case of the British Cypriots who choose to educate and raise their children in Cyprus until university age, and then send them to the UK for further academic and professional development. However, my study demonstrates that strategic switching not only takes places *across* national borders but also *within*. My participants strategically chose to raise their family in the overall favourable Cypriot setting, but at the same time preferred certain 'less Cypriot' elements that are available *within* this local setting, such as international education. Hence, they strategically switch between, and capitalise upon, the various 'Cypriot' and 'non-Cypriot' elements the island has to offer.

Interestingly, both first-generation returnees (with regard to their second-generation returnee children) and second-generation returnees (with regard to *their* children) appear to adopt such a strategic approach. In the following excerpts we first hear 29-year-old British-born Harris, who returned to Cyprus from London with his Cypriot parents at the age of 8, followed by a quote from Angela, a 41-year-old second-generation returnee who moved to Cyprus in 1997 with her (third-generation) children:

The reason my parents took me [to an international school] and not to a Greek school was because they always intended to send me to study in England [...] so I went to study in 1999 in Surrey, um, enjoyed it, was there for 7 years, got my PhD, and for the last year, as of 2006-2007, I was looking for a job in England. I couldn't get one, so I decided, because I kept coming and going to Cyprus, 'yes, let me move over to Cyprus and look for a job there'. Within 3 weeks I found a job here, I've been back now for 9 months, I don't regret it at all (Harris, 29).

My children went to an English school, a Grammar school, here, which was the best thing I did because, I always, they always, I'd always want them to go back to Britain for uni [...] My daughter has just finished her acting degree in London, Goldsmiths University, and my son he's got into medicine at Nottingham University (Angela, 41).

When emphasising the migrants' personal choices and their ability to switch between, and capitalise on different sites, it is important to acknowledge the larger social and cultural context of the nation-state in shaping their mobility and choices. In the case of Cyprus it is important to consider the island's relationship with Britain and its colonial history, which has to a certain extent 'Anglicised' the island and caused English to be a widely spoken language, and widely used for official purposes, albeit without enjoying official status (Papapavlou 2001). Furthermore, English is the first language of the large British expatriate community and the military staff of the British sovereign bases, as well as the lingua franca of the large numbers of foreign residents from other countries (Goutsos and Karyolemou 2004). These factors, combined with the forces of globalisation, have caused English to be widely used for social and professional exchanges in Cyprus. Hence English has significantly penetrated into day-to-day life (McEntee-Atalianis 2004). In the following excerpt 44-year-old Tasos, who spent some time in Greece prior to moving to Cyprus, compares the two countries in terms of language requirements:

[After coming to Cyprus] I didn't have to use Greek, basically, at all, that was the difference between Cyprus and Greece. In Greece you had to try very hard to be one of them, because Greeks are very Greek, whereas with Cypriots you can get away without knowing anything in Greek, it is very Anglofied, because it was an ex-British colony as well, and there is a lot of expats in Cyprus as well, whereas most of my friends in Greece were Greek-Americans...

Greek language skills amongst the participants varied widely, although nearly all said that they were more comfortable in English than in Greek. Also, there was a general consensus that the Greek-Cypriot they had heard – and to various extents learned – from their Cypriot relatives in the UK differs from the Greek spoken in Cyprus today. Many would comment that the Greek-Cypriot dialect spoken amongst the Cypriots in the UK 'has not changed since the 1950s' and is considered more 'villagey'. Others believe that 'the old Cypriot language is more authentic' whilst the Greek in Cyprus has become 'more Hellenic' over the years. Furthermore, the combination of the Cypriot dialect and English words has led to the formation of a pidginised language amongst the UK Cypriots. Below are a few examples to illustrate this:

I thought I spoke good Greek but my Greek was actually terrible, you know shockingly bad, because it was a very old-style and very out-dated, just very poor erm level of vocabulary and so an accent as well, I thought I had a great accent but I speak like a foreigner [*laughs*] [...] At the beginning I was quite fearful, not fearful, but awkward maybe, of using English [...] now I just drop it, if I'm speaking Greek and I don't know the word, I just drop the English word in and carry on with not even a thought, whereas in the beginning it was like 'oh I must speak Greek'. Now I've got over that (Vasos, 35).

When I came here [my Greek was] rubbish. Not very good, and still not very good, because I speak a lot of English, I continue to speak English, because of my job as well [...] so my main language again is English. No it's improved, don't get me wrong, my Greek's improved, I went to Greek school in England which was once a week at church, which we didn't learn much 'cause we used to just mess around [...] I would speak Greek to [my parents] but I would say it's more of a village Greek [...] It's Cypriot, it's not Greek that we actually speak. And I do understand it, of course [but] I find it difficult, maybe, to read newspapers, or to listen to the news, you know the political, the big words and everything, but I do understand it (Margarita, 43).

I'm a researcher for a company in Paphos that does e-learning and technology enhanced learning [...] the difficult part of this job is [that] you have to write everything in Greek [...] So what I have to do is write it all in English, and then translate it. I tried writing it in Greek but it slowed me down so much. First all in English and then I have to translate it and then I give it to my boss to take out the slang and make it sound more professional because that's the other barrier you know, you learn a

language to a certain level and then making it more professional is just that whole other level [...] A real barrier [...] was to learn proper Greek I mean, just a nightmare, all the words I'd associated with anything, even common objects, were now obsolete, they were like real slang, some words I still say and people laugh in my face, and they say 'no one's uses that word, it's really slang, never use it' but for me it's just such a normal word (Harris, 29).

I'm comfortable with both [Greek and English], it depends who I'm talking to [...] I think I can act really Cypriot if I want [...] but I like to be very English when I'm speaking to clients on the telephone and work and stuff, so I can do both, I like that (Leo, 30).

The level of 'Cypriotness' instilled whilst growing up in the UK did not appear to be an indication of the level of knowledge, or use, of the Greek (Cypriot) language once in Cyprus. Maya, despite having been brought up in a rather strict 'Cypriot' environment, surrounded by the Greek-Cypriot dialect, stated that she does not speak any Greek today, nor do her two sons, aged 12 and 13, who were both born in Cyprus.

I spoke Greek growing up [...] the church ran lessons on Saturday [but] I picked up more at home, but it was from my aunties who weren't as educated but you know they spoke village Greek, chat, you know so I mean my Greek wasn't to a good standard but since being here it has deteriorated to an extent that I don't speak it at all [...] Cyprus is my home now, but it's very much a British Cyprus, for me you know [...] see I don't read the Greek papers, I don't watch the Greek news, I don't know what's going on in Cyprus, it's quite weird isn't it?

Lisa, on the other hand, who stated that her childhood was 'not Cypriot at all' and Greek was not spoken at home, claims to be 'very comfortable' speaking Greek today:

We weren't brought up in a Cypriot way at all, nothing. [My father] didn't speak to me in Greek at all. [...] I tried to learn later when I came to live here. I didn't find it so hard [...] but then at school as well, I liked language, I mean I didn't find it hard to learn languages, I don't know if this is because of this or just you know [...] And I didn't like not understanding what people were saying so I *had* to learn it, so at the beginning it was very tiring as well sometimes, because you're hearing all the time another language and you're trying to understand, you know it's very difficult, it's very tiring, that's what it is, and [...] how to behave, where to go, where to find things, you know all these things, but as I learnt more my Greek improved.

It was only after moving to Cyprus, and then during a holiday to the UK, that she was 'introduced' to the Greek spoken by the Cypriots in London:

Cypriots from London, actually they speak in a funny way, I know because my first husband he had some relatives there, I remember we went there, back to England for a holiday once, and we went to visit his relatives in London, and for me it was another

new thing because I had never been with these Cypriot people in London and they were talking and I was thinking 'what are they saying?' 'cause they were speaking some strange language and some I could understand, they spoke Greek, and then they're speaking English, and they were using some strange words and I was thinking 'what did they say?' and they were mixing up like English and Greek together, and making this word that's not even Greek or English [...] one example, this lady she was saying 'I went to the marketta'. 'Marketta?' I thought... she said it with her accent and I'm thinking 'what language, is this Greek?' I said to my husband 'what is this?' And he told me the word in Greek and then I realised that it's the English word like market, she just [...] made it Greek [...] then I heard more other words and I'm thinking 'oh no, it's terrible'.

According to McEntee-Atalianis and Pouloukas (2001), those who use English as a resource appear to have greater socio-economic power in Cypriot society, enabling them to construct and exploit multiple social roles. They suggest that English within the Greek-Cypriot community can be exchanged from one form of capital to another (cf. Bourdieu 1986), for example from cultural capital (such as an English language qualification or degree from an English-speaking university) to economic capital (such as a job). Furthermore, they stress that those who are able to exploit various linguistic repertoires, i.e. the 'legitimate/official' language within the Cypriot community but also that of a prestigious international language, 'are in possession of ultimate cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital' (2001: 34). Their findings suggest that intelligibility with non-Greek speakers (nationally and globally) and preservation of Cypriot identity do coexist in present-day Cyprus. Along similar lines, my ethnographic data suggest that the English language and background, when capitalised upon, can serve as a tool for social, economic and professional advancement for my participants, whilst at the same time benefiting from the local 'Cypriot' character of the island.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has explored those parts of the participants' narratives that deal with their return to Cyprus as adults: their motivations behind their move, their personal experiences of adjustment, and their experiences of managing everyday life, particularly their interactions with Cypriot society at large.

The desire for a better (or different) quality of life, and the belief that Cyprus can offer this, runs like a red thread through the narratives. As already seen in the previous chapter, returnees tend to favour Cyprus as a place to bring up their own children. This chapter has further elaborated this point and introduced other aspects, such as the Mediterranean lifestyle, climate and slower pace of life, which were key quality-of-life factors behind the return and the acclimatisation process once in Cyprus. However, such pull factors were generally not considered from a nostalgic point of view or an essentialistic longing to go back to one's 'roots'. Rather, their move was based around more personal, often pragmatic, reasons and a desire for a change. Hence they moved to Cyprus, as the island offered these desired qualities of life, *plus* a familiar environment, in terms of culture, language and geography. Therefore, even though, hypothetically, these second-generation migrants materialised their parents' (who often remained in the UK) desire to return, their motives are generally very different.

Interestingly, the very factors identified by the participants as the main attractions of life in Cyprus were often also the cause of the main annoyances. While the slower pace of life is a major pull factor, it is also a source of aggravation when it comes to administrative or professional formalities. Along similar lines, the close proximity between places and the outdoor lifestyle were mentioned as highly appreciated qualities of island life, while the lack of anonymity that comes with this was a much less appreciated side-effect. However, while frequently switching between, and reflecting upon, the pros and the cons, participants often concluded that, generally, the plusses outweigh the minuses. A similar dynamic can be observed in participants' critique of perceived sexual rivalry (particularly in the case of female returnees) and economic rivalry. Whilst initially struggling with being perceived as a potential threat by the native Cypriots, once settled, participants often managed to capitalise upon the very factors they were criticised for. Some stated, for example, that their British background, which is often linked to high levels of professionalism and an Anglo-Saxon work ethic, benefits them in the employment market.

It is worth acknowledging once again the similarities my findings reveal with studies on second-generation return migration to the Caribbean, in terms of the various quality-

of-life factors, perceived sexual and economic rivalry, and the attached advantages such as the English accent and valued Anglo-Saxon levels of professionalism. This may be linked to the shared characteristic of being post-colonial island communities. However, more in-depth comparative research would be needed to be able to establish such argument.

Furthermore, the data demonstrated how the participants strategically choose, and capitalise upon, a variety of sites and locations in order to assemble the most favourable 'lifestyle package' for them and their families. What is interesting is that the participants not only switch between sites and locations transnationally (as emphasised in Ley and Kobayashi's 2005 study on Hong Kong Canadians), but also locally. By choosing to enjoy the benefits of the *local* 'Cypriot' quality of life, and selecting a school for their children that is located within this favoured setting but at the same time provides an *international* curriculum in the *English* language, which will enable them to pursue a university education *abroad*, many participants strategically switch between a variety of local, international and transnational sites. It is important to acknowledge, however, the larger social and cultural context of the nation-state in shaping such mobilities and choices. The island's colonial history and the influx of foreign residents over recent years, combined with other forces of globalisation, have caused English to be widely used for social and professional exchange in Cyprus. This scenario may bestow British-born Cypriots with a valuable tool for social, economic and professional advancement, whilst benefiting from the local quality-of-life characteristics of the island.

Generally participants claimed to feel more Cypriot in the UK and more British, or 'European', in Cyprus. However rather than pointing out the disadvantages of feeling like 'a stranger', they emphasised some of the benefits of being 'a foreigner', whilst at the same time choosing which parts of their Cypriot heritage to enjoy. Different contexts allow different responses to emerge. Sometimes participants reacted angrily to certain situations, whilst in other instances they laughed or reacted enthusiastically. My data showed that all these 'sides' of themselves were valid and consistent: 'they revealed the complexity, variability and dynamic aspect of the dialogical self'

(Kadianaki 2009: 23), exposing an image of agentic individuals who react creatively to dynamic experiences.

Before closing this chapter, I should emphasise the partiality of what is presented here in an attempt to understand British-born Cypriots' motives for return and their experiences of settling on the island. An important part of positioning themselves within Cypriot society was the participants' perceptions of how they are perceived by the native (indigenous) Cypriots. However, the voices of these native Cypriots are left unexplored, as this aspect reaches beyond the scope of my thesis.⁵⁴ Secondly, and for the obvious reason that my research focused on British-born Cypriots *in* Cyprus and hence my main fieldwork took place locally, the data presented in this chapter does not include accounts of British-born Cypriots who 're-returned' to the UK, following an 'unsuccessful' move to Cyprus. However, I do not consider this a significant limitation of my study as my aim was to provide an impression of the motives and experiences of those returnees who *do* live in Cyprus. Nevertheless, as my participants did occasionally mention friends, relatives or acquaintances who moved to Cyprus and subsequently moved back to the UK, I will close this chapter with a excerpt from Anti's narrative, in which she muses on those who 'do not make it':

Coming over [to Cyprus] I think what you have to do, and what a lot of people can't do I think, [is not] taking notice of people, what they say, you do get, especially as a woman, they are very direct so they'll tell you if you've put weight on, if you've got wrinkles [...] and they'll get involved in your life... maybe not in the city, Nicosia, but still... [...] or you might go into a shop and someone gives you a bit of attitude or whatever and you'll just get wound up by that, or to go and get a job done, here in Cyprus it's just impossible, a government department, you won't get it done, keep going on and on at them and they won't pay attention to you... [...] Now my friend [re-returned to the UK], 'cause she was the sort of person who'd [...] get angry, and wound up and stressed, she couldn't cope with that and eventually she [returned to the UK]. Whereas I surprised myself in that I think 'OK that, that's as much as they know, that's the way it is', I can't change it and I just get on with it, I do get frustrated quite a lot but I don't let it get me, wind me up too much [...] You can just see, you can just see [whether] people are gonna last. In the time I've been here I've seen people go back, and also other people, like you see them and you know that they're gonna be perfectly fine, they're gonna love it. You just know either people love it or they don't...

⁵⁴ Nevertheless, I did interact extensively with native Cypriots during my fieldwork period, and indeed witnessed some of the points made by my participants. However, their voices are not part of my official data.

Chapter 6

'Where Do I Belong Today?'

On Home and New Spaces of Belonging

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Having followed the participants' narratives in a biographical timeline, from childhood memories of the homeland to the actual experiences upon their return as adults, we now come to a central concern of my thesis, which is the question of **how the participants shape and articulate the meanings and boundaries of their identities, their sense of 'who they are' and 'where home is'?** Hence, the point in time on which this question focuses is *today*, the moment of narration. Participants' narrations tended to swing back and forth between the past and the present. Memories of the past and feelings of 'today' were interwoven throughout the narratives and in most cases the narrative was naturally concluded with 'who am I today and how do I feel today?' Through remembering and narrating their lives, experiences of the past were assessed and reworded – in accordance with and in relation to what has happened since – as understood and reunderstood from now (Freeman 2003: 123). Levels of reflexivity and articulation amongst the participants were generally very high, and stories and memories from the past were often followed by a reflection from their position today.

Before delving into the empirical material this introduction stresses the limitations – at least for the purposes of my research – of the concept of 'identity'. Attentive readers will have noticed that I have generally shunned the use of this term, although there have been occasions when it has been unavoidable. Instead, the linked notions of *home* and *belonging* are used here as a dual analytical construct to refer to a rather intangible space created in the migrants' contemporary world characterised by fluidity and movement. Furthermore, attention is paid to *location as a social space* and to participants' *positionality* within such space, in order to identify aspects of structure

and agency throughout the narratives. The introduction will be followed by a brief discussion of the various ways that notions of 'home' and 'belonging' have been discussed in the literature, emphasising the need for a grounded interdisciplinary approach rather than defining the meaning of 'home' from the outset. The dynamic journeys of belonging, revealed through narrative excerpts of British-born Cypriots, show the variety of ways that home can be understood and experienced throughout the lives of individual migrants. The excerpts provide insights on how dynamic, contradictory and dialogical are perceptions of 'home' and 'belonging', and how these notions are understood and reflected upon at the time of the narrative. Further analysis of the empirical material shows what I have chosen to term the unique 'third cultural spaces of belonging' established by the British-born Cypriot returnees. These new cultural spaces demonstrate the potential limitations of exploring notions of 'home' and 'belonging' within ethnic, national or primordial cultural boundaries. An examination of the participants' personal relationships and social spaces reveals a highly international and 'hybrid' character. Yet, my analysis also shows that many participants *have* developed a sense of belonging in Cyprus, which could be understood as a 'new' sense of Cypriotness, made up by a wide range of ingredients, which were cultivated and harvested in the course of their individual journeys 'home'.⁵⁵

Though theoretical discussions on notions of home and identity are often interlinked in the academic literatures (e.g. Ahmed et al. 2003; Benmayor and Skotnes 1994; Blunt 2007; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Christou 2006c; Walsh 2006), I noticed when talking to my participants that a description of their 'identity', or their use of this term as such, was rarely present in their narratives. Rather, expressions of 'home' and 'belonging' would be used to describe processes of identification, and would run through their stories like a seam in the rock, both during the life-narrative interviews as well as during everyday conversations and interactions. During the early stages of my fieldwork I would occasionally raise the question of identity, until I realised that it

⁵⁵ The findings presented in this chapter will be published as a paper in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (Teerling, 2011). An earlier version of this paper was presented, 14 December 2009, during the 'TIP-TIM Workshop for International Publishing' at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) in collaboration with the Sussex Centre for Migration Research (SCMR).

tended to disturb the 'flow' of the narrative, as the participants seemed to feel like they had to ascribe themselves with certain attributes (such as locality, ethnicity, religiosity and nationality), which felt rather static and unnatural. Hence soon enough I decided to remove the word 'identity' from my vocabulary, and indeed the participants themselves would hardly ever use the term when narrating their life stories.

The above observation affirms the argument that traditional classifications of identity are not only too abstract but also fail to adequately capture the everyday dynamics of lived experiences and emotions of inclusion (Anthias 2002, 2008; Brubaker 2005; Rapport and Dawson 1998). A question about identity addresses it as if it were a possessive property, asking 'that a subject has a ready-made story to tell about who they are and where they feel they "belong"' (Anthias 2002: 494). Although the essentialised views of identity have been challenged in postmodern scholarship, above all in a series of often quoted papers by Stuart Hall (1990, 1992, 1996), the current notions of multiple and fragmented identities retain the very elements of the essentialisation they try to resolve: '[f]or, however many "multi" or "layered" prefixes we use, it remains the case that what is retained must have some singular meaning in and of itself, otherwise the term "identity" would be a rhetorical flourish more than anything else' (Anthias 2002: 495).

Hence, notions of identity – whether 'fragmented' or unitary – involve the describing, labelling, and categorising of the different elements that (supposedly) make up 'the whole', which suggest that identity is a possession rather than a process. Belonging, on the other hand, is about shared experiences, values, networks and practices, and the ways in which such connections are manifested in everyday life and in emotions of inclusion (Anthias, 2008: 16,8). Anthias' (2008) concept of narratives of 'location' and positionality offers a useful tool, as it moves away from these elements of essentialisation maintained even within the idea of fragmented and multiple identities. Along these lines, Anthias' concept rejects the understanding of migration in terms of dislocation, as this assumes a fixed and given location in the first place, from which one becomes displaced. Instead attention is paid to *location as a social space* which is not

fixed but produced within a certain context, meaning and time, acknowledging that positionalities entail shifts that can be complex, contradictory and dialogical. Positionality takes place in the context of the lived experiences in which identification is performed at the intersection of *structure* and *agency*: structure referring to a social *position* (effectivities such as gender, class, stage in the life-cycle etc.), and agency to social *positioning* (a set of practices, actions and meanings). The concept of positionality is used to identify the aspects of structure and agency as they surface in the narratives. Likewise, Rapport and Dawson (1998: 8-9) argue that traditional classifications of identity fail to sufficiently depict appreciations of 'individual actors' world-views and their drives to new [...] sites and levels of association, of incorporation and exclusion'. They suggest deploying the notion of 'home' as an analytical concept to describe 'where one best knows oneself'.

With these arguments in mind, I explore notions and expressions of 'home' and 'belonging' as they emerged from the stories of the participants. By focusing on the interplay between social structures and the agency of migrants, and on 'the claims individuals make about their position in the social order of things, their view of where and to what they belong (and do not belong), as well as understanding the broader social relations that constitute and are constituted in this process' (Anthias 2002: 491), I aim to divert attention from traditional classifications of identity and 'groupisms' (Brubaker 2005) to a more experiential, grounded representation of the lived realities and associated feelings of 'home' and 'belonging' amongst British-born Cypriot returnees. What follows is an account of the dynamic processes and understandings of home and belonging encountered through their journeys and through their narrations of these journeys; and of agency, choices and 'Cypriotness' in the development of 'spaces of belonging' in Cyprus.

6.2 DYNAMICS OF 'HOME' AND THE JOURNEY TO BELONGING

Scholars within a wide range of fields, such as anthropology, human geography, sociology, history and architecture, have explored the various notions of 'home'. Is home a place, a space, a feeling, practices, or a state of 'being in the world'?

Established conceptions in which home was the steady physical centre of one's universe – a safe and still place to leave and go back to (whether house, village, region or nation) – are now recurrently challenged by more fluid and fragmented processes of identification and belonging (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 6). Home is often related to relationships and family, self, safety, and journeying (Mallett 2004), associations which shift the anchors of 'belonging' away from the purely geographical. The participants in my study stressed such processes by describing their sense of home to go beyond a single or stable location, ethnic or national frame, or established form of cultural association. Rather, home was said to be found in practices, shared and repeated habitual interactions, emotions, memories, or, as Berger (1984: 64) so nicely put it, in 'words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, and even the way one wears a hat'.

Although many now acknowledge the need for the understanding of home as a multidimensional concept, few have translated this into truly interdisciplinary studies of the meaning of home. Instead researchers generally limit their analysis to specific dimensions of home – typically those aspects that routinely fall within their own discipline (for a critical review of the literature see Mallett 2004). Saunders and Williams (1988: 91), for instance, see home as a major political issue and something that touches centrally on our personal lives. Therefore, feminists, for their part, tend to focus on the issue of gender domination, and may associate home as a site of oppression and patriarchal domination, whilst liberals relate home to personal autonomy and a challenge to state power. It is not the aim of this chapter, nor of my thesis, to come up with an interdisciplinary model for the study of 'home'. Rather, by adopting a bottom-up strategy instead of embracing a particular theoretical or disciplinary approach, I hope to contribute to the 'human face' of studies in global mobility (see Favell et al. 2006), which in turn encourages an intersection of disciplines and the borrowing of illuminating insights across disciplinary boundaries. Along these lines, and following Ahmed et al. (2003: 8), I will 'avoid assuming that home has an essential meaning, in advance of its making'.

As noted above, 'home' is inextricably entwined with 'belonging'; hence the fact that these terms are frequently used interchangeably is not surprising. 'Belonging' is often

equated with ‘feeling at home’, both in academic discourse (see for example Yuval-Davis 2006) and in everyday language. My participants were no exception, and neither am I. In fact, when I was recently asked what I think is ‘the difference between “home” and “belonging”’ I found myself translating this question into Dutch, my mother tongue, and I realised that the noun ‘home’ (*thuis*) is incorporated in the verb ‘to belong’ (*thuishoren*). Hence, in the Dutch language it is *assumed* that ‘home’ is an integral part of ‘belonging’. This not only reminded me of the semantic complexity of the notion of ‘belonging’ (Antonsich 2010a: 646), but also of the value of life narratives, which explore the actual *feelings* behind these notions, allowing the participants to use their own words – as few or as many as they like – in order to get these feelings across.

Although I prefer pragmatics over semantics, I would like to take a moment to address how this term, ‘belonging’, is used in the social sciences. Antonsich’s (2010a) insightful review of the usage of ‘belonging’ across the various disciplines reveals that it is often treated as a self-explanatory term and left undefined. A browse through the vast literature in which ‘belonging’ is used demonstrates it to be another multidimensional term within the social sciences. Yet I do sympathise with this development – I do not believe that concepts have ‘true’ definitions, as definitions tell us nothing about the contexts in which they arose. However, what all these various dimensions of ‘belonging’ have in common is *attachment*. Belonging encompasses the countless dimensions (emotional, physical, cultural, ethnic etc.) of attachment (to places, people, feelings, environments, climates etc.) (cf. Antonsich 2010a: 645; Bhimji 2008: 414; Sicakkan and Lithman 2005: 27). I will not attempt to sum up this vast literature here. Rather, I will highlight some relevant contributions to the understanding and usage of belonging, in order to provide a context within which to read my findings.

Yuval-Davis’ comprehensive study of belonging focuses on two major analytical dimensions: first, ‘the notion of belonging’ which, she states, ‘is about emotional attachment, about feeling “at home” and [...] about feeling “safe”’; and second, ‘the politics of belonging’, which ‘comprises specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectivities that are, at the same time, themselves being constructed by these projects in very particular ways’ (Yuval-Davis

2006: 197; see also Fenster 2005). It is in the context of the second dimension that belonging is often mobilised as a synonym of identity (see for example Colombo et al. 2009; Ehrkamp 2005; Fortier 2000; Migdal 2004), of citizenship (for example Hampshire 2005; Ho 2006; White and Gilmartin 2008), or both (for example Anderson and Taylor 2005; White and Gilmartin 2008), while the notion of belonging as an emotional and individual experience of 'feeling at home' is not frequently explored by scholars (see for example the critique of Yuval-Davis 2006 by Antonsich 2010a).

Indeed it is that personal and intimate dimension of 'belonging', of 'feeling at home' and 'feeling safe', that I miss in studies like the one by Yuval-Davis – particularly since it was the dimension mostly evoked by my participants. With this I mean a personal narration of the 'self' and the emotionally based orientation of belonging and inclusion, rather than a discursive resource of identity parameters (such as ethnicity, religiosity and nationality etc.) for drawing boundaries of social or political inclusion or exclusion.

In their 'belonging hypothesis', Baumeister and Leary (1995) emphasise the importance of relational factors and suggest that the need for belonging is satisfied by significant *positive* and *affective* interpersonal relations. Relational factors refer to the personal and social ties that positively contribute to the quality of life of an individual in a given place. My close examination of the referents used by my participants to signify their ability to 'feel at home' revolved around such personal ties: with family, friends, partners, as well as everyday encounters in their places of work, study and leisure. While such 'personal referents' (Antonsich 2010b: 124) were most often used by my participants to describe their experiences of 'feeling at home', symbolic characteristics (history, traditions, language, institutions, landscapes, climate, peoples' 'characteristics' and manners etc.) – or 'social referents' (Antonsich 2010b: 124) – which shape the specific 'identity' of a given geographic space played a role as well. While both referents, 'personal' and 'social', have been demonstrated to a certain extent in the previous chapter – through an examination of participants' accounts of their more personal environment and choices upon return on the one hand, and their

experiences within the wider social and cultural fabric of the island on the other – the present chapter will add further analytical pointers.

So in the context of my thesis, ‘belonging’ should be understood as the connection to the *emotion* of feeling at home and to home in the *physical* sense (cf. Blunt 2005: 506). Hence, ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ are affectively, rather than cognitively, defined concepts; the seemingly neutral, simple statement ‘home *is* where we belong’ really means ‘home is where we *feel* we belong’ (Hedetoft and Hjort 2002: vii; italics in original).

I must emphasise that ‘home’ here does not denote the domestic space of patriarchal relations, oppressions and fear, which has been at the centre of intense critique by feminist scholars.⁵⁶ Nor should belonging be seen ‘as a property of the rational mind, as a particular kind of “politics”, situating individuals between individual freedom, collective rights, and negotiated identities’ (Hedetoft and Hjort 2002: xvii). Rather, ‘home’ as a space ‘where we feel we belong’ is analytically separated as a symbolic, felt and lived space associated with feelings of attachment, comfort and familiarity (cf. Diprose 2008; hooks 2009). My privileging of the latter notion is not to escape the power relations that often saturate this space, but to stay true to the notion mostly evoked by my participants (see also Antonsich 2010b).

When listening to the participants’ life stories, and the way they narrated their feelings of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’, it became clear that the meaning of ‘home’ took on various forms throughout their ‘journey’, both in the physical sense as well as ‘the journey within’. Hence the question, ‘where or what is home?’ is not one that can be easily and straightforwardly answered. The participants experienced and remembered a variety of ways of ‘feeling at home’ up to the point of narration. As mentioned earlier, the main question of this chapter is the feelings of home and belonging of *today* (i.e. the time of the interview) expressed by the British-born Cypriot returnees. However, the

⁵⁶ Although more recently, some feminist scholars have started to ‘release’ the notion of home by emphasizing its ambiguity (see for example Blunt and Dowling 2006). Young (2002: 336), although explicitly tackling the oppressive aspects of home, suggests that home entails important positive human values and that ‘feminists should try to disengage a positive from a oppressive meaning of home’.

whole ‘journey’ or ‘process’ – terms often used by the participants when describing their lives – has shaped their feelings and views of today, as remembering ‘serves to illuminate and transform the present’ (hooks 1991: 147, quoted in Massey 1994: 119).

Let us now return to the data to put some empirical flesh on this theoretical discussion. In order to get an impression of the *‘journeying’ through various stages of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’* I start with the story of Dina, a 32-year-old British-born Greek Cypriot who moved to Cyprus in her early teens, then went to study in the US, and now lives in Cyprus again, with her (non-Cypriot) partner. Dina’s narrative is just one case chosen from dozens, to capture the various understandings and feelings involved with ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ over a participant’s life course; it shows, through narration, rewording and reflexivity, how home is understood at the time of the narrative. In actual fact, Dina’s story is not particularly typical of the timing and geographical routing of ‘return to Cyprus’, but I have deliberately selected the following long passage because, through various paragraphs of one narrative text, many perspectives and nuances on the variable concept of ‘home’ are nicely encapsulated.⁵⁷ From Dina’s narrations of ‘home’ we get insights into how dynamic individuals’ perceptions of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ are, and how such perceptions transform and tend to change over the course of an individual life, or in different spatial contexts. Through snapshots of different periods in Dina’s life, her ‘journey’ up to today is nicely captured.

My mum always wanted to come back [to Cyprus] And I remember my mum [...] being very excited about moving to Cyprus, so I remember thinking at the time, ‘ok it must be something really good then if my mum is so excited’. But I could not get used to it. Awful [...] I just couldn’t get into Cyprus, I didn’t like it [...] it was a very strange period the whole thing for me.

[...]

And I remember [growing up in England] we were only allowed to hang out with Greeks⁵⁸ ... They were very protective of me [...] And so the people that I could go to

⁵⁷ My use of longer narrative extracts in this chapter – in order to explore the multiplex and nuanced perspectives on home and belonging – means that I have had to be more selective in choosing which participants’ transcripts to draw on, compared to the much more multivocal accounts in the prior two chapters.

⁵⁸ Dina, like several other participants, used the terms ‘Greek’ and ‘Cypriot’ interchangeably when referring to Greek-Cypriots.

their houses were only Greeks, oh god they also sent us to Saturday Greek school, and it was at this church, and I am not very... religious... no I'm not, and I hated it, I hated it. So there was always a lot of negativity involved with [anything] Greek. It's just like the last ten years that I really appreciated the language and that I like it, and I'm not as comfortable with it as I am with English, but I do enjoy it now, but as a child I hated it...

[...]

When I was in England I always felt like a foreigner [...] When I moved to Cyprus I never felt like a Cypriot. So I never quite fitted in either way, which is something I've heard a lot of people say [...] Now I kinda like that feeling, I feel I don't belong to a country, I belong to myself, and then wherever I go that's my home, kind of. [...] I do think I think of Cyprus as home now... I think I do, I can't say for sure, but I think I do. My family is here, my friends are here... but I also think I could live abroad easily... [...] I think I feel... if I had to choose somewhere it would be Cyprus... but then at the same time, I can't relate to the people very much [...] So I don't know if I could consider myself Cypriot.

[...]

[W]hen I finished the Junior School [in Cyprus] all of my friends were like me, none of my friends were Cypriot, a couple were from Canada, one was from America, there was [...] she was half French [...], living all over the world. So yeah most of my friends were like that [...] So there was that international feel again, there was that exposure to different places and those were the people that I could relate to, at least in the way of thinking [...] it wasn't a very, I don't know, Cypriot way of thinking...

[...]

How do I create a sense of home now? Ok, erm, very materialistic but the fact that [...] now we've got a little more money of our own, so we can get away a little bit, also to set up a home the way we want to, because I am very homey[...] I like being at home, so if I'm comfortable in my home I feel good... I do enjoy seeing my family; in all reality, you know with the complaining and everything, I do like seeing them. [...] And the other thing is that Cyprus [...] the actual country, I do really love it, especially areas like Pomos, it's beautiful and it feels like it's not overpopulated... people are still in touch with the basics, I feel a lot closer to the land, to the earth. So getting away [...] discovering places like that, that helps. [...] I made friends on an adult level that I can relate to. I think these things are good, and also, again in all reality, Cyprus is a comfortable place, it's an easy place [...] you don't have to drive too far to see people, there are certain comforts to living in Cyprus [...] I have a really good relationship with [my partner], so we're able to talk very openly about a lot of these things, a lot of these feelings that come up [...] and we're also on the same wavelength in terms of, er, what we consider home [...] Ok there's two parts to this, the first is the physical house that [...] we've created a comfortable space with ourselves, we've got the two cats, which might sound a bit silly, but it's like our little babies, so I feel like I have a nice home, I feel comfortable in my home. On a feeling level, I think we're pretty in sync [...] Right now I'm alright here. If I come to a point that it will get really uncomfortable for me then I'll consider moving, and I think [my partner] is quite open to it as well. So again on that level it's nice to have somebody that understands, that can relate to what I'm feeling [...] So you know, I think it's comfortable like that, he's also a major part of feeling good in Cyprus and I think he offers a lot of support for me.

[...]

Going to the States as well, and feeling so comfortable there, that also helped in terms of you know 'hey I'm here, I feel good, it fits me, so this is my home then' [...] and then I come back to Cyprus and there is the feeling of familiarity, the smell, and all that, and then it's like 'no this is actually also my home'. It kind of came together at one point that I don't need to define my home, I feel, you know, the world is kind of your home, it's what you make of it, how you fit in. [...] it feels so good to push yourself, and that gives me a sense of feeling like I'm able to do it, like I feel really empowered, so when I have that feeling I could be anywhere, and that's a really nice feeling. It's slowly putting the pieces together. Ok, I can't say that I had this feeling in my early twenties [...] it's not something that happened from one minute to the next, it was something that kind of evolved into that, eventually. It feels good feeling it, you know, it makes sense to me now. Whereas before it was a lot of confusion, now it makes sense. It gives a feeling of self-assurance, it makes me feel a bit more independent, 'cause I feel like I can make it [...] on my own.

[...]

[S]peaking about it [now] really makes me more aware, of the journey I went through, and it feels good having come where I am, because thinking back, it was uncomfortable, it was difficult [...] But it's nice to actually, having said all this now, it's nice to hear myself say that, because all that work and effort has actually paid off a bit, I feel alright, I feel more complete let's say, so it's almost like a self-realisation that... 'yeah ok it's good'. I like this [research approach] 'cause you're not being put in a box, you're actually being listened to [...] it's nice, it feels good.

Of course every story is as unique as the person who tells it, and all vary in terms of life trajectories, orientations and experiences. However, what all narratives do have in common is the wide variety of ways home is viewed, experienced and communicated. The different dimensions and experiences of home – related to house, family and relationships, haven, self, and journeying – revealed in a single narrative confirm that home is a multi-dimensional and multi-layered phenomenon (see for example: Douglas 1991; Markowitz and Stefansson 2004; Porteous 1976; Rapport and Dawson 1998; Somerville 1992), which call for recognition of the need for multi- *and* interdisciplinary research in the field (see Mallett 2004) – a way by which, to use Dina's words, 'you're not being put in a box'.

What is striking about Dina's narrative – and the reason why I decided not to 'break up' this long passage with analytical reflections – is that it perfectly captures how she matured into her own space of belonging, of 'feeling at home', throughout her life

journey. Early on in the passage there is a clear distinction between the *personal* referents (the emotion of feeling at home) and *social* referents (home in a more physical sense) of 'belonging'. Dina describes her confusing feeling as a teenager when she saw her mum – a person whom she associated with a strong feeling of *personal* belonging – so excited about being back 'home' in Cyprus, which made Dina think there was something wrong with herself, since she did not share that excitement about the *symbolic* characteristics (or social referents) of the place.⁵⁹ Different ways of feeling at home (or not) can be experienced at the same time by the same person. Furthermore, individuals may experience the same 'homes' in different ways, depending on their social position (Fog Olwig 1998: 226). Actually the participants in this study – second-generation 'returnees' – are a perfect example that 'home' and 'away' can be highly problematic terms, as home and away are likely to occupy one and the same space in one's lived experience, so that 'home' can feel strange and 'away' familiar (Ahmed 1999).

The personal referents found in Dina's narrative, such as her descriptions of her international circle of friends and her relationship with her partner, emphasise how important positive and affective interpersonal relations are in satisfying her need for belonging (Baumeister and Leary 1995). The sense of comfort and familiarity found in these relations – in Cyprus and beyond – contributes to a positive experience of home as an *emotional* space, which in turn is a key factor contributing to her ability to positively experience home as a *physical* space, what Antonsich (2010a, 2010b) refers to as 'place-belongingness'. Perhaps ironically – rather than *estranging* her from Cyprus as 'home' – Dina's realisation that she does not have 'to belong to a country' to feel at home ('I belong to myself, and then wherever I go that's my home' – 'the world is kind of your home, it's what you make of it') actually *enabled* her to establish a physical sense of home in Cyprus. As if once she had let go of the need 'to define home'

⁵⁹ Marianna, a 39-year-old British-born Cypriot single mother who moved to Cyprus with her 9-year-old daughter Christie, was going through a similar experience, albeit the other way around: 'my daughter absolutely loves the life here, she's very very happy... I'm not unhappy, I wouldn't say I'm unhappy here, but I'm not settled here, it just doesn't feel like home to me', while Christie expressed 'well... mmm... I'm not like my mum, I feel like great. I don't feel like my mum, she doesn't really feel like comfortable here. I just love it. It's a better place for kids'.

(as a discursive resource of identity parameters) she was able to embrace and appreciate the island's social and geographical characteristics. She speaks about her connection to the earth, the smells and other *sensations* of familiarity, which Brah (1996: 192) describes as 'the lived experience of a locality, its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, [and] balmy summer evenings'. Despite the fact that she 'can't relate to the ["native"] Cypriots very much', Dina has managed to create her *own* space of belonging in Cyprus. As her narrative develops towards the point of 'today', Dina clearly deploys more of a mixture of personal (her home with her partner, her family, her 'international' circle of friends, her cats) and social referents (the everyday comforts of island life, the land and the nature) to construct her feelings of 'home' and 'belonging'. Furthermore, she speaks of *being at home in the world*, which she associates with a feeling of awareness and empowerment deriving from her 'journey', as we see in the last two sections of the excerpts where her narrative has reached the point of 'today'.

Similar feelings of pride and achievement were prevalent in many of the other narratives. Through narrating their life journeys, participants created 'the contours of a space of belonging',⁶⁰ which lead to the 'conclusion' that their *lack of belonging* has actually shaped their *sense of belonging* of today, which they recognise as something positive. This underpins Ahmed's (1999) critique of theories of migration which often fail to give home a positive definition; rather, they emphasise 'the homelessness of migration and exile'. Hence, by being defined negatively in this way, home, she argues, 'becomes associated with stasis, boundaries, identity and fixity' (1999: 339). The narratives show that 'home' and 'away' are not oppositional concepts. The model which assumes such an opposition describes home as a familiar place and 'away' as a 'strange land' (Chambers 1994: 18), hence associating strangeness with migration (Ahmed 1999: 340). Recognising and incorporating the positive developments involved with the participants' return journeys does not mean romanticising them, and I want to emphasise that there is certainly no single unified sense of optimism and confidence that represents all my participants. However, I do believe that the notion of home amongst migrants – and returnees in particular – should not be dramatised either, by

⁶⁰ I borrow this expression from Sarah Ahmed (1999: 330), who uses it in a slightly different context.

only emphasising 'what it is not', or 'what is lost'. In order to get a full and contemporary understanding of the lived experiences of 'home' and 'belonging' amongst the various migrant groups, we should also incorporate 'what it *is*' and 'what is *gained*'. Focusing on the plurality of scales at which belonging is articulated, rather than on the articulation of identity in which belonging is assumed (cf. Carrillo Rowe 2005), is definitely a step in this direction. Dina's account shows us that belonging as 'feeling at home' does not necessarily have to be based on some form of ethnic, national or primordial cultural commonality (cf. Antonsich 2009: 800), and that this awareness actually contributes to a positive feeling of belonging.

The various social and intimate spaces of belonging developed and inhabited by the second-generation British-born Cypriot returnees further problematise the discourse which associates home with familiarity, and away with strangeness. Rather, we need to explore what Homi Bhabha (1989) calls 'the uncanny of cultural differences'. According to Bhabha 'the strangeness of the familiar [...] becomes more problematic, both politically and conceptually [...] when the problem of cultural difference is ourselves-as-others, others-as-ourselves, that borderline' (Bhabha 1989: 72).

The following discussion demonstrates the potential limitations of exploring notions of 'home' and 'belonging' within ethnic, national or pre-existing cultural boundaries, and shows that familiarity can be found amongst 'strangers' and vice versa.

6.3 CONSTRUCTING 'THIRD CULTURAL SPACES' OF BELONGING IN CYPRUS

A few things were quite prominent in the participants' narrations of their sense of home and belonging today. In the extracts from Dina's narrative we saw the various ways 'home' can be viewed and narrated by one individual, and how different ways of feeling at home (or not) can be experienced simultaneously. Furthermore, the participants' sense of self-pride when describing their journeys and their lives today was quite striking, as mentioned above. Another striking element of their narratives, and the main focus of the rest of this chapter, was the unique spaces of belonging

created by the individual participants, which tended to be emphasised *beyond* national, ethnic and primordial cultural boundaries.

So, where or what is 'home' in the early twenty-first century for these British-born individuals of Cypriot descent who have relocated to the parental homeland? How do they define their sense of belonging during this 'period of accelerated globalisation and cultural mixing' (Nederveen Pieterse 1995: 46)? One of the most important aspects of contemporary diversity is the complication it elicits for conventional notions of culture (Robertson 1995: 39). As 'new homes' and 'migrations' are recognised to form hybridised cultures without 'pure' origins (Ahmed et al. 2003: 4), it is important to be careful not to remain guided by the old and rather well-established view that depicts cultures as bounded and discrete, and tends to overemphasise coherence (see also Kearney 1995). Indeed, over the past two decades critics have expressed their uneasiness with the term, suggesting that the notion of culture 'emphasizes shared patterns at the expense of processes of change and internal inconsistencies, conflicts, and contradictions' (Rosaldo 1993: 27-28), its 'most-dangerously misleading quality [being] that it literally flattens out the extremely varied ways in which the production of meaning occurs in the contested field of social existence' (Friedman 1994: 207), which 'almost irresistibly leads us into reification and essentialism' (Keesing 1994: 302). In fact, Lila Abu-Lughod opposes the notion of culture, arguing that it enforces separation; she suggests a strategy for *writing against culture*. She puts forward 'ethnographies of the particular' which – by focusing on particular individuals and their changing relationships – subverts homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness. She suggests that the conventional idea of culture excludes the importance of 'halfies' – individuals who combine in themselves a mixture of features resulting from migration, overseas education or parentage (Abu-Lughod 1991).

The British-born Cypriot returnees who participated in this study could be included in Abu-Lughod's 'halfies'. Having been brought up in a country that is not quite 'theirs' followed by moving to a country that is not quite 'theirs' either, equipped with experiences of being an 'insider', 'outsider', and 'in-between', these migrants tend to create spaces of belonging in their personal, leisure, and work lives that not only

transcend local and national differences, but are unique in the sense that they are built around a mixture of 'home', expatriate and 'foreign' relationships. These spaces are based on shared experiences and life views, often formed around cross-cultural experiences and living abroad. Within these spaces *feelings of familiarity and comfort* seem to be key. At the same time, these spaces draw upon a variety of sources such as the same generational, age and life-cycle cohort; common interests in music, films, art, travel etc; shared personal life histories and struggles, and so on (see also Kennedy 2007: 362). These migrants are actively involved in heterogeneous societies, characterised by global travel (both physical and virtual), which are consequences of their generation and life cycle. Yet, they often do maintain a sense of 'Cypriotness', albeit in a fresh and perhaps 'unconventional' way. Through shared experiences, knowledge, values, ethics and lifestyles, a 'third cultural space of belonging' is created, which brings about 'a generative frame of unity within which diversity can take place' (Featherstone 1990: 2).

International lifestyles which cross and undermine cultural and national boundaries, and generate alternative hybridised socialities, are a growing, though not new, phenomenon. In the 1970s Useem and Useem (1976) came to realise that expatriates from various countries had formed a lifestyle which they shared with each other, but was different from both their home and their host settings. They began to use the term 'third culture' to cover their way of life, whilst the term 'third-culture kids' was coined to refer to children who accompany their parents into another society. Today, as noted by Cockburn, '[t]he concept of this "third culture" would still seem appropriate in terms of defining a particular group of people who have a shared experience' (2002: 477). Two examples of more recent studies on 'groups' constructing their lives through interpersonal relationships that cannot be reduced to, or simply understood in terms of, their associations with either their 'host' or their 'home' society are Kennedy's (2007) work on socialities formed by skilled migrants in London and Manchester, which he refers to as 'third social spaces', and Sampson's (2003) study on 'hyperspaces' created by seafarers aboard. When listening to the British-born Cypriot returnees there are similarities, but also some subtle differences, to be found with the groups discussed in the studies referred to above. Many seemed to have gone

through various stages of 'home' to reach the point where they are 'at home in the world', a socially constructed place emerged through and created from lived experiences (see Gurney 1997; Jackson 1995).

And yet I must acknowledge some difficulties with this formulation. The terminologies of 'accelerated globalisation', 'cultural mixing' and 'hybridised cultures' described above (cf. Ahmed et al. 2003: 4; Nederveen Pieterse 1995: 39), as well as the term 'third-culture kids' (Useem and Useem 1976), seem to refer to a more elite form of international migration and cultural cosmopolitanism than the Cypriots, for whom it is not the worldwide range of the expat sojourner or the global business traveller that applies, but the much more specific geo-historical space of Cypriot migration to, and return from, the UK. The translocal spaces inhabited by Cypriot migrants are different too: moving from poor, mainly rural, locations in Cyprus through working-class urban neighbourhoods in Britain, to decent (but hardly 'jet-setter') accommodation in Cyprus – very different, I would say, from the luxury villas and gated compounds of the international migratory elite. Charter flights and budget airlines connect the Cypriots' translocal spaces, not long-haul flights in business class.

The second problem with my chosen formulation of 'third cultural spaces of belonging' is that, in 'writing against culture', I have difficulty in avoiding using this word (in the same way that my eschewing of the word 'identity' sometimes left me no alternative but to occasionally use that very word). My defence, for what it is worth, is that I am using 'culture' not as an essentialised construct of national or ethno-religious identity (that word again!), nor as an expression of artistic interests ('high culture'), but rather as an evocation of the 'culture of the particular' (*pace* Abu-Lughod 1991). This denotes the particular, at once narrow but also mobile and flexible, cultural referents of the second-generation Greek Cypriots which reflect both their particular social and 'ethnic' upbringing in the UK and ancestral ties with the island, and their subsequent socio-spatial trajectories as second-generation 'returnees' now living in the culturally hybridised space that is Cyprus. This also explains my choice of using 'third *cultural* spaces of belonging' (rather than 'third *cultures*') to describe the unique spaces inhabited by the British-born Cypriots who participated in my study. While 'culture'

gives a wrong impression of holism and essentialism, the adjective form of the word – cultural – moves into a more suitable realm of variation, contrasts and comparisons (cf. Appadurai 1996: 12; Barnard and Spencer 1996: 142; Borofsky 1994: 245; Keesing 1994: 309).

Hence, I am distinguishing between two sets of ideas about culture: an older set of ideas which equates 'a culture' with 'a people' which is bounded by a 'checklist' of characteristics; and a more dynamic discourse in which culture is not represented as a stable 'thing' but as a process of contestation over the meaning of certain concepts (including 'culture' itself) (Wright 1998: 14). Although I fully agree with the critics' concern regarding the 'idea of culture', and the baggage it contains, I do not think it is useful to totally abandon it from our writings, as some have suggested (for example, Abu-Lughod 1991, 1999; Barth 1994, 2001), as the word 'culture' has become very much part of public vocabulary. Barth (2001: 434) asks the (legitimate) question what is gained by a concept, like culture, if a 'local' one might serve as well or even better. But culture is one of these concepts that has emerged from academic discourse and now *is* being widely used by the people we research (at least in contemporary post-industrial societies). So rather than simply abandoning it, I think scholars have the responsibility to find out (and respect) how a certain word⁶¹ (or concept) that has been introduced through academia is actually being used in everyday discourse. Consequently, we may find out that, although some of 'these "old ideas of culture" [that] have percolated out from academic discourse [...] are still in widespread use in public parlance' (Wright 1998: 8), it cannot be taken for granted that 'laypeople' will consistently associate the word with the essentialist meaning of homogeneity, stability and boundedness, as will be shown in the narrative extracts in the following sections.

6.4 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL SPACES

The 'third cultural space of belonging' is well captured by the various forms of personal relationships developed and maintained by the participants. The highly mixed character of the friendships and relationships is strongly evident in my empirical data.

⁶¹ After all it is just a word...

Certain social venues in Nicosia, for example, popular amongst the returnees, clearly embody this 'third culture' atmosphere, and attract people from a wide range of national (or 'mixed') backgrounds, connecting on common grounds in terms of experiences, life views, humour and so on. The fact that connections were made beyond national and ethno-cultural boundaries was emphasised by participants often stating that they could relate much better to native Cypriots who had been 'away' than those who had not – 'away' referring to those who were born and raised in Cyprus but have spent a significant amount of time abroad. Consider the following extract of 35-year-old Marcus:

It kinda gravitates towards each other... there are British-Cypriot friends, a lot of people that come into the bar... people like [...] who's half French and half Cypriot [...] one of my best mates is South African, one of my other mates she's Cypriot, born in Cyprus, but her mother is – erm – from Liverpool, and her father is Armenian, so she's Armenian Cypriot, so it's a mishmash of English speakers, but [...] I got a bit of Lebanese, bit of African, a bit of, you know Moroccan, Tunisian friends, a mishmash of all cultures. [...] It's a lot easier, the communication, with those people [...] so making friendships, talk, either just pissing around and having a laugh, or talking intellectually, it's a lot easier [...] So yeah we tend to attract each other. I don't have purely Cypriot friends... Ah I do actually, but they speak very good English [...] Especially from the people who have gone away to America or the UK, or some other English-speaking place, or even like Spain, or whatever, they come back and they have such a different outlook, it's not this tiny island, there's a whole world out there, they act in such a different way, different cultures that they've absorbed and they liked, and they become so much more relaxed; it's so much easier communicating with these people than Cypriots who have never left the island, who have never got to study somewhere else, who completely refuse to talk to someone because they're black or they don't speak Greek, or... they got two heads or whatever, I don't know... They always have some prejudice about someone.

The way participants emphasised the 'international' tendency of their social networks, and the comfort they find in it, is quite striking, emphasising – again – the importance of personal interactions, relationships and feelings of familiarity, contributing to one's feelings of belonging. Furthermore, long-term romantic relationships tend to be 'mixed' (with someone of a different national or ethnic background), whilst those who are single tend to envision their future relationships to be of a 'mixed' nature. In most cases, ethnic or national background does not appear to be a key prerequisite, whilst a shared view of the world and experiences *beyond* culturally defined boundaries does. Hence one may say that the importance of a common ground based on national and ethnic identity seems to be weakened, and perhaps partly replaced, by an emphasis on

broader and shared experiences. Thirty-year-old Leicester-born Tina described how she 'still [does] not have any [native] Cypriot friends' despite having lived in Cyprus as a young girl for ten years and having returned as an adult more than three years ago: '[they are] from Lebanon, Israel, France, um Bolivia, just whatever like... [...] one or two [British-Cypriot] friends that I have, but that's about it'. When asking her why she thinks she doesn't have any (native) Cypriot friends she replies: 'well the thing is I think if they hadn't left the country they have different interests, different mentality, [...] it's hard to find somebody that's lived in Cyprus and has never left, and is sort of quite broad-minded. I'm not saying that there isn't but generally speaking this is what I find'. In their narratives, Marcus and Tina clearly distinguish between personal referents (friends made up by 'a mishmash of all cultures') and referents to wider social dimensions ('Cypriots who have never left the island' and who 'have a different mentality'), which mainly contributes to their sense of belonging within a more 'international circle'. These metaphors of hybridity transform 'difference into sameness, and sameness into difference' (Young 1995: 26), which:

not only recognize differences within the subject, fracturing and complicating holistic notions of identity, but also address connections between subjects by recognizing affiliations, cross-pollinations, echoes, and repetitions [...] Instead of endorsing a drift toward an ever greater atomization of identity, such metaphors allow us to conceive of multiple, interconnecting axes of affiliation and differentiation (Felski 1997: 12).

Hybridity, here, should not be simply understood as cultural (or ethnic) syncretism. Although the social and personal spaces occupied by the participants *are* 'mixed' in terms that they are shared with individuals from a variety of national and ethnic backgrounds, it is not the merging of these backgrounds (or the retention of parts of it) into some new 'organic whole' that identifies them. Rather, while the individual differences in ethno-national background may characterise these spaces, it is the commonalities *beyond* these characteristics that bring these individuals together. In this sense it moves away from conceptions of hybridity often criticised for making assumptions about the pure or static elements (racial, ethnic, linguistic, national, cultural etc.) from which it derives, turning 'the hybrid' to take on yet another static product. My characterisation and critique of hybridity above resonates with that of Hutnyk (2010) and Kalra et al. (2005). Whilst emphasising that 'the hybrid' is a usefully

(but also dangerously?) slippery category, purposely contested and open to change, Kalra et al. (2005: 70) affirm that 'in its most recent and realist usage, hybridity appears as a convenient category at "the edge" or contact point of diaspora, describing cultural mixture where the diasporized meets the host in the scene of migration'. Papastergiadis (2000: 3) makes a similar point at the start of his well-known book *The Turbulence of Migration*. What I find interesting about the above formulation is how the assumption of hybridity 'occurring' at the outer edge of diaspora (i.e. where the emigrant diaspora meets the host society) is, in the case of my research, inverted. Here, it is the counter-diaporic migrants 'returning' to the homeland who encounter not just a 'new' host society (the 'old' society their parents left behind, albeit now in a vastly changed form), but also new social groups (expats, immigrants, cosmopolitans) with whom new social relations form within newly created social spaces. The spaces of belonging and identification depicted by my research are dynamic and constantly emergent, produced in relation to the image of native Cypriots 'who are less open-minded' or 'who never left the island' (and the particular characteristics assigned to this image, such as 'materialistic', 'prejudiced' or 'snobbish'), and thus have to be discussed within this particular context. Hence, the character of these spaces is not dependent on a 'fusion' of particular ethnic, national or racial 'wholes', but on a common narrative shared by various individuals, deriving from a shared 'life view' produced interactionally in a local context (cf. Anthias 2001).

Like many of the other participants, 35-year-old Vasos was raised in the UK in 'a very Cypriot way', in terms of church, Greek school, family and community relations. He talks about the initial shock he experienced when he arrived in Cyprus several years ago and realised he 'could not get away with being Cypriot'. Today however, when discussing feelings of home and belonging, he expresses a discomfort with bounded notions such as 'national identity' and 'home', while attaching greater value to experiences beyond such notions:

I am not a Cypriot, I'm a foreigner, well I'm not even English so I just, as long as you don't have any [...] preconceived notion of who you are or what you are, if you leave that to one side and just get on with the day-to-day living then actually it's all quite cool [...] I don't feel un-Cypriot, I travel to quite a lot of countries, I've been to a lot of places and so I'm a bit more broad-minded than maybe [...] you know, I'm a

concoction of all my experiences and that's it, I'm not being nationalistic or anything like that, I don't connect to these sort of outdated modes of operating, you know, I am how I feel in that moment.

[...]

[on my recent visit to the UK] I slept in my own bed and it didn't really feel like mine anymore, and actually when I came back [to Cyprus] and I came to sleep at my place here I was like 'aaah' [*mimics sigh of relief*], so I suppose in terms of feeling my home is here, erm, but you know it's a bit of an outdated notion, where's home; it's like wherever you're at, at that moment in time. I feel like my life's here so this is where my home is, maybe that's it, rather than saying home, let's... go straight to life.

When talking about a potential life partner he stresses the importance of being with someone who shares such views of life:

I think that's [Cypriot parents'] big dream isn't it? As a traditional Cypriot parent they want their child to marry within the same culture and not only just that, someone that they approve of, it's very complex, you know. I don't think I could ever marry a Cypriot person, I think that would do my head in [*laughs*]. I mean the mentality is completely different, I possibly, if someone similar to me, half and half, or... so there's some cultural, a cultural understanding [...] I've been out with a lot of Spanish women and they seemed to have the same cultural understanding so you know that would be ok, but it would freak the shit out of my parents. But hey, you know, ultimately you just find a good person, then, wherever they're from, they're from.

Interestingly the understanding of a 'suitable partner' as someone who shares similar 'cultures' is shared by both Vasos and his parents. However, his parents refer to someone from a Cypriot 'culture' – equating culture with a homogeneous and bounded people – while he links the term 'cultural understanding' to someone with whom he shares commonalities *beyond* this Cypriotness. In fact he expresses strong doubts about whether a potential life partner who shares his 'cultural understanding' could be someone who also shares the 'culture' (i.e. Cypriot) preferred by his parents. This brings me back to my earlier point where I rejected the presumption that 'laypeople' will invariably associate the notion with the essentialist 'old ideas of culture'. Rather, echoing Barth's (2001: 433) reflection, 'culture, then, is not a set term – some natural phenomena that one can consensually describe. [It] is what various people conceive it to be, and [...] people perceive it in different ways for different ends'. Also note how Vasos uses the word *culture* as a noun to describe his parents' essentialist understanding of marriage, whilst avoiding this reification by changing to

the adjective form, *cultural*, when describing his own, more dynamic, views on the subject.

Nicholas, aged 31, also touched upon the generational differences in views on marriage. Unlike some other participants he felt no pressure from his parents to marry someone 'within the community':

No I mean, my mum said, erm, – my dad absolutely nothing – my mum said 'you will have an easier life if you marry within your culture, but that doesn't mean you have to' [...] at the end of the day I could have more in common with a foreigner who grew up in Cyprus than I could with a Cypriot... who's never, like lived abroad. I think culture makes a difference, but there are so many issues that, erm, that make two people tick [...] I mean in my... in my few years... [*grins*] that I've been er... dating... I think I've rarely dated within my community.

Again, in Nicholas' narrative there is the mention of the potential problem of connecting to a Cypriot 'who's never lived abroad'. However, there is also a sense of a local culture developed in Cyprus, a culture that he might share with 'a foreigner', but one who has been living in Cyprus. Hence, Cyprus as a place remains important in the narratives of the British-born Cypriot returnees, albeit in a different way than their parents may have described it and passed on to their children. This again reflects back to my earlier discussion about the connection between an emotional (interpersonal) and physical (located) sense of belonging. In analytical terms, this shows us that inhabiting personal or intimate spaces of belonging with others 'here and now', does not necessarily have to be based on some form of ethnic or national commonality. This echoes an important point stressed by Antonsich (2010a: 653): while scholars have largely focused on the interrelation between the 'here' and 'there' of belonging, 'no studies are available which explore the "here" in all its multiple scales and their connections':

little attention, however, has been given to the basic fact of sharing the same politico-institutional space and its potential in generating a sense of belonging and commitment beyond the idea(l) of a common national identity (Antonsich 2009: 799).

Cyprus becomes a place where new cultural spaces of belonging are developed by a new generation, which is the result of a journey which has been characterised, to a greater or lesser extent, by 'essentialised' Cypriot diasporic experiences as well as a

‘hybridised’ more individualised self. Consequently a pick-and-mix portfolio is constructed (see also Kennedy, 2007: 362), instinctively but also consciously, as Marcus stresses: ‘when one part of my personality clashes with one part of my culture then I just decide what’s best for me’.

The extracts so far have been from participants who can be generally characterised as young, single, well-educated professionals. However, it would be a mistake to describe the development of such a third cultural space of belonging as ‘bohemian’, merely developed in ‘alternative’ scenes and social venues. Those British-born Cypriot returnees who are settled with children, and sometimes married to native Cypriots, also tend to feel more comfortable in the so-called ‘expatriate’ environment; they often work in international settings and their children often attend international schools, which become spaces of interaction, comfort and belonging. Like Margarita, hotel owner and mother of two:

I met a lot of people through nursery ‘cause I put my daughter in an English-speaking nursery so I found a lot of women, like me who are... even, I’ve met an Australian, who’s married to a Cypriot, American married, different nationalities, the actual Cypriots, I can’t say that I, um not many, not many.

Angela, a restaurant owner with two children in their early twenties, expresses a similar feeling:

No matter how Cypriot I thought I was, you need your own people, whether they’re English-British or they’re Cypriot-British, different mentality completely [...] Yeah I can [relate better to them], even our humour’s different, everything you know. And then when they go into the Grammar School, the children, I met friends that I wanted to be with because they were all multicultural [...] and I made a lot of my friends from the school rather than just mixing with um relatives.[...] [T]he people I mix with is the people I want to be with [...] as I said, they’re all, they could be half Cypriot, half Canadian or they could be just Canadian, they are all just mixed. [...] Yeah, I do, I do [have native Cypriots friends], but very different, the way of thinking, and what we talk about when we’re together [...] unless they’re quite, um... worldly, you know they’ve been around, or they’ve been to study out and come back, they’re different, but people that haven’t left [Cyprus] are very different in their way of thinking, yeah...

These women, too, mention the importance of shared experiences, life views, sense of humour and so on – commonalities *beyond* ‘home’ or ‘host’ settings and predefined national, ethnic or cultural boundaries. In fact, in her statement that ‘you need your

own people', Angela does not refer to Cypriots but to people from abroad. Such spaces of interaction and belonging are built, as Kennedy states when describing the social and cultural spaces of skilled migrants in Manchester, 'around a mixture of expatriate, host and other foreign relationships' (2007: 362). My participants make a distinction between the Cypriots who have never 'left' and those who have, identifying the latter as more 'worldly', and hence more comfortable to relate to. Along these lines, those who actually *did* marry native Cypriots, like Margarita and Angela, find it important to emphasise that their partner is not 'a typical Cypriot'.⁶² Angela says that her husband 'had fourteen years in England [which] knocked the very Cypriot out of him, which was good', while Margarita describes her happy marriage to a native Cypriot by stressing 'thank God [I'm happily married] 'cause I married a modern person, I married someone who is um, he's quite unique, he's not the typical Cypriot'.

6.5 AGENCY, CHOICES AND 'CYPRIOTNESS' IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'NEW THIRD CULTURAL SPACES OF BELONGING' IN CYPRUS

I don't think you can ever become totally assimilated, because there is the question of what are you being assimilated into [...] what is it to be a Cypriot? [...] When I say I'm Cypriot I don't mean it in any nationalistic way (Apostolos, 48).

I do believe I feel Cypriot... but I... I don't feel Cypriot as a Cypriot, if you know what I mean, it's really weird (Angela, 41).

This section focuses on the meaning of 'Cypriotness'. The above quote, in which Angela wants to make a point that she *does* feel Cypriot, but struggles to define it at the same time, perfectly captures the challenges involved with feelings of belonging (or not) towards 'a culture', 'a people', 'a place'. Apostolos' statement captures the complexities of 'assimilation' and challenges the idea that for a person to belong s/he has to assimilate to the language, traditions, values, behaviour and religion of the dominant group (Yuval-Davis 2006: 209).

⁶² Those who are divorced from a native Cypriot tend to put their ex-spouses in a more negative light when referring to their 'Cypriotness', but this could most likely be understood as a 'natural' reaction, or a way to 'explain' their 'failed' marriage.

So far we have looked at the various feelings of 'home', 'self' and 'belonging' experienced by British-born Cypriots who have returned to Cyprus. Furthermore, I have discussed the unique space of belonging within which their lives in Cyprus are developed and experienced. There is a difference, however, between the migrants portrayed in this thesis and those in other studies describing 'third cultures' (like Cockburn 2002; Kennedy 2007; Samson 2003). Unlike the informants (both adults and 'third-culture-kids' or 'TCKs') in those studies, who migrated to a 'new' country to which they had no ancestral connections, the participants in my study returned to their parents' country of birth. As I noted in Chapter 1, this phenomenon has been variously referred to as 'ancestral return' (King 1986: 6-7), 'ethnic return' (Tsuda 2003), 'roots migration' (Wessendorf 2007), or 'counter-diasporic migration' (King and Christou 2008, 2010). Hence the understanding of Cyprus and a sense of 'Cypriotness' in this whole process should not be ignored. However, it is important to start from the 'bottom'; in other words to take the overall life-view of the second-generation returnee as a starting point, within which their everyday experiences can be grounded. The new cultural space they inhabit, which has sprung from their – shared – story and migration history, is dramatically different from their parents' and hence should be appreciated as such.

Of course there are many stories and each is unique. In some life-stories a stronger emphasis was put on 'essentialised' views of Cyprus and 'Cypriotness' (as 'received' from the family and the 'community'), whilst others were more 'self-scripted' and adopted already early on in the narrative a strong focus on the 'hybrid' or 'fluid' aspects of their identities and sense of belonging. However, 'essentialised' and 'non-essentialised' perceptions are not mutually exclusive. As captured in the earlier example from Dina's extended narrative, notions of the 'essentialised' and 'non-essentialised' home and self are negotiated throughout one's life – and throughout the narration process – and both contribute to the creation of a space of belonging in Cyprus today. Likewise, being part of a 'third cultural space' (not Cypriot, not British, but also something more than just 'in-between'), and being part of a more 'essentialised' Cypriot space (for example the extended family), are not mutually

exclusive either. In an earlier excerpt Marcus⁶³ described the socio-cultural space to which he feels he belongs and which he shares with people from various national and ethnic backgrounds, rather than with 'Cypriots'. Here we see how this space does not exclude the more 'essentialised' idea of Cypriotness (such as the 'homeliness' of the Cypriot family), but that he finds a way of balancing it which suits him as 'Marcus':

[Going on holiday to Cyprus as a child], seeing my mother, talking to her sisters and her brothers, it did feel very much like home... it still does, I think as you grow older you realise that... I mean, it is about the people rather than the place, so if you are identifying in a certain way with a certain group of people, while you are in that place, it's home for you... It still is, I mean I like going to my aunts and uncles now, it does feel homely, and secure... erm, but for me, like I said, [that's] the ambivalence of being [of mixed background]. The good thing is that in my line of work, all the people around me are bilingual, or multilingual, if I can't think of a word in Greek I'll just swap to another language. It's more of a problem when I speak to my family, and we're trying to have a discussion about something, er you know, more important than food, but like politics or religion, and I trip up and I can't express myself properly, that really frustrates me [...] I always felt more Cypriot than English when I was in the UK, I actually feel less Cypriot now than I did then [...] Now that I'm here, apart from the Greek food that I sometimes have at my family's house, I don't listen to any Greek music, I can't stand it, I don't listen to any of the Greek music stations, erm, do I feel Cypriot?... no, I just feel like [Marcus], I decided that's the way I got to be.

These migrants create a space made up by components to which they feel they belong, forming a unique whole which is characterised by *their* time, place, views and experiences. For them 'Cypriotness' is not exclusively shaped by the Cypriot nation, the history, traditions or their parents' migration experiences. Rather, their affiliations, relations and emotional self-attributions *beyond* such essentialised understandings of 'Cypriotness' form new spaces of home and belonging, which are based on a variety of experiences and views, shared with a variety of people, yet located *in* Cyprus, emphasising the importance of focusing on the 'here' in all its multiple scales, rather than on the interrelation between the 'here' and 'there' of belonging.

In one of the earlier extracts, when discussing friendships and partnerships, Nicholas stressed the likelihood, and desirability, of finding a non-Cypriot life partner in Cyprus.

⁶³ To remind the reader, Marcus was born to a Greek-Cypriot mother and a South-Asian father, but his parents divorced when he was very young and his father moved back to his home country, so he and his sister were mainly raised by their Cypriot mother.

However, the fact that he emphasises the importance of having *shared* experiences as ‘foreigners’ living *in* Cyprus highlights the significance of the location where this common culture is developed and lived: Cyprus. Like many other British-born Cypriots, the spaces which Nicholas inhabits in his work, social and leisure life are shared with a diversity of people and based on common life-views and experiences, rather than on shared ethnic or national backgrounds. This, however, does not stand at odds with his involvement in Cypriot society today. On the contrary, all the ‘ingredients’ of his life contribute to a kind of Cypriotness to which *he* belongs, which feels right for him. His understanding of self and belonging in Cyprus is the result of his journey, which was a personal venture. Despite having been brought up by ‘typical’ Cypriot parents in the UK and having moved to Cyprus at the age of twelve, it was only well into his adulthood, and after having attended university in the UK, that he decided to ‘embrace’ his Cypriotness, albeit in his own way. Here are some excerpts taken from the ‘journey’ described in his narrative:

[I was brought up in the] Greek community in Liverpool, you know, weddings, Greek school on Sundays, and... didn’t really like any of that. Erm, hated the weddings as well... [...] But then on Sunday it’s Cypriot Day, where... we wouldn’t really go to church because my parents aren’t religious, but we would meet Cypriot families, you know, eat and drink [...] [...] And we went to Greek school but that was *[makes a dismissive gesture with his hand]*.

[...]

[I] finished university, that was when the actual process started of deciding... [...] this kind of constructive deciding what I thought I wanted to be, who I was [...] so I got a job here, I started renting a house here, I started speaking the language more, and being involved in the press, I got into local issues much more, I knew who were the ministers, the deputies, the parliamentarians, I could discuss in a local coffee shop with anyone any of the issues... and that makes you feel more involved.

[...]

[M]y school [in Cyprus] was mostly foreigners, erm, all my family [...] all speak good English, and they would speak to us in English [...] No need to speak Greek here, Cyprus, anywhere you go [...], you go to a kiosk, or coffee shop, or... everyone speaks English, I just never bothered. Until I realised like ‘hang on a minute, how can you call yourself Cypriot and not read the newspaper or not talk to people...’ So it was a conscious effort to change. [...] I’d like to make more, more friends, Cypriot friends, ‘cause all my friends seem to be international....

I value my own experience because... it's broken many many moulds, because I've been forced to think and renegotiate meaning structures, you know on so many issues... so I've been forced to think and double think.

[...]

The more politicised I get, because I am, I have become more politicised, I'm getting older, like now I'm going to vote in the elections for the first time, you know, I've been living here for years and this is the first time I've chosen to vote in the elections... So I feel more like I'm part of the process. It's like in a sense I'm allowing myself to have some belonging... which is fun, it's nice, it's nice.

As we can see in Nicholas' narrative, the various stages and experiences of his life – such as the (sometimes ambivalent) feelings towards the 'essentialised' Cypriot culture of this childhood, the hybridised social and cultural spaces he developed in Cyprus, and his own reflections as an adult – have contributed to a unique sense of belonging in Cyprus today. The last sentence of the above extract was also the concluding sentence of his narrative – he *allows* himself to belong – which resonates with the notion of 'elective belonging', in that a deliberate decision to 'making a go' at living somewhere, contributes to a positive sense of belonging. According to Savage et al. (2005), a sense of belonging (in their words 'elective belonging') is generated when the chosen location of residence is congruent with the individual's life story. However, as shown through the narratives, we have to keep in mind that this kind of 'elective belonging' is not simply a matter of rational choice, but rather embedded in the personal journey through various stages of (un)belonging and experiences of 'home', exercised within specific social contexts and linked to the positionality of actors within these contexts (cf. Anthias 2001).

My analysis reveals not only the need for further research into the existence of spaces of belonging within alternative, post-identity socio-spatial settings – which is particularly relevant in a context of increasingly culturally diverse societies – but also into how such spaces draw on, overlap *and* co-exist alongside more 'traditional' local communities. Hence, following Antonsich (2010a: 653), I would suggest that 'rather than envisioning a passage from territorialized to de-territorialized forms of belonging, as some scholars have too simplistically advocated, it seems more plausible to think of

contemporary societies as characterized by the co-presence of a plurality of forms of belonging’.

6.6 FEMALE RETURNEES IN THEIR FIFTIES: SOME DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

In line with their parents’ migration history, the ages of most of the participants in this study ranged between late 20s, and mid 40s; this temporality and cohort effect is important in terms of the common ‘traditions’ and stage of ‘development’ of Cyprus and the UK Cypriot community throughout their lives. A small number of the participants, however, were in their late forties or older. I do not want to generalise the views of these ‘older’ participants because of the diversity of their experiences, and some do resemble the descriptions given so far. I must note, however, that there was a minority whose feelings towards their ‘journeys’ were notably different, whose reflection of ‘today’ was one of disappointment rather than empowerment. Their voices are significant and should be touched upon too.

It is fair to say that particularly the lives of the women of this age group seemed to be more affected by a more ‘essentialised’ Cypriotness during their upbringing and adult lives, which they experienced as a burden at times. Though, like the younger participants, these women’s friendships and social lives seem to take place in international spheres, the positive and open ‘pick-and-mix’ culture seemed less prevalent in their stories. Rather, they seem bogged down by family and community pressure, and by ‘the Cypriot life-style’. Amalia and Celia, who are both around the age of 50, are two women who returned to Cyprus a little over twenty years ago with their husbands whom they had married ‘through introduction’. I spoke to the women, both teachers, on different occasions. They have never met one another but their stories are remarkably similar. Unlike the younger participants, they hardly visited Cyprus as children, and still very much view the UK as ‘home’, contrasting the other participants who described home as a more ‘worldly’ space of belonging. In fact, when I entered Celia’s study in her house in Cyprus her computer displayed an estate agent’s website showing images of village cottages in the UK. When I asked her about it she laughed and said ‘I’m always looking at houses in England! [...] It’s *home*. I like the freedom in

England. I like being accepted. I like going out, chatting with other people [...] I'd like to live in a nice little cottage, in a nice village, in England, yeah'. She thinks this will never happen though, because her native Cypriot husband (who she too described as 'not really a typical Cypriot guy') does not have any intention of leaving Cyprus. Amalia also dreams of 'returning [to the UK] and retiring in a small green village'. In these women's narratives (and others their age) the impact of patriarchy on their current lives surfaces in a much stronger way than in the narratives of those who are younger. In fact, Celia and Amalia described how their younger siblings – both girls and boys – were allowed (relatively) more freedom than they were themselves. Though one of the reasons these women moved to Cyprus at the time was for a safer and better family life, family pressure, particularly from in-laws, appeared to cause quite a bit of rupture in Cyprus. Here Amalia describes how she tried to negotiate the different roles she was confronted with when arriving to Cyprus:

So outside you're somebody else and you come home as somebody else, the same feelings you experience here with more pressure, because here you're a Cypriot female, and you have your family and you have to be a good daughter-in-law, a good neighbour, a good friend, the emphasis put upon those social statements and social statuses are quite frightening to somebody like myself who was anonymous in London. I did my work, I loved it, I came home and I was a Cypriot woman trying to live in a Cypriot society as closely as I could, but I was British with British standards, British education, my friends were English um, and so yes my identity crisis came when I arrived here, when I did not want my family members to visit me unless I asked them to, I did not expect um, my husbands' family to interfere with my decisions and I didn't want to live with them I, we didn't wish to go and have um, lunch every Sunday, so little things that are habitual, the rituals I objected to and so did my husband and you realise that there are statements attached to your behaviour and then you think 'I don't belong here, I really cannot tolerate this', it's not because I'm a difficult person, I've not lived this culture before, where is that beautiful romantic culture that I was told about?

When asked why they decided to stay in Cyprus when it proved to be so hard, she explained 'well, I wanted to be fair to my partner and my husband felt he needed more than just a year to make the decision so I agreed to stay'. Then, as time moved on, she learned how to cope with daily life and actually managed to create an international social circle which provided her with a sense of belonging:

You know we said 'ok we'll try another year'; by the third year of course we created the school so we were very busy forgetting the problems we were encountering in the local shop, in the local cinema, in the local office, you know er, we seemed to just

ignore and push that aside and just carried on living on our own, within the small community you create. I guess that's logical anywhere, you create your own environment, a community that you feel that you belong to, and you're happy with that.

When asked if she feels Cypriot today she replies 'oh no not at all, I've decided that I should be universal! No I do not feel Cypriot, I do not feel I belong after so many years. [...] That is completely, utterly out of the question [...] No I don't feel that I reflect anything that this society here demands from me, the culture itself'. Unlike the narratives we have discussed earlier, which revealed a variety of new cultural spaces localised in Cyprus, Amalia associates Cyprus with an essentialised culture of which she does not want to be part, to conclude that her sense of home and belonging is not to be found in a particular place, but rather 'a peace within':

Bottom line really is how you feel inside I think, that secret is how you feel inside, you know finding your own peace, harmony within yourself, because whichever society you live in you cannot truly belong, you don't really belong in a British society because there were things that I objected to there, and I was not part of consciously and unconsciously, but generally I think that if we could all learn to find our own peace then you belong anywhere, 'cause people are the same everywhere, live with limitations and gifts and talents and it depends on... because if I was to go back to London today and be working there and living I'm sure I would be missing aspects of my world here, because my world here [is what] I've made it so that I'm comfortable in it.

What these 'older' female participants do have in common with others discussed in this chapter, is the international 'third cultural' space they inhabit. Amalia described the 'small community' she has established through the school she runs, which includes parents, colleagues and friends from a wide variety of national and ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, she touches upon a feeling of peace and belonging that can only be found 'within oneself', rather than within certain national or ethnic boundaries. However, women like Amalia and Celia, and others I spoke to – both formally and informally – in Cyprus and the UK, seem to associate Cyprus with the 'essentialised', patriarchal and stifling Cypriotness they experienced throughout their childhood and upon their return, which appears to dominate their narratives and reflections on Cypriot society. Unlike their younger peers, who emphasise their sense of home and belonging found in a new contemporary Cypriot space (and beyond), these women's accounts tend to emphasise their sense of *not belonging* to the 'traditional' Cypriot

society, which seems to have a stronger impact on their lives than the belonging they may experience within their ‘small community’ of international friends and colleagues.

6.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has focused on the participants’ feelings of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ – namely how their sense of ‘who they are’ and ‘where home is’ was experienced at the moment of narration, and how their return has influenced these experiences and feelings – privileging the second generation’s unique articulations of *belonging*, as shaped by *their* views and experiences *today*, over the more ‘traditional’ classifications of identity and the essentialised notions of ‘culture’. This shift in focus reveals the *new* social spaces and relations that second-generation returnees form *beyond* primordial cultural and ethnic boundaries. In section 6.3 I developed my own terminology for these new social spaces and social relations carved out by second-generation returnees, calling them ‘third cultural spaces of belonging’. I see these ‘third-culture spaces’ as ‘particular’ – unique to the British-Cypriot second-generation-returnee experience, based both on the protagonists’ ‘ethnic’ and family upbringing in Britain, on the absorption too of some ‘British’ values, and on their geographical location and experiences now in Cyprus.⁶⁴

I am aware that one of the problems of using a terminology including the words ‘third space’ is that there can be confusions between different authors who have used it in different contexts. Many scholars have emphasised the fluidity, flexibility, hybridity, in-betweenness, malleability, and unpredictability associated with notions of a third space – across curriculum studies (Wang 2004), cultural studies (Bhabha 1994), geographic studies (Soja 1996), architecture (Lefebvre 1991), and other disciplines. On the one hand, my notion of ‘third cultural spaces of belonging’ corresponds quite closely to Bhabha’s notion of ‘third space’, as it complies with its principles of

⁶⁴ But this is not to say that instructive comparisons could not be drawn with other geo-historical second-generation-returnee settings. Within the AHRC project, we have started to do this with Greek-Americans and Greek-Germans (see King et al. 2009, 2011 on childhood visits ‘home’) and there are some parallels, which I have noted from time to time, with Wessendorf’s research on returning second-generation Swiss-Italians (2007) and with the more extensive literature on the Caribbean (see, inter alia, Conway and Potter 2009; Phillips and Potter 2006, 2009; Potter and Phillips 2009; Reynolds 2008).

hybridisation and is critical of essentialist positions of identity and conceptualisations of 'original culture'. At the same time there is a difference, which links back to my earlier argument emphasising the importance of focusing on the various scales of belonging 'here and now'. Hence, although I take issue with the concepts of 'culture' or 'identity' as bounded and static, I equally contest the notion that migrants' lives and practices – at least in the case of my study – take place in an imaginary 'third space' (Bhabha 1990; Soja 1996) abstractly located 'in-between' national territories. My formulation suggests that the 'locality' of global processes (Cyprus in this case), where such new forms of belonging are constructed, needs to be taken into account, rather than presenting these migrants as deterritorialised, free-floating people who are 'neither here nor there' (cf. Guarnizo and Smith 2006). Furthermore, although Bhabha emphasises hybridity when describing 'his' notion of the third space, this hybridity stills seems to rely on backgrounds of ethnicity, nationality etc. The third cultural spaces of belonging proposed here tend to shift away from such notions to actual experience.

As emphasised earlier, there are many stories and each story is unique, as are the narrators and their ways of dealing with the various events and emotions in life. Hence, not all patterns discussed in this chapter were evenly manifested in the various narratives discussed in this thesis. Nevertheless, I suggest that this chapter's insight into the lives and feelings of British-born individuals of Cypriot parentage who have moved to Cyprus, indicates the importance of defying disciplinary confines when trying to understand issues of 'home' and 'belonging'. Merely the various ways in which 'home' and 'belonging' are understood and narrated in the course of each individual life-story justifies such a 'post-disciplinary' approach. Secondly, the findings stress how migrants' spaces of 'home' and 'belonging' are created beyond predefined national, ethnic and cultural boundaries, and are built around a mixture of home, expatriate and foreign relationships. The mixture of features combined by these individuals – resulting from their migration stories, parentage and other experiences – challenges the view which considers the world to be a mosaic of separate cultures bounding the ethnographic object (Kearney 1995: 556). Rather, through shared experiences, knowledge, interests and values, *third cultural spaces of belonging* are created. These

spaces are formed around personal and social relations which draw upon a variety of sources, from being from the same life-cycle cohort to common interests in arts, travel, lifestyle etc.

Yet, for these British-born Cypriots, being part of such a 'third cultural space' and being part of a 'Cypriot space' are not mutually exclusive. Rather, these migrants create a space made up by a range of components to which they feel they belong, forming a unique whole which is characterised by *their* time, place, views and experiences. Throughout their lives, and throughout the narration process, the participants negotiated notions of the 'essentialised' and 'non-essentialised' 'home', and both contributed to the creation of a new space of belonging in Cyprus today – a space which is characterised by its 'hybrid' nature, yet located or 'grounded' (in Cyprus, or in the cosmopolitan spaces of Nicosia), rather than free-floating. Furthermore, many – though not all – participants expressed a sense of self-pride and victory, when reflecting on their life journeys and describing their sense of belonging today.

Hence, these 'third cultural spaces of belonging' seem to be substantially different from transnational fields, which commonly refer to multiple activities and ties – economic, political, national, cultural and emotional – spanned *across* national borders, yet often maintained by individuals or groups with common ethno-national backgrounds (Basch et al. 1994; Portes et al. 1999). Rather they are embedded *in* Cypriot society, yet appear to be more 'cosmopolitan' than some transnational relations (see also hooks 1991). This does not mean that the participants are not involved in transnational or diasporic activities. Many do maintain allegiances 'here' and 'there', and are part of networks which travel across national borders. However, the new cultural spaces of belonging discussed in this chapter are influenced by a variety of cultures 'borrowing' from each other – blurring the question of who inhabits whose space – yet they are localised in Cyprus, which results in a new kind of 'Cypriotness' experienced by the British-born Cypriots in Cyprus today. However, this 'Cypriotness' is shared with a variety of people, some of whom are from Cypriot parentage, whilst others are not. This challenges the idea of a 'Cypriot culture', which

assumes a natural association of a culture ('Cypriot culture'), a people ('Cypriots'), and a place ('Cyprus').⁶⁵

To a certain extent the above coincides with Brah's (1996) notion of 'diaspora space', which rejects the idea of an inherent 'nativeness' in any diaspora discourse in favour of a space that crosses boundaries of people, culture, capital and commodities, allowing new forms of belonging and otherness to be appropriated and contested. A diaspora space, she argues, is not only inhabited by immigrants and their descendants, but also by those perceived to be 'native' inhabitants of the host society. Hence, rather than simply focusing on the 'majority's' effect on 'minority' groups, she highlights the reciprocity in exchanges that occur between the two, influencing not only the immigrants but also the host society's formation. Thus, in Brah's conception, it seems, the negotiation of 'Cypriotness' arises from such dialectical exchanges between the immigrants and the natives in Cyprus. However, my participants do not truly fit either one of these groups. Neither true 'natives' nor total 'strangers', sharing personal and professional spaces locally with individuals from a wide range of national/ethnic backgrounds, these individuals not only blur the boundaries of who inhabits whose space, but also of 'the indigenous' versus 'the migrant'. After all, despite not having been born locally, these individuals are the 'co-founders' of a new 'home-grown' space of belonging.

This chapter demonstrates that new migrant cultures are created that cannot be reduced, or simply understood in terms of, their association with either their 'host' or 'home' society, nor can they be examined through traditional classifications of identity. At the same time, however, these migrant cultures are anything but placeless. Location

⁶⁵ Prompted by Gupta and Ferguson's (1992: 12) criticism of the term 'American culture', as it provides no clear understanding of what that means whilst being based on the assumption that it is 'a natural association of a culture ("American culture"), a people ("Americans"), and a place ("the United States of America")'. Moreover, my discussion here, and throughout this chapter, of 'Cypriotness', 'Cypriot culture', and indeed the very notion of 'Cyprus', has been led by my Greek-Cypriot interlocutors towards a (usually unspoken) assumption of 'Greek-Cypriotness', 'Greek-Cypriot culture' etc. This is clearly deeply problematic in the political-historical context of Cyprus, for it ignores the Turkish-Cypriot element. Although any deep analysis of the problem of bi-communal relations in Cyprus is beyond the scope of this thesis (I sketched a few background remarks in Chapter 2), my attempt to redress the balance in the context of migration and return is contained in the next chapter.

is important, as these migrants define themselves through their relations (feelings of belonging) to actual and metaphorical places (or spaces). However, rather than guided by the rather well-established view that depicts cultures and identities as bounded and discrete, these dynamics can be best appreciated through an experiential, grounded presentation of migrants' lived realities, and the associated feelings of 'home and belonging'. Undoubtedly, second-generation returnees are not the only migrants that inhabit spaces of belonging which undermine traditional and primordial affiliations. Research is needed in many other settings and groups in order to explore how such 'third cultural spaces of belonging' may exist or flourish in various contexts. I elaborate further on this comparative potential in my concluding chapter. Before that, in my final empirical chapter, I turn to a much closer comparative dimension, that of the Turkish Cypriots who share this common, yet divided, Cypriot 'home' space.

Chapter 7

British-born Turkish-Cypriot ‘Returnees’

7.1 INTRODUCTION

From the outset of my study I believed there to be good reasons to include a small sample of British-born Turkish-Cypriot returnees. Firstly, the migration experiences of the Greek Cypriots and those of the Turkish Cypriots are inextricably intertwined. Thus, the question arises of whether we should speak of one or two diasporas (see for example Bertrand 2004). The fact that there is no simple answer to this question shows that, at least in my opinion, one cannot conduct an in-depth investigation of one ‘group’ without reasonably including the ‘other’. Second, the inclusion of a sample of British-born Turkish-Cypriot returnees adds a valuable comparative dimension to my main investigation, as well as providing an interesting small case study of its own accord. And third, I felt a personal ‘moral duty’, in any study based *in* Cyprus, to include both the two main ethnic groups who call this island ‘home’, a feeling that was only strengthened while spending time in Cyprus and interacting with Turkish Cypriots. Hence, in addition to my fieldwork with British-born Greek Cypriots, I also collected ethnographic data amongst second-generation Turkish-Cypriot returnees, albeit on a smaller scale. Subsequently, I decided to dedicate this final empirical chapter of my thesis to the return experiences of British-born Turkish Cypriots, rather than try to interweave the Turkish-Cypriot data with the previous chapters on the Greek Cypriots, which would, I think, have been rather ‘messy’ and fragmented. Therefore, this chapter should be seen as an exploratory piece of research, based on a relatively small (albeit thoroughly examined) sample of a unique, and unresearched, group of returnees, which I hope will not only add a useful comparative angle to the main sample of British-born Greek Cypriots, but also serve as a gateway for further research.

During my fieldwork period I spent a significant amount of time in Northern Cyprus, where I collected 12 life-narratives, attended social events and conducted (often

spontaneously) small focus-group discussions. Data were collected mainly in urban locations (Nicosia, Morphou and Kyrenia)⁶⁶ but also in some outer semi-rural suburbs and involved roughly equal numbers of men and women, varying in age from their late teens to late 40s. In fact, on various occasions (in Nicosia) interactions did not take place in a clear-cut Greek-Cypriot or Turkish-Cypriot setting, but within more hybrid spaces, identified in the previous chapter as ‘third cultural spaces’, occupied by individuals from a variety of ethno-national backgrounds, including residents from both ‘sides’. The opening of the Ledra Street/Lokmaçi crossing in Old Nicosia – the first one directly connecting the residential and commercial areas of the same municipality – which took place during my fieldwork, on 3 April 2008, played more than a minor role in this. Besides making it a lot easier for me to travel back and forth between the two sides of town, this highly symbolic opening brought about a new and diversified pedestrian traffic in the commercial centre of Nicosia, revitalising and changing the face of old Nicosia, both in the north and in the south. The opening has increased the contact between the two major ethnic communities of the island and broadened opportunities of interaction, in the shops, restaurants and coffee-shops on both sides of the Green Line (Jacobson et al. 2009). It was particularly those social settings, like sharing a meal, enjoying a laid-back Cypriot coffee session or attending a musical event, which provided me with valuable insights into the new everyday life of this ‘re-mixing’ of ‘Greek’ and ‘Turkish’ Cyprus, at least within this old-city micro-space. Only time, and some significant political developments yet to be achieved, will reveal whether this re-connection of the two separate ‘halves’ of Cyprus will progress beyond this city-centre pedestrian space.

This chapter will loosely follow a chronological line, in accordance with the way the participants narrated their stories. The first section provides some background information based on previous research on the Turkish Cypriots in the UK, followed by an impression of the participants’ experiences whilst growing up in the UK, as well as their memories of childhood holidays to Cyprus. This is followed by a discussion on their motives for return to Cyprus, which feeds into sections 7.4 and 7.5, which review

⁶⁶ I use the (Anglicised) ‘Greek’ names of these places rather than the lesser-known Turkish ones (respectively Lefkoşa, Güzelyurt, Girne).

everyday life on the island and the consequent feelings of home and belonging. The final section examines the participants' willingness, and ability, to act as agents of change in the parental homeland, Cyprus.

Like the more extensive discussion of the British-born Greek-Cypriot case, this chapter highlights those themes that 'naturally' surfaced in the life-narratives of the Turkish-Cypriot participants as vital elements in their return experiences and accounts of belonging. The account demonstrates that there are significant overlaps with the experiences of their Greek-Cypriot counterparts: from early memories of childhood holidays to Cyprus, with frequent references to sun, sea, family warmth and freedom, to more recent experiences in their adult lives, such as the search for a better quality of life and the importance of an 'international' social circle. However, there are also some important differences. Most striking was how references to 'the Greek Cypriots', 'the Cyprus problem' and 'the division' surfaced throughout the narratives of the British-born Turkish Cypriots. Mentions of Greek-Cypriot childhood friends and family acquaintances would frequently arise in participants' accounts of growing up in the UK, and memories of roadblocks and political tensions were mixed with the idyllic recollections of holidays to the island. Also when narrating their experiences as adults living in Cyprus today, the international isolation of Northern Cyprus (and its consequences) and the actual physical experiences in recent years of crossing the Green Line in everyday life were central to the lived experiences of the participants. This awareness would often lead participants to reflect on their potential contribution to social and political change in Cyprus – all elements that were far less present in the Greek-Cypriot narratives.

7.2 BRITISH-BORN TURKISH CYPRIOTS IN THE UK

Very little has been written about the Turkish Cypriots in the UK – even less than on Greek Cypriots. When exploring the limited research undertaken on the former, their 'invisibility' in Britain seems to be their most prominent characteristic. Despite being

relatively substantial in size,⁶⁷ the Turkish-Cypriot community has a very low profile compared to other migrant communities in the overall context of a multicultural Britain (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Robins and Askoy 2001). Both Ladbury (1977) and Oakley (1979) have provided some useful insights into the UK Turkish-Cypriot community, but these studies are rather dated. Furthermore, references made to the Turkish Cypriots in Britain are often reduced to the – accurate yet limited – observation that ‘Turkish Cypriots share many of the experiences of migration, settlement and positioning in Britain with Greek Cypriots’ (Anthias 1992: 9). For instance, mentions are made of parallel commonalities between the two communities in terms of kinship networks and family ties (e.g. Oakley 1979: 16-17) and the relatively amicable relations between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots in Britain (e.g. Constantinides 1977: 276-277). Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) stresses how looking at the less resourceful diaspora political groups, rather than mainly focusing on ‘the success-stories of diaspora politics’, may render the Turkish-Cypriot community in Britain more visible. Drawing on her in-depth study of Turkish Cypriots in London, she analyses the political fragmentation which characterises the interactions between homeland movements and political agents, both in the UK and in Northern Cyprus.

Kevin Robins and Asu Aksoy’s (2001) important paper has brought the Turkish Cypriots, particularly those born in the UK, more to the foreground in the British context. Through their analysis of the ‘sense of cultural positioning’ of British-born Turkish-Cypriot women ‘as they live their lives in London’, they suggest to step away from official and popular discourses of ‘identity’ and ‘community’, which portray the identity of Turkish Cypriots in Britain as ‘fixed’, representing a homogeneous and singular community. Instead, they stress that the Turkish Cypriots are negotiating between a wide range of different cultural positions (in colonial and contemporary Britain, in Turkey, in pre- and post-divided Cyprus and in relation to the Greek Cypriots in Britain),

⁶⁷ Although estimates differ, it would be fair to say that the Turkish-Cypriot community in the UK is at least half the size of the number of Turkish Cypriots residing in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Bertrand (2004) estimates that 60,000-90,000 Turkish-Cypriots (first and second generation) live in Britain compared to 90,000-100,000 who live in Cyprus. Østergaard-Nielsen (2004) gives a number of 120,000 in the UK compared to 164,000 in the TRNC. She points out, however, that these numbers are estimates based on rather dated information given by the representatives of the TRNC and the Turkish Embassy in London. Furthermore, these figures are contested by Greek Cypriots and their supporters, who claim that it is in the interest of Turkey and the TRNC to keep figures as high as possible.

which calls for new perspectives on culture and belonging and a 'shift from identity to experience'. Drawing on Ulrich Beck (2000: 90), they stress the importance of the changing cultural, political and biographical self-awareness of a group of people who 'no longer move or locate themselves in a space of exclusive nation-states but in a space of world society instead' (Robins and Aksoy 2001: 708) – an issue which is central in my own thesis.

Another study that focuses on British-born Turkish-Cypriot women is by Tözün Issa (2006). Through observations of everyday conversations within a small group of five women at a London hair salon, she examined the changing patterns of language choice, code switching and borrowing, and the consequent emergence of a new mixed language, reflecting the experiences of those living in an urban, multicultural setting. Overall, there seems to be a growing body of research on the multilingual practices of the Turkish-speaking population in the UK, particularly those of young people (see for example: Issa 2005; Lytra and Baraç 2008; 2009). However, when it comes to their everyday lived experiences in Britain, the Turkish Cypriots are largely left unaccounted for (Robins and Aksoy 2001; Solomos and Woodhams 1995). It is not my intention, nor the overall aim of my thesis, to overcome this gap. What I will try to do, by drawing on my modest sample of narratives of British-born Turkish-Cypriot returnees, is to give an impression of their experiences of growing up in the UK, in order to provide a background for the main discussion of this chapter: their motives for return and their consequent experiences *in* Cyprus, a topic that has not been previously discussed in any of the literature.

Robins and Aksoy (2001: 690) suggest various reasons for the low profile of the Turkish Cypriots in the UK, which has rendered them 'simply inconspicuous'. Firstly, they have been overshadowed by a number of other migrant groups, both in the wider context of multicultural Britain (by the larger and more high-profile Black and Asian immigrant communities) as well as in a more particular context (by the more prominent migration of Turks and Kurds from 'mainland' Turkey). Furthermore, and in the context of the latter, Turkish Cypriots, having developed a sense of affinity with British culture during the colonial period and a strong desire to be accepted by the British, tended to regard

themselves as more ‘progressive’ and more ‘integrated’ into the British way of life than their counterparts from ‘mainland’ Turkey.

The above was demonstrated in the account of 41-year-old journalist Rowan, who recalled how, whilst growing up in London, his Turkish-Cypriot side ‘was a hidden, and undefined part of [his] character’. Rowan’s father left Cyprus in 1960, with the aspiration to get educated in the UK, build a life and ‘immerse himself in British culture’ – he ended up establishing a successful business, married a British woman and up to this day has no intentions of returning to Cyprus:

We grew up in London, not knowing Turkish at all. I mean, my dad’s English is very good [...]. He’d been to an English school [in Cyprus], and he knew about Shakespeare, and he immersed himself in British culture when he got there, and he aspired to be British, much more than kind of glorifying or celebrating his Cypriot background, and therefore when he went to England he didn’t really seek out Cypriots [...] So yeah we grew up as English kids, not speaking Turkish at home [...] I was kept apart from language, and I used to nag my dad to teach me and he would say ‘oh you don’t need it’, erm, ‘I don’t have the patience to teach you anyway’, so yeah I had to do all of that myself later on...

Interestingly, despite having been brought up devoid of Cypriot ‘culture’ in the UK or without having been ‘fed’ the parental dream of return, from his first holiday to Cyprus, at the age of five, Rowan developed a profound affection for his father’s country of birth, and knew that one day he would return:

Until we came to Cyprus [for holiday] I had no idea, but as soon as we came I fell in love with the culture and the people, and my relatives, and the village, and the animals, and all this stuff, yeah I viewed this place as some kind of paradise – I spent my whole childhood with the assumption, and the knowledge, that I would return to Cyprus [...] Which is what I did [...] This was my holy grail, you know, this is where I wanted to be. I remember walking to school [in the UK] in the pouring rain, everything was grey, the clothes you wore were grey [...] everything was hard and rough and wet and cold, and in my mind there was this very nice and sunny, yellow and blue place where people were very friendly and kind, you know, and had time for you, and I thought that everything I wanted was here...

Like Rowan, 35-year-old educator Esra was born in London and ‘grew up not feeling very Turkish or Cypriot’. In fact, she remembers that she ‘tried very hard *not* to be’. However, in contrast to Rowan’s experience, *her* Turkish-Cypriot mother actually *did* try to teach her Turkish – ‘but I just wasn’t interested’, Esra recalls. Neither did her

childhood visits to Cyprus, however enjoyable they were, incite a feeling of ‘belonging’, let alone a desire to move to the island one day (that she did return will be ‘explained’ later). Nevertheless, she always felt slightly different from the English children and her closest friends at school *were* Cypriot, albeit *Greek*-Cypriot rather than Turkish-Cypriot:

I didn’t have any Turkish friends at school; I did have a lot of Greek-Cypriot friends actually. [...] You’re brought up slightly differently [than the English children] maybe they are a bit more protective, or you know the family becomes more important [...] When I was in England I didn’t [feel British], I just didn’t know what it was, I just felt that I was different, *here* I think my Englishness comes out more.

Participants’ recollections of growing up in the UK showed that the Turkish-Cypriot element – if present at all – was very much a ‘family affair’, rather than something that was executed, or experienced, within a wider community beyond the walls of the private homes. As 21-year-old London-born student Emre put it: ‘the only Cypriot culture we saw was when we were at home, with our own family’. In a sense, and as stressed by Robins and Aksoy (2001: 690), it appears that, for the first-generation Turkish-Cypriot migrants in the UK, ‘the expression of their own particular culture and identity was not a major concern or issue for them’. Rather, many of them chose to adopt a more pragmatic position in order to accommodate ‘the demands of their new British circumstances’. Furthermore, their relations with the Greek-Cypriot migrants were, in the context of London, quite amicable, and keeping a low profile in terms of cultural or political identity was a way to keep it that way (Robins and Aksoy 2001: 691). These amicable relationships with the Greek Cypriots appeared to have extended beyond the first generation, as many of my participants counted Greek Cypriots amongst their best friends while growing up in the UK. At the same time, however, it was the younger, British-raised, generation of Turkish Cypriots who showed greater political involvement and reflexivity with respect to their Turkish-Cypriot background, and got engaged in debates and activities in order to raise more understanding towards the Turkish Cypriots and give the UK community a voice. This development was demonstrated in the narrative of 48-year-old school teacher Beran, whose parents moved from Cyprus to the UK for economic reasons, when she was six months old:

Of course there was the family. We had Turkish Cypriots in our street [in the UK] that we used to visit, we had Turkish Cypriots at school, went to Turkish school as well. [But] If you're talking about having a close-knit Turkish-Cypriot community, no we didn't have that [...] As I grew older I got involved with the Turkish Cypriot organisations, but [at the time] that was really about it. At my primary school there were very few Turkish Cypriots, and there were some Greek Cypriots as well – this is another strange thing, my best friends in primary school [were] two Greek Cypriot girls, and what happened is that they came to my secondary school too [...] We got on well [with the Greek Cypriots] they were people that I liked, some of our traditions were the same...

[...]

What I find of Turkish Cypriots, and Greek Cypriots as well I'm sure, [is that] in their daily lives they're quite tolerant of each other, but when it comes to politics things change [...] What I've seen in different countries is that [the Greek-Cypriot community] tries to make it clear that the Greek Cypriots are the legal owners of the island [...] which is not fair, because the 1965 constitution clearly stated that there were two different people with equal rights [...] At university I was a senator, and I was shocked to find that the different colleges of the University of London [...] were putting forward motions [...] protesting at what they called the Turkish invasion [...] and when I found out about it I [thought] if you're asking people to work to get a settlement then don't just ask one side, you ask both sides, you don't just blame one side for what happened [...] and if you want to sanction anybody for not working towards a settlement then you sanction all the sides, not just one. So that was my basis and that's how I challenged the motion. Up until that time, as far as I know, nobody had ever challenged a Greek-Cypriot motion. Because, first of all, there were very very few British-born or British-brought up [Turkish-Cypriot] students in university; university education was rare for Turkish Cypriots, there were more Greek Cypriots. The second thing was, even the Turkish Cypriots that went to university, they didn't really get involved in the politics [...] In England the Greek Cypriots are very well organised [...] and that's one of the reasons why I think that in England the Greek Cypriots have got more authority over things and people believe more what the Greek Cypriots say, because they've been doing it for so long. [...] And it annoys me, but now I think that the Turkish Cypriots are more organised, there are more Turkish Cypriots going to university, third generation going to university is not special, it's expected [...] so things are changing.

Beran's parents left Cyprus in 1960, before the eruption of the intercommunal violence, and her political involvement on behalf of the UK Turkish Cypriots was very much based on the desire to raise the community's profile and levels of mobilisation in the UK. Nicosia-based lawyer, Aysu, also 48 years old, was born in Cyprus, and left the island at a very early age. However, unlike Beran's parents, who left Cyprus in 1960, *before* the conflict, Aysu's parents left *because* of the conflict in 1963 – a traumatic experience which left a clear mark on their family life in the UK. The fact that they did not move out of choice had a strong influence on Aysu's sense of Cypriotness and

belonging. Like Beran's narrative, Aysu's account of life in the UK was infused with political references and memories of interactions with Greek Cypriots. However, whilst, as a young UK Cypriot, Beran was concerned with developing and strengthening the Turkish-Cypriot community *in the UK*, Aysu's focus was more geared towards Cyprus, the political situation *there* and the pining for the homeland:

We were an average Turkish-Cypriot family until 1963, until the conflict [...] we became refugees, we lost our home [...] It was a very traumatic way we left Cyprus [...] We went as a result of the conflict to England. But temporarily, that was the idea. [...] So waiting for the Cyprus problem to be resolved and then to come back [to Cyprus], we found ourselves in school, in work, first we rented a home and then we bought a cheap house [...]. It was an area with many Cypriots, Turkish and Greek, our neighbours were either Greek or Turkish, the supermarket, the grocer's was Cypriot, the doctor was Cypriot, so it was a community [...] But we didn't sort of go on an adventure, or decide to go to England, we were torn and conditions forced us to go to England, and I think we always carried that [...] Within the usual time we applied for citizenship, we bought a better house, my father [...] started a business [...] my brother and I we went to university and so on. And coming back never became a serious plan, because my parents placed a lot of importance on education [...] And now when I think back in my later life I think [...] I always carried in me a desire, or that idealised idea of coming back, coming home here. I never ever felt 'this is great, forget Cyprus, I'm in England now, I'm sort of British, and this is me', I think that that identity pull was always strong, and we also had a very traditional family upbringing, that imposes on you your [...] national ethnic peculiarities. So you grow up with that, you grow up with both, you grow up in a British environment, British schools, you speak English like it's your mother tongue, but you also carry that other part. And that other part for *us*, in our particular family, as I said, also meant being torn from Cyprus. [...] My closest friends [in the UK] were Greek Cypriots, our immediate neighbour was a Greek Cypriot, we shared a lot of things, in sickness and in health, as neighbours. The Cypriotness there sort of overrode any Greek or Turkish conflict mentality. We would share joys, we would share weddings, help each other, and I never felt any problems with Greek Cypriots in England – maybe on the contrary, there was something that would make you feel closer to another Greek or Turkish [Cypriot] person [...] because of your background, because of the similar traditions, the pining for Cyprus kind of features were similar.

Interestingly, the two individuals who most longed to return to Cyprus whilst growing up – Rowan and Aysu – were also those whose childhood experiences varied greatest, in terms of upbringing and narratives of belonging 'recycled' in the family. Rowan was raised by a Turkish-Cypriot father who consciously moved away from Cyprus to 'immerse himself in British culture', and raised his children accordingly. Aysu's parents, on the other hand, left the island against their will, under very different circumstances, which brought about a 'pining for Cyprus', an emotion that was passed on to their

children. However, despite being brought up in the UK ‘largely removed from any kind of Cypriotness’, Rowan did go on holidays to the island as a child, and it was during these visits that he developed a desire to return as an adult. Earlier we heard Rowan recall how, as a child, he experienced Cyprus as this ‘very nice and sunny, yellow and blue, little paradise’. As mentioned earlier, childhood memories of visits to the island amongst the British-born Turkish-Cypriot participants were to a certain extent similar to those of the British-born Greek-Cypriot participants. They too made frequent references to idyllic village life, nature, sun, sea, family warmth and the great sense of freedom they experienced in Cyprus. However, the one striking element that set the Turkish-Cypriot holiday memories apart from those of the Greek Cypriots were the *references to the conflict*, and the experiences of *interactions with Greek Cypriots* whilst visiting the island. Whilst narrating their life stories, participants would ‘naturally’ – and without being prompted – interweave such references through their account. This is demonstrated in the following excerpt from Beran’s narrative:

The first time we had a chance to visit was only in 1973, which was like a dream really. I was thirteen. [...] For me it was just like I was in a fairy-tale land: ‘this is the place that my parents have been telling me about all these years’, and I was trying to put things together. But the things I did notice in 1973 was trying to go from Lefkoşa, Nicosia, to my parents’ village; we would have to go through different villages, some of them were Turkish villages, some of them were Greek villages, some of them would be mixed villages – but I very soon got to know which was the Turkish and which was the Greek villages, because of the state of the village, the ones that were in disrepair, the worst, were the Turkish villages, the others were the Greek villages, and one of the reasons was at the time there were lots of restrictions [...] so Turkish Cypriots could not get a hold of things to build their house or to repair their house. [...] The other thing that I remember is [...] having to go through [the barricades], we were never stopped, but we were told by other people that they were stopped. The other thing I remember is when we were at the beaches, obviously because we were on holiday we would go to the beaches, and we were told not to talk Turkish loudly in case anyone would cause trouble [...] so that was a little bit unnerving [...] And also we wanted to visit the Troodos mountains and it took us a long time to find somebody who was willing to take us, because they were scared of being stopped on the way [...] But I remember that it was very very hot, it was the middle of August, and it was freezing cold water up in the Troodos mountains, so putting the watermelon in the water to cool down and eat it *[laughs]*. I remember we stayed in this area ‘cause my uncle had a house in the middle of Lefkoşa. I remember the sound of the [mosque], calling for prayer, there were two or three [mosques] close to each other, so one after the other the call to prayer was sounded, I remember that. I just remember really being free, freedom, ‘cause in England we were living in the middle of London, in a block of flats, it was very dangerous to play out, we never did that, but *here* it was ok, we did play out in the streets, and we stayed up late, and we sat outside on the pavement, and that kind of thing, which was completely different of course to England, there is no

way people sit out on the streets [...] I remember meeting family for the first time, 'cause there were many people in the family that we'd just heard of [but] we'd never met them at all, we just knew of them, we'd written letters to them and they had written letters to us [...] Oh and I remember getting very ill, when I first went to Cyprus [...] and I had to go to the doctor [which] was in a mainly Greek town [...] and I remember people recognising my dad 'hi how are you? ah this is the baby that you had, hasn't she grown up?' [...] and people who heard he'd come back were coming to see him, to greet him and everything, I remember that, it was very friendly then at that time [...] It was very special for me, seeing my family was very special for me [...] I got spoiled a lot, so that was nice, so I looked forward to that.

Sights, sounds and tastes all emanate powerfully from this account; feelings of warmth and excitement mixed with emotions of apprehension – the rather unsettling road to the Troodos Mountains with the sweet reward of ice-cold watermelon. This echoes Agnew's (2005: 10) remark about migrant memories being 'surrounded by an emotional and sensory aura that makes them memorable'.

As in the Greek-Cypriot narratives, gifts, hospitality, plentiful food and family warmth are key features in the Turkish-Cypriot memories of childhood visits. Other experiences parallel to those of the Greek-Cypriot returnees include the sense of freedom experienced in Cyprus, which stands in contrast to the limited spatial and temporal freedom experienced in the UK (Beran's memory of being allowed to run about freely in the streets without being watched and to stay out late is almost identical to some of the Greek-Cypriot descriptions). Also, participants recalled being shocked by the great difference in youth behaviour between young Cypriots in Cyprus and in the UK, as certain 'traditional' Turkish-Cypriot values they were brought up with in the UK did not really exist in Cyprus anymore. In the following excerpt Beran remembers her surprise at how liberal the Turkish-Cypriot girls' upbringing was on the island, compared to her own sheltered childhood in the UK:

The girls had a lot more freedom, even more than some of the English girls, so that was a bit of a shock [...] [UK Cypriots] did not think that there was change here, [they] kept the same values of courtships and everything like that – here [in Cyprus] I was shocked to know that girls have boyfriends, and that they could see them [...] It was impossible in England, if you were seeing somebody you just kept quiet about it and made sure your parents didn't find out... [...] I didn't expect so much freedom, for young people...

Esra believes that such new-found freedom plays an important factor in the everyday contentment of young female returnees in Cyprus:

Quite a few London Cypriot [girls] have moved back to Cyprus [...] Because they were brought up in a really strict environment they liked Cyprus a lot, 'cause it's given them freedom, a license to be able to go out and wear what they want, and see who they want, whereas in England they weren't allowed to do that. So in that respect it's much nicer for them, because they wouldn't be having that kind of life, living back in England. So I think that those kinds of things make a real difference in how you perceive this place and how comfortable you are in it.

It is worth pausing for a moment to stress how the younger women's motivation to 'return' to Cyprus (both in the Turkish and Greek cases) contradicts the general finding from the wider migration literature that return is gendered the other way around – i.e. that males are keener to return than females because the former are able to reclaim some measure of patriarchal status in the more 'traditional' home-country society whereas the latter are constrained to 'lose' the empowerment they achieved in the more 'progressive' host society. The key to the paradox is the passage from one generation to the next. That is to say, the patriarchal order of the home country is taken abroad by the first-generation migrants and preserved more or less unchanged in the host society; subsequently, the second generation, prompted both by their exposure to the more liberal values and behaviour of their 'native' age-peers in the host society and by their realisation, on visits 'home', that their 'home-country' peers have also become more free, sees an escape to the (parental) home country as a legitimate (also in the eyes of their parents) migration strategy. If this is one 'explanation' for return, there are other motivations, as the next section shows.

7.3 REASONS FOR 'RETURN' TO CYPRUS

The British-born Turkish Cypriots I spoke to returned to Cyprus for a wide variety of reasons, which reveal their heterogeneity (beyond the supposedly homogenous 'ethnic label' of being from Cypriot parentage). Overlaps can be found between the various narratives, but it is the internal differentiations that make such overlaps so interesting. Take Rowan and Aysu for example; both grew up dreaming of returning to Cyprus one day. They both did. At first sight this could be interpreted as an

essentialised reading of return or 'roots migration' (Wessendorf 2007). However, when you *listen* to their childhood memories and the family narratives they grew up with, they could not have been further apart. Rowan's childhood was largely devoid of anything Cypriot whilst Aysu's family, torn away from Cyprus, held their Cypriotness close to their hearts. Hence while the cause (i.e. deep seated-desire to return to Cyprus) and the effect (i.e. the actual return to Cyprus) may have been similar, the personal circumstances that brought forward their desires and actions were certainly not. Focusing closely on the actual circumstances and histories of individuals and their relations shows that such particulars, which are always present (as we know from our own experiences), are also always crucial to the constitution of experience. This is best represented by textual means, based on everyday life conversations, rather than by theoretical statements (Abu-Lughod 1991: 476).

In the following quote Aysu describes how the family narrative of being torn away from Cyprus, with its 'nice weather, countryside and family warmth', to 'the cold and cramped environment' of the UK, influenced her feelings toward England and Cyprus from a very early age. Therefore, she believes that her marriage to a native Cypriot, who did not have any intentions to leave the island, was no coincidence. Also note the reference to the 'Cyprus problem', which again was interwoven as a 'natural' part of her account, something that was very rare in the British Greek-Cypriot return narratives:

I would come as a young teenager for holidays and so on, and I met someone here [...] and his condition was [that] we'd build a marriage and a home *in* Cyprus. He didn't want to come to England. I was at university, and I took the challenge. [...] I think with my relationship, it was the opportunity or the *excuse* to come back [...] I don't think it was a coincidence, 'cause there are plenty, many, men in England [*giggles*] you know, there were relationships there too. But this was a challenge; it was a challenge to come back, to return, and also that tearing away made another impact on me, that I know very clearly, I thought [England] was a horrible place to go for children. Because Cyprus for me was, you know, this weather, playing in the garden, grandma, grandpa, chickens, a much nicer childhood. To be torn from that [...] where my relatives were living in cramped housing, very big schools, noisy schools, you know, it wasn't even the nicer areas of England, it wasn't the nice green villages, it was the tough city. [At] school they threw you out at playtime into that horrible cold weather [...] So I always had inside this presumption that England is a bad place to raise children, which is a terrible generalisation I think, it was just based on what I had suffered. So I thought also marriage and family and children would be a better option here in Cyprus. Another thing that I always thought, again it goes back to the 1964 thing – 'how much

longer can this problem continue? it's bound to be resolved soon [...] there's going to be a solution and Cyprus is going to be better' [...] – so I think I had also that expectation. So I came back [...] I was in love, I was going to get married, it was as I said a challenge that I took on, I always loved Cyprus, I never stopped having this strong bond with Cyprus.

Esra too relocated to Cyprus to be with the man she loves. So in this sense both women's motivations for moving overlap. However, a closer look at the circumstances shows that the 'particulars' are very different. As mentioned earlier, and unlike Aysu, Esra never dreamt of moving to Cyprus until her relationship with a native Cypriot, combined with the fact that she had lost her job in the UK, brought about the opportunity to do so six years ago:

I didn't start learning Turkish until about two years ago [*laughs shyly*]. 'Cause, basically I married a Turkish Cypriot, that's why I moved here, I moved here to see how our relationship would develop, and we ended up getting married, but when I moved here I don't think I thought that I would stay here. I just came on a bit of an adventure, I'd just been made redundant [in the UK] so I thought 'well why don't I just go?' So I never ever thought that I would be sitting here six years later.

Leyla, aged 47, and her Portuguese-born husband were both working long hours in demanding jobs when they decided to swap their busy UK existence for a more laid-back Cypriot lifestyle. Aspiring to spend more quality time as a family, and offer their children a 'safer and nicer' environment to grow up in, they relocated to the island five years ago, where they are now running a restaurant in the centre of (North) Nicosia. Despite experiencing a sense of (Turkish) Cypriotness whilst growing up, Leyla never perceived Cyprus as home and never thought of moving to the island, until her life had reached the juncture and where she felt she needed a change:

I never thought I'd come back here. I think having children [...] and thinking to myself 'well I've worked in this system for x amount of years' and looking at the future and thinking 'well where will I be in five years ten years time?' 'what job will I be doing?' 'how hard will I be working?' 'what will be the quality of my life?' And looking at a place like Cyprus and thinking 'what has it to offer? and what could it offer to my family unit?' and the decision was based on that really. Also the life in England [...] is very stressful [...] it's very fast-moving. Family has always been very very important to me, and the fact that basically you get into a pattern where you don't see your husband [and the children], at night you get half an hour together, *maybe* [...] So it means that basically you have to sacrifice those things and I didn't want to do that really [...] And I think within the year we thought 'fine we'll try it...' [...] We'd come here on holiday together and we did like it and we thought [...] we could probably

have a nice lifestyle if we moved back. So we thought ‘we’ll go for a year, see how it goes, if we don’t like it we can always go back’, nothing is forever. This was five years ago *[laughs]* so it’s becoming more permanent now [...] I think life here is good for kids, it’s nice for children, and because of the security [...] for us it has been a very good move.

The above quote echoes familiar points raised by the British-born Greek-Cypriot participants, presented in the earlier chapters of this thesis. Also for the Turkish Cypriots, quality-of-life issues often played an important role in the decision to return to Cyprus, which was often strengthened – as articulated by Leyla – by feelings of discontent with life in the UK, particularly in terms of climate, pace of life and work-life balance. The view held by Aysu and Leyla, that Cyprus offers a more desirable environment for raising a family, was shared by other Turkish-Cypriot participants too. A birthday party I attended in Güzelyurt (Morphou), of the seven-year-old son of one of my participants, 28-year-old single mother Asli, turned into a group discussion when I raised the topic of reasons for return to Cyprus. There was a general consensus amongst the British-born parents of the young party guests, all pupils at the nearby American elementary school, that Cyprus offers a better environment for their children. One mother stated that ‘they are all coming back, because things have changed so much [in the UK], things are very difficult there now, especially for people our age [in terms of] crime, drugs, violence, the criminal situation there is so bad at the moment’, upon which one of the fathers nodded in agreement as he expressed that ‘London was not safe anymore, the main reason [we returned] was the kids’.

Also the parents of British-born brothers Emre and Murad, both university students at METU,⁶⁸ who moved from Cyprus to the UK for economic reasons in the 1960s, decided to return to the island when the boys were in their teens, in order to introduce their sons to some ‘true Turkish-Cypriot culture’ and to prevent them from ‘getting into the wrong crowds’ in London. Although, at first, as teenagers the drastic change of environment was tough for them, they do believe that their parents made the right decision:

⁶⁸ The Ankara-based Middle East Technical University (METU) established a branch in Cyprus, just outside Güzelyurt (Morphou), in 2000.

The reason for [our return] is because, one, my dad wanted to come back to his homeland, he was sick of the weather and the miserable life there; two, he wanted us to learn Turkish, he didn't want us to get buried in that English culture; and three he didn't want us to get into any of the trouble over there [...] Every week you'd hear of someone getting stabbed, drugs [...] And maybe if I was still in England I would have gotten in all of that [trouble] too, who knows [...] So I think it was a good choice, I am happy that [my parents] made that choice (Emre, aged 21).

If you go to North London [...] you see lots of Turkish people [with] shaved heads, you know, sort of like, how can I say it, the African American look about them, because the culture over there is changing, it's changed a lot, and they're taking up that culture, they wear big chains, Turkish flag, all kinds of different stuff going on there. But that's not who we are, Turkish-Cypriot people aren't like that, which wear caps and walk around with a limp, that's not a Turkish-Cypriot thing, it doesn't matter if you wear a big chain with a Turkish flag on your neck, you know what I mean? So basically they brought us over here so we won't become like that [...] Yeah I'm pretty happy about it now, at first I was upset that I was coming over here and started a new life, as any young teenager would go through that at that age, but now I've grown up and I've met people that are pretty much the same as me, I mean I got an Australian friend, you know so they got the same sort of thing going on [...] I got friends like him [points at one of his British-born friends] who came over and went through the same sort of things, quite a few people like that, so we have our own sort of friend group, and it's been going good, we understand each other (Murat, aged 20).

While Emre and Murat left the UK 'just at the right time', others claimed to have left the UK because of the trouble their teenage children were already getting into. Forty-year-old father of two, Ahmed, explained that one of the main reasons they moved to Cyprus was because of his 14-year-old son: 'he was quite bad in school, he had a warning that he was gonna get kicked out of school, he was always having problems, so I thought it might help him here'. Whilst talking to 21-year-old student Kadir, his 14-year-old sister joined the conversation and told me that their parents decided to move to Cyprus because her older siblings 'used to get in a lot of trouble' in the UK. Such circumstances are parallel to those described by some of the participants in Tracey Reynolds' (2008) study on Caribbean second-generation return migration, who also migrated in order to remove their children from negative peer pressure in the UK, something that was much less evident in the Greek-Cypriot return narratives.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ As mentioned in Chapter 5, although Floya Anthias (1992: 121-122) briefly touched upon the issue of behavioural problems amongst some British-Cypriot boys in UK schools, this did not seem to be a push factor for return amongst my Greek-Cypriot participants.

7.4 EVERYDAY LIFE IN CYPRUS

The last section examined the motives behind the participants' return to Cyprus. For some the return was triggered by childhood images of Cyprus, either privately cherished (like in Rowan's case) or based on family narratives (for Aysu), whilst others returned for more pragmatic reasons, like to join a partner. However, for most the decision was based on a unique combination of factors, and it is indeed those particulars that make the narratives so interesting. Nevertheless, whilst the personal circumstances that incited such a desire to return varied greatly, it is fair to say that not only considerations about the returnees' own quality of life, but also concerns about their children's, had an important influence on the migration decision. So, having left the UK with certain expectations, or hopes, for a new way of life in Cyprus, how did the participants react to everyday reality on the island today?

Comments on the extent to which their 'home' communities have changed, either compared to their childhood visits or family narratives, were much less prevalent in the Turkish-Cypriot narratives than in the Greek-Cypriot case, where participants frequently commented on the increased levels of materialism and consumerism, the loss of hospitality amongst the native population, and the impact of recent mass immigration. This may be down to the fact that the north was isolated (and still is to a great extent) for so many years (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2003), whereas the south was more exposed to the forces of globalisation, European and international developments, and especially mass tourism. Where comparisons were made between their expectations (the 'imagined' Cyprus) and the actual experiences upon arrival, many claimed that their dream was realised to a considerable extent, and nearly all participants believed that their move had improved their quality of life. However, many do believe that they *are* different from the native Cypriots, in their views and everyday behaviour.

The above points are reflected in the following example where Rowan describes his experiences during the first years after his return, how his hopes of getting back in touch with 'the culture he had been deprived of as a child' were realised, and the pleasure he found in all those elements he loved about the island, such as the climate

and nature. However, he also believes that the way he enjoys and experiences Cyprus is different from that of a native Cypriot, as he compares his more to 'an expat's love of Cyprus':

I got a job at the university teaching English, and I decided I was going to learn Turkish [...] I didn't speak any Turkish, but I started learning [...] I found a girlfriend, you know, my [ex]wife, and that speeds everything up. [...] My son is half Turkish Cypriot, so we have this bilingual thing [...] I was very much into, you know, discovering my culture, that I'd always felt that I'd been deprived of as a kid [...] Before I came here I believed it was a wonderful place with wonderful people, wonderful food, and wonderful weather, and wonderful landscape, and all these things. Although it was wonderful, it wasn't actually given to me as such [whilst growing up].

[...]

A lot of my expectations were confirmed. [...] I used to love waking up in the morning seeing the sea, the sound of the goat bells, olive trees. I mean, I made the most of it, I realised after a while that the way I loved Cyprus made me less of a Cypriot, 'cause most Cypriots complained about it [...] My love of Cyprus was more like an expat's love of Cyprus, I would enjoy sitting on my balcony at sundown, even though it was after work you know, and the things... you know I read books, I just had a different view you know. I wasn't like a Cypriot, although I could have a really good time with Cypriots. [But] nearly all of my friends, on both sides of the Green Line, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, are like me, in that sense. They've at least been out of the country many years, you know, a good solid number of years, and been influenced by British, American, Australian, well basically an English-language culture, or even if it's Italian, or Spanish, or anything European, it makes them different from your average full Cypriot, you know.

Here is another quote describing initial experiences upon return, as well as reflections on the differences between British-born Cypriots and the natives in 'the north', this time from Aysu's narrative:

I felt prepared to sacrifice, if I couldn't have all the luxuries or all the plusses of England [...] because it was part of the sacrifice of the love for your native country. So that didn't bother me, what was a little bit difficult was language [...] I was a qualified lawyer, but my Turkish was domestic [...] I had a language and an education with a big gap, so I had to catch up with that, which I did ok [...] but people can still tell [...] they also tell me it's a little bit in my behaviour, my attitude, or the way I dress, not standard Turkish-Cypriot born and raised, so people tell me there's a difference there [...] But I also see differences between me and people who were born and raised here, we tend to be more open-minded, so less, sort of, what's the word, rural you know, coming from a more open society, a lot braver in many respects [...] To have [...] fluent English is a big advantage for me, over everybody else, over other people here, although now there are more and more English-speaking Turkish Cypriots as well. During the period that it was more closed here English was less spoken, but now it's

opening up more and more, there's passages to the south, more children are going as EU citizens for education abroad and in England.

What is interesting about Aysu's narrative, and those of other participants her age, is the observation that their UK upbringing has *positively* influenced their development in terms of 'attitude' and 'broadmindedness' whilst, on the other hand, they prefer *their* children, as we heard earlier, to be brought up in Cyprus away from the *negative* influences of the UK. Whilst reflecting on her own life-history Aysu became aware of this irony as she stated: 'when I'm just discussing this, it makes me think that children are a very strong deciding factor in the way that, when we went to England, my parents after a while thought "well we'd better stay for the children" [while] when I was coming back I was thinking "this would be a nice place to raise children"' (cf. Reynolds 2008: 12; see also Dustmann 2003).

From the various interpretive remarks that could be drawn out of the last two narrative excerpts, I would like to highlight the linguistic and materialistic isolation of northern Cyprus, on the one hand, versus the more recent exposure to international influences and to the more 'urbanised', southern, part of the island on the other. Aysu pointed out how she had to overcome a language gap in order to work as a lawyer in Cyprus. Unlike the British-born Greek-Cypriot returnees, for whom Greek language limitations did not appear to be a major barrier (English being widely used in the southern part of the island both in informal and official circles), limited knowledge of the Turkish language *did* cause difficulties for some of the British-born Turkish-Cypriot returnees, particularly for those who moved to Cyprus a significant number of years ago, before the crossings opened in 2003. However, since the more recent developments on the island, which allow easier passage to the south and to wider Europe, this hurdle seems to be slightly decreasing. And so are 'the sacrifices', as Aysu put it, that had to be made in terms of 'British luxuries' and consumer behaviour, as many now cross to the south for shopping, entertainment, and some even to seek employment and education for their children. In fact, unlike many British-born Greek-Cypriot returnees, who tended to be critical towards the increased levels of materialism in the south, the British-born Turkish-Cypriot participants seemed overall

pleased about the broad consumers' choice across the Green Line, as they are now able to obtain products or services which are unavailable in the north. Like 45-year-old Kyrenia shopkeeper, Omer, who said that 'because [now] you can find everything here, there's nothing to miss [from England], before you couldn't do this, but now you can go to your Marks and Spencer's, you can get everything, whatever you can get in England, you just cross the border and you can get it here'. Twenty-year-old Murat, who also lives in Kyrenia, seems to agree as he states that 'the south is like a mini-version of England', while commenting on the lack of social activities available in the northern part of the island:

There's not so many social activities here to do, I mean there's clubs and there's gyms for boys... that's about it *[laughs]* ... clubs, gyms, a few football pitches, a few of them play football or basketball, but that's about it. You don't have bowling alleys; you don't have proper big cinemas, like you do in England, where you have shopping malls.

However, having stated his slight frustration (albeit tongue-in-cheek) with the limited entertainment options available in 'the north', he is keen to emphasise that there *are* reasons for this, and that, all considered, things are not so bad after all:

But don't forget that this island has been isolated for... *this* side of the island has been isolated for how many years... But they're doing well really, look at us, we are sitting in a nice little café, we're not doing bad...

Murat said he does not go to 'the south' very often, unlike his older brother, 21-year-old Emre, who stated: 'I do my shopping there, and I also go clubbing there [...] I would even be willing to work on the Greek side if I'd find a good job there, I don't mind'.

Rowan's life very much takes place across the divide. Whilst living in the northern part of Nicosia, he works predominantly in the south, and in one of his earlier quotes we heard him describe his 'international social life' which takes place 'on both sides of the Green Line'. In line with this lifestyle, his 12-year-old son goes to an international school. The latter is not unusual as most of the British-born Turkish Cypriot's children go to international (English-taught) schools. However, there *is* a difference, as Rowan's son attends school in 'the south':

He goes to school on the Greek side. Because here, I mean, the schools are just rubbish. I think it's important, you know, you're very influenced by your teachers. Everything I enjoyed studying, or became good at, these were the subjects where I met a teacher who inspired me, and kind of set me in the direction, I don't see anybody doing that here.

Leyla's lifestyle and viewpoints are very similar to Rowan's. She too lives in the centre of old (northern) Nicosia, where she runs a restaurant with her husband and enjoys an international circle of friends. She claims to 'feel totally at home in the south', where her two children, like Rowan's son, are going to an international school:

I like the ethos of the school; I like the fact that it's so international, and the fact that children are exposed to different cultures and different ways of thinking, which is important to me [...] 'cause I don't want them to be educated in a system which is very... erm... nationalistic, they have to be able to, you know, look all ways – now that they're little, but it all starts now really.

She continues by explaining that she tries to stay away from politics and how she hopes that educating this generation (i.e. her children) in a more 'neutral' way will contribute to a solution for the 'Cyprus problem'. Although she claims to want to distance herself from politics, some of the reasons for sending her children to this school *are* politically motivated, even if they are fuelled by a desire for a more 'neutral' environment. Clearly, she *does* involve politics in her narrative, which, as mentioned earlier, appears 'naturally' in many of the other narratives of the British-born Turkish-Cypriot participants, regardless of their individual political views:

I try to stay well away [from politics]. I think it will be my children, my children's children, depending on how they grow and what kind of environment they have, and the fact that lots of children from this side are now able to go to school on the other side, and appreciate growing up in schools where history is taught in a different way [...] so they can grow in a more neutral environment, and have more neutral views, then maybe they will be able to come together [...] With my children for example I don't talk about Turkish or Greek, they will come to terms... you know they do realise that there are Turkish Cypriots, that there are Greek Cypriots, we are equal, they will have to make their own decisions as they grow. I don't want to put any ideas in their heads, I don't wanna give them lessons in writing histories [...] I'm tired of [politics] 'cause it's always the same story [...] So that's how I feel 'don't tell me anymore, 'cause it's always the same story', a bit negative to say it that way [*laughs apologetically*]. [...] It's exhausting. I would like to see the next generation deal with it, 'cause I think that this generation, they are not ready.

While many participants pointed out the benefits of the recent opening of the crossings to the south, they did emphasise their loyalty to ‘the north’ and the ‘Turkish-Cypriot cause’, whether their political views support a ‘bicomunal state’, like Rowan, who shows understanding for the sentiments on ‘both sides’, or Beran, who prefers a ‘two separate states’ solution:

Ideally Turkish and Greek Cypriots should all live together, and happily ever after, you know. But I understand the arguments on both sides, I understand the sentiments, I understand the feelings of injustice, from both sides, and they’re both valid [...] It’s all about perspective. I’m educated enough to know that it’s about that. But at the end of the day I think, probably like every other Cypriot, in terms of them and us. I wish I didn’t, I really wish I didn’t, I don’t want to think like that, but somehow... somehow it’s there, it *is* there. And I won’t defend *us* unconditionally by any means, but ultimately [...] I do sort of feel closer to the Turkish Cypriots than I do to the Greek Cypriots, *obviously* (Rowan, aged 41).

Personal relations I have no problems, I have people that I know, I have friends that are Greek Cypriot [...] and I have [Greek-Cypriot] people that I work with, so we get on, we work together. People come over here, I go over there, I don’t have any problems with that. As to what I feel comfortable with, I feel comfortable with the situation as it is, but *with* an agreement, without an agreement it’s still a problem, but with an agreement, the way the island is set out now, for me, it’s ok. I would like it if there were fewer restrictions coming and going, but I like the fact that it is two sides, I don’t want to be ruled by the Greek Cypriots (Beran, aged 48).

7.5 ARTICULATIONS OF HOME AND BELONGING

How do the British-born Turkish-Cypriot participants articulate their feelings of home and belonging today? In the previous chapter I demonstrated how their Greek-Cypriot counterparts find that *their* feelings of home and belonging are very much formed around personal and social relations, characterised beyond ethnic, national and primordial boundaries, which produces new ‘hybridised’, yet localised spaces, of belonging. To a certain extent, this is the case with the Turkish-Cypriot participants too, as many belong to an international social circle, and a significant number are the product of a ‘mixed’ relationship or are in a ‘mixed’ relationship themselves. Furthermore, some stated that they consciously chose a school for their children that defies national and ethno-linguistic boundaries and has a more multicultural nature. For example, all these factors played an important role in the development of feelings of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ for Leyla, whose reflections on family, relationships, quality

of life, politics, and children's education we have heard throughout the present chapter. In the following excerpt it is notable that her feeling of 'home' is shaped around a sense of happiness, being with the people she loves, and being comfortable in her immediate surroundings, rather than the awareness of being physically located in the parental homeland. Nevertheless, she *does* feel that knowledge of one's roots (which in the case of her children is Cyprus, Portugal and the UK) *is* important, and that this knowledge – combined with the various people one mixes with and the variety of physical and social spaces one inhabits throughout life – enables one to benefit from a rich yet stable sense of belonging, regardless of geographical location:

I am home now [because] I am happy, because it worked out well for us. It's better for our relationship because we can spend more time together. It's better for the children because I feel, one they are able to get a good education [...]; two, the sense of security, I don't have to worry about that, they grow up safely; and, you know, to me the place is nice. There *are* frustrations, there are lots of frustrations, just little things really, dealing with this, dealing with that, and people maybe not doing things quick enough, all these little things that you sometimes maybe take for granted living in places like England you know, and those *are* frustrations, *but* the plusses are far greater for me over here than the negatives.

[...]

I think a place feels like home where your family members are and where you feel you're most comfortable. For *me*, it's not a matter of 'oh these are my roots [...]' so this is my home'.

[...]

I think it's important to know where you come from, I think you have to know where your roots are, you know your parents, your parents' parents, where did they come from, I think that's very important. And I think if you know that anyway, it doesn't matter where you live, you will always hold on to that because that's part of you. And there will always be influences coming into it, depending on where you live, who you mix with, who your friends are, there's lots of influences everywhere really, and they should be things that are the cream on top of the cake, if you know what I mean, they should be positive things.

Also Aysu stated that 'home is a mixture', formed outside ethno-national boundaries. Actually, she stressed that it was her return to Cyprus, of which she had always dreamt whilst growing up, that enabled her 'not to feel so completely enslaved to a country [or] that roots are more important than anything'. She believes that home is created by the everyday interaction and integration with the people and environment around

you, and embraces the cultural diversity the people and life in Cyprus have to offer – a diversity to which *she*, as a British-born Turkish-Cypriot returnee, contributes. Furthermore, she feels that the *differences* between her and her native Turkish-Cypriot husband, in terms of cultural background and upbringing, have enriched their, and their children's, experiences of 'home':

Home is a place where you establish your family and everyday life, and where you are able to adapt with your environment, because home is not just an isolated unit [...] it's interaction more, home sounds insular, yeah, and I'm thinking as we speak that it's not, that it is being somewhere and integrating with that place.

[...]

I think the difference was very big between [my husband and I], but it also made the interestingness of the marriage, it has always been a plus, because my husband helped me to learn Turkish, and Turkish culture, and literature, Turkish politics [...] There was a lot that he was passing on to me, there was a lot that I passed on to him, his English is a lot better because of me, he has a better grasp of English, of English literature [...] Home, the way you build your home... I think it has been successful for the combination, it didn't create a conflict [...] on the contrary, it created a richness [...] Your kids grow up with the plus of each, instead of just one [...] So I think it's been a plus, a wealth. But that's also a matter of luck. I don't have a husband who is very narrow-minded, or is a very typical traditional Cypriot, he's always open-minded and he has left-wing views, progressive ideas.⁷⁰

It is important to note, however, that several participants *did* express the importance of 'returning to their Cypriot roots', something that was less prevalent in the British-born Greek-Cypriot narratives. Particularly in the case of parents who returned with teenage children, as demonstrated earlier – these parents not only returned to provide their children with a safer, sunnier and more pastoral lifestyle, but also to get their children in touch with their 'homeland culture'.

Another striking element in the British-born Turkish-Cypriot narratives of home was the actual *physical* experience of crossing from 'the north' to 'the south'. It has been reported that overall more Turkish Cypriots cross the 'Green Line' on a regular basis than Greek Cypriots do (Jacobsen et al. 2008). Unlike the Greek Cypriots' narratives, the 'crossing experience' appeared frequently in the Turkish Cypriots' accounts.

⁷⁰ Recall how similar emphases on how one's native Cypriot spouse is 'not a typical Cypriot' were also prevalent in the narratives of the British-born Greek Cypriots married to natives.

Particularly those who live close to a crossing – and hence are able to cross frequently either for social or leisure purposes, or for reasons of work or education – claimed to experience a sensation of ‘coming home’ every time they entered back to ‘the north’. This is articulated by Esra, even though she feels more comfortable in the south in terms of language and other ‘English’ influences:

Most of my friends do go to the south and when you come back you always have a sense of you are kinda at home now, and even I feel that [...] The only thing is that it is much easier to go around and speak English, there are things that you find in England in the south, you know all the shops, you know those things, you don’t feel like you are somewhere quite so different, which is why perhaps English people would find it easier to live on that side than they find it here. But if I was to compare the two, [the North] would definitely feel more like home to me.

Having listened to Rowan’s life-history at a sun-drenched outdoor restaurant in northern Nicosia, I asked him if there is anything he would like to add in relation to his feelings of home and belonging. He said that such feelings are inevitably related to ‘the Cyprus problem thing’, something that he ‘would like to rise above, but [which] is not always possible’ – a reply which demonstrates the influence the political situation on the island has on the everyday feelings of belonging of a British-born Turkish Cypriot in Cyprus :

With the north-south divide, I do feel when I come to the north that I’m coming home, although I don’t believe in the reasons for the existence of this separate state, I think it should have been sorted out without the necessity of creating it, and I don’t think it was a necessity, it was a political idea, there was a whole agenda, and it wasn’t mine – erm, but because I’ve been living here for so long, I know Kyrenia, Famagusta, Lefke, Güzelyurt and whatever, these are the places that I know, and when I go to the south I feel like I am in another country [...] I have to obey *their* laws, rather than my laws, although I have the ID card and the citizenship of the south⁷¹ [...] but yeah it’s their country and this feels like my country, it’s funny, because if there are later on territorial adjustments, I wonder how that’s going to work in my head, and how the whole bizonality of it is going to work...

⁷¹ As the Republic of Cyprus still considers Turkish Cypriots to be its citizens they can apply for Cypriot IDs and Cypriot/EU passports. Mainland Turks who live in the north, however, are not permitted entry into the south.

7.6 SECOND-GENERATION RETURNEES: POTENTIAL AGENTS OF CHANGE?

Rowan's pondering on the effects of a potential 'bizonal bicomunal state' at the very end of the last extract leads into the theme of the returnees' involvement with, and willingness to contribute to, the development of their parental 'homeland'. Having spent the last 17 years in Cyprus, Rowan told me he had come to a point where he started to think of leaving the island, at least for a while, particularly as he was considering putting his son through high school in the UK. However, the thought that 'a solution' for the 'Cyprus problem' might be around the corner could provide him with an extra incentive to stay. And so his musing continued:

It's going to be really interesting, it kinda makes me want to stay, despite the fact that I also wanna leave you know, [...] 'cause *if* it's really going to be a project, a serious project, and there's a will there, I'd obviously like to be involved in it [...] I can't deny having the hope that this project gets under way one day, you know this project of creating a nation, because I don't think we have one yet, I don't think we have anything that deserves to be called a nation – and I'm not talking about the north, I'm talking about an integrated, multicultural, bicultural at least, nation. It would be so great if we could do it, we would be going against the trend, which is of secession rather than integration, but I do have hope, I'd love to see it.

[...]

Sometimes I think that people like me are actually part of the solution, 'cause if we can be outside of it then we can see it for what it is, and we can see that it is just petty and stupid, so I think I share that view, and it's a little bit snobby actually you know, it's a little bit arrogant of us possibly, to think 'oh these silly Cypriots they can't sort it out, if it was up to us there wouldn't be a problem, 'cause look at us, we're totally fine'. Erm, yeah I think that if you have this whole liberal view, in my experience and from what I hear as well...

Rowan ponders how people 'like him' – referring to foreign-born or raised Cypriots on *both* sides of the Green Line – may possibly be part of a solution due to the outside views and experiences they bring to the island. Discussions regarding whether returning migrants are seen, or see themselves, as agents of change are not new in the field of migration studies. As stressed by Conway and Potter (2007), the commonly-held view that returnees are unlikely agents of societal change as they often differ greatly in terms of experiences and attitudes, and hence lack 'solidarity' or the ability to adapt to the home society, is being increasingly challenged. Amongst others,

Conway (1993) and Gmelch (1992) argue that returning nationals should be viewed in a more positive light than thus far, as they *do* positively contribute to the social and economic development of their home regions. According to research evidence from the island of Barbados (Conway and Potter 2007), second-generation returnees are becoming an ever-more important group, in terms of their education and ambition, poised to be positive and progressive agents of change. In the case of the second-generation Turkish-Cypriot returnees too, frequent references were made in their narratives to their – and their children’s – potential positive contribution to Cyprus’ future. Earlier on in this chapter I quoted Leyla’s aspiration that her children, and their peers in both the Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot communities, will contribute to a political solution on the island, as she hopes that ‘maybe *they* will be able to come together’. From a different age group, 21-year-old Emre also believes that people like him are able to positively contribute to northern Cyprus, particularly in terms of economic and business investments, and he would like to see more young British-born Cypriots return to the island. At the same time however, he acknowledges that the current status quo and the lack of employment opportunities, specifically in northern Cyprus, may hamper such ideals and that he too might have to go back to England to work, even if that is not his preferred option. This is a view quite common amongst British-born Turkish Cypriots his age:

I’m happy here, even though [northern] Cyprus isn’t a recognised country. I feel lucky to be here, and I think... I think the Cypriots who are back in England [...] should really consider coming back here as well, because if they come back here as well I think things can be a lot different for Cyprus. [But] I might have to go back to England, I don’t *want* to, but if my plans and projects don’t work out here I might have to [...] I may have to go and make some hard cash and come back or something.

Aysu, an active contributor to various bicomunal activities who has ‘always been one for reconciliation, pro-solution and pro-dialogue with Greek Cypriots’, has two children Emre’s age. She empathises with the complex situation the younger generation finds themselves in:

I have two adult children, and I think it was good for them to have a childhood here, but I’m not so sure that it’s good for them to have a career here, because, again, we have an unresolved problem, and a very bad economic chaos basically,

mismanagement of the administration [...] One of them studied in Turkey, the other one studied in Manchester in England; they feel, like any other young person, better equipped to be more worldly, and Cyprus is too narrow for them, North Cyprus especially, the Turkish-Cypriot side. So for them I feel that it's sad at the moment that there's still no solution, if there were a solution, things would be better, which is again another idealist presumption.

Aysu's view, that the isolation of northern Cyprus limits the younger generation's opportunities, is shared by other participants. Many believe that the fresh perspectives needed to support political and social change in Cyprus, and to broaden one's overall life-view in general, are best obtained *away* from the island. Hence, although Cyprus was often the preferred place to raise a family, it is not necessarily seen as the best place to develop for young adults. This is reflected in the following quote by Leyla, who, while hoping that her children's generation will be the future 'agents of change' in Cyprus, will encourage them to leave the island once they are older so 'they can grow':

When my children come to a certain age, like 18, I don't want them to be in Cyprus, I think they should be out there, you know, in the bigger world – maybe England, you know, maybe somewhere else in Europe, it doesn't matter where, but they have to experience life, they have to experience different places. If you get stuck in a little place, you can't grow, that's my opinion. I mean once you've done lots of things in your life, once you've seen lots of things, you've experienced lots of things, Cyprus is great...

Hence, while it is important to emphasise the participants' willingness to act as 'agents of change' in their parental homeland, it is equally important to acknowledge the complex political and socio-economic situation, particularly in the northern part of the island. The fact that Emre 'is happy in Cyprus even though it is not a recognised country' may boost his aspirations to contribute to the social and economic development of his parental homeland. At the same time, however, it is precisely the political status of northern Cyprus which limits his social and economic options, and hence complicates his ability to contribute. Despite Aysu's involvement with reconciliation and pro-dialogue activities with Greek Cypriots over the years, northern Cyprus remains an isolated zone characterised with 'bad economic chaos [and] mismanagement of the administration', preventing *her* children from pursuing healthy careers on the island. And while Leyla hopes that her children's generation will have the 'broader, neutral and worldlier view' which she believes is needed in order to

change the current situation in Cyprus and work towards a solution for the ‘Cyprus problem’, she also believes that such views are best obtained *away* from the island.

Therefore, despite the political developments in the recent years, including the opening of the crossings that enable Cypriots to move more freely across the island, one must not forget the unusual state of affairs on the northern part of the island. Yael Navaro-Yashin, in her study on the northern Cypriot space, a territory which is unrecognised by the international community, reminds us to hold on to ‘that strangeness’ when we write about northern Cyprus, since it is central to the lived experiences of our participants: ‘this is not a “place” that is natural and in place. This is “no man’s land”, carved out as “place” through specific historical agencies. Here we are studying a contemporary experience unrepresented in ethnographies of transnationalism and globalization’ (Navaro-Yashin 2003: 120).

While the answer to the question of the extent to which British-born Turkish Cypriots (and their children) will be able to effectively contribute to societal changes remains to be seen and while further detailed research remains to be done, my participants’ awareness, involvement and willingness to contribute to the future of their ‘homeland’ – regardless of their divergent attitudes, backgrounds and political ideals – offer an optimistic hope that they *do* have the potential to become agents of change on behalf of northern Cyprus, and the island at large.

7.7 SUMMARY AND COMPARISONS

This chapter has aimed to provide an impression of the experiences of British-born Turkish Cypriots who relocated to the parental homeland, Cyprus, by highlighting those elements that surfaced as key in their life-narratives and in everyday informal discussions.

The Turkish Cypriots in the UK have been generally perceived as an ‘invisible population’ (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Robins and Aksoy 2001), as very little was (and still is) being written about them, and the community itself was by and large believed

to maintain a 'low profile' in the wider context of multicultural Britain, factors that undoubtedly stimulated one another.⁷² Indeed many of my participants remembered that, when growing up, the Turkish-Cypriot element – if present at all – was something experienced and executed within the immediate family setting, rather than something that was part of the wider social or community surroundings. At the same time, however, historical developments in Cyprus and local relationships with the Greek Cypriots did seem to play an important role in the participants' everyday experiences whilst growing up, much more than it did vice versa in the Greek-Cypriot case. The Turkish-Cypriot narratives incorporated childhood memories of spending time with Greek-Cypriot friends, and later of political disputes between Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot university students. Like the British-born Greek Cypriots, childhood memories of holidays to Cyprus were generally very positive, recalling sunshine, the charming countryside, family hospitality and good times spent at the seaside, as well as the great sense of freedom experienced during visits to the island, contrasting their lives in the UK. What *was* different from the accounts of their Greek-Cypriot counterparts, however, were references to the conflict (or the aftermath) and to experiences of interactions with Greek Cypriots whilst visiting the island.

Motives for return to Cyprus varied. Some were pulled by the warm welcome they experienced during their childhood visits or remembered from family stories, whilst others returned for more practical reasons, like to join a partner. Many believe that Cyprus provides a better and safer environment to raise a family; hence children often played an important role in the migration decision. For most, however, the decision was based on a unique combination of factors, in order to reach a better quality of life for themselves and their loved ones, an ambition that was realised to a considerable extent for nearly all participants. In this sense, again, many commonalities can be found with the second-generation Greek-Cypriot returnees.

⁷² More recently, Turkish Cypriots' 'identity' in the UK, especially in London, has been folded into the wider realm of the 'Turkish' or 'Turkish-speaking' populations originating from mainland Turkey (King et al. 2008a, 2008b).

Prior to April 2003 northern Cyprus was divided by an uncrossable internal border and communication between the two sides was virtually non-existent. Although people have been able to cross to the 'other side' since the border openings seven years ago, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus remains unrecognised by the international community. Therefore only the Greek-Cypriot side effectively became part of the European Union in 2004. The everyday experiences of the isolation of northern Cyprus, the actual physical experiences of crossing to the south, and the way the recent check-point openings have influenced the participants' lives, played a vital role in the participants' everyday consciousness, and hence formed an integral part of their narratives.

For the British-born Greek Cypriots, feelings of home and belonging were very much articulated *beyond* essentialised ethnic and cultural boundaries, formed around personal and social relations, influenced by a variety of cultures 'borrowing' from each other, hence blurring the question of who inhabits whose space. And while to a certain extent this applies to the second-generation Turkish Cypriots too, as many *do* occupy professional and personal spaces that defy such abstract boundaries, there *is* one very real and physical boundary that plays an important role in their everyday feelings of belonging: the actual separation between northern and southern Cyprus. Most of my Turkish-Cypriot participants cross the Green Line regularly, for a variety of reasons ranging from occasional leisure activities, such as shopping or going out, to everyday routines, for work or school. For many, the southern side offers consumer items, activities or services which are unavailable, or of 'lesser' quality, in the north.

From a very early age, participants were conscious of the unusual position of northern Cyprus, and today, as residents of this controversial space, it has become part of their everyday awareness. Furthermore, the actual act of travelling back and forth between the two 'sides' appears to bring about an acute sense of belonging to the north, and a feeling of 'arriving home' when crossing back from 'the south', regardless of the more fluid 'third cultural spaces of belonging' they may occupy. It is precisely this reality which continues to confront the British-born Turkish Cypriots with the political situation on a daily basis, and which caused references to the 'Cyprus problem', a

potential solution, and *their* potential role in social change in Cyprus, to be strongly embedded in their life-narratives.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has focused on the multifaceted perspectives in which notions of 'return', 'home' and 'belonging' can be viewed and experienced in a migratory context, through the voices and life-narratives of second-generation British-Cypriot 'return' migrants. My thesis is perhaps best described as a 'narrative ethnography', demonstrating the interplay between narrative interviews and other ethnographic observations and encounters, aiming to emphasise particularity through textual means. I have aspired to be guided by my empirical data, in order to provide an interpretation that puts experience first, rather than abstraction. Therefore I chose to interweave relevant literature throughout the empirical chapters, rather than present separate literature reviews, seeking thereby to create a 'conversation' between the data and wider concepts and settings, whilst leaving my readers space to bring in their own meanings and interpretations.

As I hope has been clear, the life-narratives were extremely rich, with information often extending beyond the focus of my thesis. I have attempted to take up those elements and themes that characterised the narratives as a whole, whilst staying true to the individual stories (and the words they consist of). One of my key aspirations was to avoid making assumptions about my participants in advance, both in light of their parents' migration histories as well as the wider literature on second-generation 'return' migration. My impressions started from the life-worlds and experiences of my participants as individuals, rather than from their (presumed) shared characteristics. During our conversations and interviews, I would avoid using terms such as 'homeland', 'roots', 'identity' or 'ancestry', leaving it up to the participants which words to choose when describing their experiences and views. This approach proved to be fruitful in revealing *new* similarities (and differences) that lie under the surface of predefined

labels and categories. My analysis shows how boundaries are blurred, eroded and re-established by a new generation of migrants, reflecting *their* time, experiences, choices and ideologies. Location, place and space *are* important elements in these migrants' reflections – however, they are often experienced beyond and across predefined ethnic, national and primordial cultural confines, revealing new, contemporary, ways and spaces of belonging.

I elaborate further on these points in the next section, in which I revisit the individual research questions I set out in part 1.5 of Chapter 1. This is followed by a discussion on what can be learned from this thesis, from a thematic, regional and epistemological perspective. Then I reflect on the limitations of my study, some of which overlap with my considerations for further research. I close the chapter, and the entire thesis, with a self-reflective note on my own positionality and 'research journey'.

8.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

Although the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 have been dealt with at some considerable length in the empirical chapters, I would like to highlight the key points of those answers below.

My first research question, which was focused on **the role of childhood experiences**, both in the UK and during 'home-country' visits, was largely addressed in Chapter 4, the first empirical chapter of the thesis. It was considered more briefly, for the Turkish Cypriots, in section 7.2 of Chapter 7. Many of my participants were brought up in family and ethnic-community surroundings in which 'Cypriot' was understood to be 'safe', whilst 'British' was often correlated with 'threatening', both in terms of values and 'traditions' as well as personal and physical security. These views were clearly materialised in memories of their parents' conduct in the UK and in Cyprus. In contrast to their strict and protected upbringing in the UK, participants remembered the times spent in Cyprus (whether during holidays or more extended stays) as periods of great freedom and exposure to liberties often inadmissible in the UK. Consequently, and

combined with the Mediterranean climate and welcoming relatives, childhood times spent in Cyprus were often remembered in rosy terms.

This contrast also caused the participants to reflect on notions of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’, revealing the multiple understandings, nuances and ambiguities these supposedly opposing terms entail. The ‘traditional’ Cypriot values their parents brought with them to the UK, and according to which they raised their British-born children (to various extents), had often faded out in the ‘modern’ Cyprus the second generation encountered during their return visits. On the other hand, many participants believed their overall ‘outlook’ on life – particularly in terms of social issues such as multiculturalism and tolerance as well as their own ability to recognise (what they perceived as) the ‘shallow’ side of the island’s accelerated consumerism – to be much more ‘modern’ and progressive than those of their native Cypriot counterparts.

Hence, childhood times spent in Cyprus *did* contribute to the participants’ learning process about the ‘homeland’, particularly in enabling them to draw a contrast between the images of Cyprus constructed in the diaspora and the everyday reality on the island itself, thus allowing them to establish their *own* perceptions, beyond those of their first-generation migrant parents and their relatives and peers in Cyprus. Rather than internalising the essentialised notions held in the diaspora about Cyprus and those held in Cyprus about the diaspora, these migrants developed their own narratives, based on *their* experiences and unique position as British-born individuals of Cypriot parentage.⁷³ Yet, the potential hypothesis that such ‘home-country’ visits played an instrumental role in the participants’ choice to *move* to Cyprus later on in life, was only partly supported. Rather, returns took place for many other, individualised reasons, which ushers in my synthesis of the second research question listed in Chapter 1.

⁷³ This particularly applies to those under the age of 50 (i.e. most of the second-generation ‘returnees’), as they generally visited Cyprus more often than some of the ‘older’ participants.

What factors, then, *did* stimulate **the second generation's decision to return**? Although each individual return was prompted by unique personal circumstances, my overall analysis shows that most were drawn to Cyprus for pragmatic, non-essentialist, reasons. While the first generation's (mythical) desire to leave the host country is said to be primarily based on a yearning to go back to their roots, the second generation's departure, at least in the case of my study, often had other primary and highly individual reasons. Only few made a direct causal connection between parental return narratives and their own desire to return. The main theme running through the narratives of these second-generation returnees was a desire for a better (or different) quality of life, in terms of climate, safety, and pace of life – in contrast to the British weather, fast-paced lifestyle, and the perceived high levels of crime and associated lack of personal safety. Although more practical reasons, such as a job offer, business plan or property opportunity, often prompted the actual move, in most cases the underlying motives were driven by the wish to improve their overall 'lifestyle package'. Nevertheless, the decision to move to Cyprus – rather than to another country (such as Spain or Italy) that meets these desired conditions – *is* based on their connection to the island and should not be ignored. The combination of the desired qualities of life, *plus* a familiar environment, in terms of 'culture', language and geography, made Cyprus the obvious choice. However, such pull factors are significantly different from the feelings of nostalgia or the essential longing to go back to one's 'roots' often mentioned in other studies on second-generation return migration (for instance, Phillips and Potter 2009; Wessendorf 2007). So even though, hypothetically, these second-generation migrants materialised their parents' desire to return, their motives are often very different.

In terms of **family, gender and generational dynamics surrounding the second generation's return experience**, I should stress that the return generally took place as an independent move, either individually or with a partner. Even if other family members had also relocated to the island, participants largely described their own relocation as an autonomous decision.⁷⁴ Furthermore, those who returned with their

⁷⁴ This finding parallels the results of the comparative surveys carried out by Christou and King of Greek-Americans and Greek-Germans (Christou 2006c; King and Christou 2010).

parents at a younger age, and thus initially had no choice in the matter, all left the island some years later to study or work in the UK (or in some cases elsewhere abroad). Hence, they too arrived at a point later on in their adult life where they had to take their *own* decision whether or not to (re)turn to Cyprus, which they described as an individual and self-constructive process.

For some, the search for a better quality of life was directly linked to a desire to escape (or resolve) a family crisis or conflict. Chapter 5 included examples of relocations undertaken following a marriage break-up, as well as in order to prevent one. Furthermore, for some of the female returnees, the need for more independence from a socially claustrophobic family environment played a significant role in their move to Cyprus. Unlike other studies on second-generation return, which often emphasise the desire to be closer to family and kin and therefore having to comply with the 'traditional' and often constrained gender relations in the 'homeland' (as opposed to the more 'western' gender relations in the country of birth), some British-born Cypriot women returned to Cyprus in order to experience more freedom and autonomy, *away* from their family in the diaspora. This observation reveals how gender relations can also work the other way around. Along similar lines, gendered tensions, between the returnees and the 'natives', did not seem to arise from a clear-cut 'western' versus 'traditional' (indigenous) gendered conception, as is often suggested in studies on second-generation return (for example those in the Caribbean or Southern Italy – cf. Reynolds 2008; Wessendorf 2007). Rather they appeared to derive from a place of 'competition', between the 'natives' and the 'migrants', for certain positions in *contemporary* Cyprus. This was particularly apparent in the narratives of female returnees, who often spoke about the sexual and economic rivalry they encountered in everyday life, deriving from what they described as the local women's concern about migrant women taking 'their jobs' and 'their men'. Consequently, the female participants generally found it difficult to establish contacts with local (indigenous) women, preferring friendships with foreign (or 'mixed') women instead. The male returnees on the other hand, although expressing some experiences of professional advantage, did not appear to be affected by such rivalry with local (indigenous) men. They did, however, maintain that they had more in common with the foreign residents

of the island, as was vividly illustrated in some of the narrative extracts presented, particularly in Chapter 6.

The latter issue was also manifested in participants' (both male and female) reflections on their *own* families, which were often formed (or imagined to be formed) beyond ethnic or essentialised cultural boundaries, again indicating their agency in determining their personal life paths. Nevertheless, participants *did* perceive Cyprus as the best place to raise their children; a view which indeed for many contributed to the decision to return to – or remain in – Cyprus, as was repeatedly articulated throughout the empirical chapters, including Chapter 7 on the Turkish Cypriots. In fact, it was precisely those elements associated with their *own* childhood memories of Cyprus, such as freedom, safety and the overall Mediterranean lifestyle, that were instrumental in considering the upbringing of their own children. However, in contrast to their own – often more ethno-culturally 'essentialised' – upbringing, these second-generation 'returnees' choose to provide their children with a more 'hybrid' upbringing. The empirical material shows that, in order to offer their children the best overall 'package', participants tended to pick and choose from a variety of Cypriot, British and international elements, often strategically switching between a variety of local, international and transnational sites. For the Turkish Cypriots, this variety of sites also includes the 'Greek' south of Cyprus, used by some participants for shopping, schooling and entertainment. Interestingly, both first-generation returnees (with regard to their second-generation children) and second-generation returnees (with regard to *their* children) appear to adopt this strategic approach. Indeed, it would be interesting, as previously suggested by Anastasia Christou (2006c) in relation to her study on second-generation Greek-American return migration, to undertake a similar study with the children of second-generation return migrants who would be classified as third-generation, both those born in the UK and those born in Cyprus following their parents' return migration.

It is important to note that, although the overview so far applies to the majority of my participants, in the course of my research I spoke to a small number of female returnees over the age of 50, whose experiences were notably different. These women

described their journeys in terms of restriction and conformity, rather than independence and autonomy, and, unlike the other participants, they seem to have been affected by an 'essentialised' Cypriotness well into their adult lives. Having said that, I do not want to extend this observation to all women of this particular age group, as the majority of my female participants *do* resemble the wider descriptions provided in this thesis.

As regards **the returnees' reaction to the fundamental changes Cyprus has undergone in recent years** – my fourth research question – references to increased levels of materialism and consumerism clearly stand out in the interviewee accounts, as well as the arrival of new immigrants in the island (but hardly so in northern Cyprus). Hence, even if there was little causal connection between childhood experiences and the actual decision to return later on in life, memories of the 'old Cyprus' *did* influence participants' expectations and impressions of Cyprus when returning as adults. Chapter 4 revealed how responses to the multi-ethnic society of today's Cyprus were quite mixed and at times ambivalent, with some participants simultaneously expressing appreciation *and* reservation about the various migrant communities. However, *overall*, participants were very positive about the cultural diversity in Cyprus. In fact, for many, this diversity contributes to their own feelings (and ability to create new spaces) of belonging in Cyprus today – well illustrated by the accounts of belongingness in Chapter 6. After all, they *too* are migrants in Cyprus. In the same breath, participants would – often critically – comment on the native Cypriots' attitude towards, and treatment of, migrants, particularly those from developing countries.

In terms of the perceived negative consequences of increased levels of globalisation and consumerism, participants described how these developments have turned Cyprus into a more individualistic society, which in turn has contributed to the loss of the hospitable culture they remembered from their childhood times spent in Cyprus, a realisation that caused some to experience a sense of disillusionment upon their return. This observation is duplicated in the narratives of returning second-generation Greek-Americans and Greek-Germans who relocated to Greece (Christou 2006a, 2006c; King and Christou 2010). My evidence found that this was often linked to broader

reflections on the impact of globalisation on Cypriot society, such as the accelerated materialist developments over recent years, which many participants believed to have brought forth a certain aloofness and shallowness amongst the native Cypriot population. However, despite these critical views related to changes in Cypriot society at large, most participants viewed the island as a highly favourable place, in the context of the aforementioned quality-of-life factors.

It is interesting that the key constituents of a happy and successful return were often also identified as the main frustrations. This was particularly evident in Chapter 5, where, for example, participants articulated how highly valued characteristics of Cyprus, such as the slower pace of life and the close proximity between places, are also sources of their main everyday annoyances, such as lingering formalities, poor punctuality and lack of anonymity. However, while frequently switching between and reflecting upon the pros and cons, participants often concluded that, generally, the plusses of life in Cyprus outweigh the minuses. This was also manifested in the discussion on the perceived economic rivalry with the native (indigenous) population. In this case, many of the participants were in fact able to capitalise upon the very factors that caused such rivalry, like the alleged higher levels of professionalism amongst the returnees.

Finally, in terms of adjusting to their new island environment, I would like to emphasise, as stressed in Chapter 5, that not all difficulties in adjustment to the island were measured against memories or prior expectations from the 'homeland'. Rather, many comparisons – both positive and negative – were made with the UK, their country of birth, without linking it to the 'imagined homeland'. Furthermore, participants would reflect on the attitudes held by the local people from the perspective of a new migrant, rather than from a position of nostalgia or using a 'returnee' perspective. In everyday life this is manifested in the returnees' personal and professional relations, which are often established with a wide variety of individuals from various ethnic and national backgrounds, based on their shared experiences as 'migrants' or 'transnationals'.

My final two research questions addressed **notions of home and belonging; and the role of cultural-geographic, 'essentialised' scripts versus more personalised, 'hybridised' accounts in the narratives and conversations of the participants.**

This study provides valuable input with regard to the participants' overall feelings of belonging today, which are wrapped up in Chapter 6, along with associated theoretical discussion. One striking element in the returnees' narratives was the unique spaces of belonging they created *beyond* national, ethnic and fixed cultural boundaries. I have called these 'new' spaces 'third cultural spaces of belonging'. These migrants tend to create spaces of belonging in their personal, leisure, and work lives that are shared with individuals and groups whose ethnic, national, linguistic and ancestral backgrounds vary greatly. It is precisely that diversity that unifies them. The privileging of such experiences of belonging over 'traditional' classifications of identity brings about a sense of unity defined by one's relations to (both actual and metaphorical) spaces, beyond the traditional 'here and there' and 'them and us' dichotomies. Feelings of familiarity and comfort are key in the participants' narratives, but not necessarily defined by common ethnic or national characteristics. Rather, these feelings are based on shared experiences and life-views, drawing upon a variety of other sources, such as the same generational, age and life-cycle cohort; common interests in music, films, art, travel; humour; shared personal life histories, struggles, ideologies, and so on. This highlights the particularity of this group. Similarly, in terms of romantic relationships, in most cases ethnic or national background did not appear to be a prerequisite, whilst a shared worldview and experiences *beyond* predefined cultural boundaries did.

Yet, Cyprus as a *place* remains important in the narratives of these British-born Cypriot returnees. The narratives showed that being part of such a 'third cultural space' and being part of a 'Cypriot space' are not mutually exclusive. Indeed the one is rooted in the other. Unlike 'placeless' transnational fields which, although established *across* national borders, often maintain (and are based on) common cultural or ethno-national characteristics, these new 'spaces of belonging' are localised *in* Cyprus while defying the dual ethno-national characteristics that usually define transnationalism.

Cyprus becomes a place of belonging where new cultures are developed by a new generation, which is the result of a journey which has been characterised, to greater or lesser extent, by 'essentialised' Cypriot diasporic experiences as well as a 'hybridised' more individualised self. Participants described how they assemble those aspects of comfort and familiarity in Cyprus that create a feeling of home for *them*: a socio-cultural space to which they feel they belong and which they share with people from various national and ethnic backgrounds, but which does not necessarily exclude the more 'essentialised' elements of Cypriotness (such as the 'homeliness' of the Cypriot family or the feelings of safety experienced in Cypriot society at large). This results in a new kind of 'Cypriotness' experienced by the British-born Cypriots in Cyprus today, which is shared with a variety of people, some of whom are of Cypriot parentage, whilst others are not. For these migrants, 'Cypriotness' is not exclusively shaped by the Cypriot nation, its history, traditions or their parents' migration experiences. Rather, their affiliations, relations and emotional self-attributions *beyond* such essentialised understandings of 'Cypriotness' form new spaces of home and belonging, which are based on a variety of experiences and views, yet located *in* Cyprus.

Overall, I found the British-born Cypriots who participated in my study to be reflective and articulate individuals who claim ownership over their feelings of home and belonging today, which, despite – or perhaps *because* of – the struggles and dilemmas they may have faced along the way, brings about a sense of pride and empowerment.

8.3 WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THIS STUDY ON BRITISH-CYPRIOT SECOND-GENERATION 'RETURN' MIGRATION?

In the introductory chapter, I contextualised my thesis in three dimensions – thematic, regional and epistemological (section 1.4). I now revisit these three contextual points and try to evaluate what has been achieved, which includes also an assessment of what has *not* been achieved, and therefore some suggestions for further research.

Thematically, while my thesis adds a substantial empirical study to the growing literature on second-generation and ancestral return, being the first study of its kind

focusing on Cyprus, it also offers challenges to some of the main findings from studies on second-generation return so far. Return migration is largely seen as a first-generation phenomenon. Until not too long ago, research on the second generation tended to focus on integration or assimilation into the 'host' society, whilst relatively little was written about their connection (and potential 'return') to the 'homeland'. This is now increasingly being rectified by a rapid increase in studies on the transnational lives and the 'return' of the second generation, many of which have been cited throughout this thesis. Yet, the migrants' experiences are mainly examined within, or weighted against, the cultural and national integrity (traditionally) held by the societies they inhabit, and hence often remain placed along the marginality vs. assimilation continuum. The potential *new* social spaces and relations that second-generation returnees form *beyond* such fixed cultural and ethnic boundaries, however, and the role of such spaces in creating a sense of 'home' and 'belonging' in the parental homeland, have received little attention. Apart from some work on Caribbean return migrants, these studies appear to mainly talk about the (important!) problems and difficulties involved with the process of return. My study on the experiences of British-born Cypriot returnees is certainly not devoid of references to struggles and problems settling in. However, references to what is *gained* and *created* as a result of their return were particularly striking. I believe that, in order to get a more complete and contemporary understanding of the lived experiences of this particular 'generation' of migrants, we should not only focus on 'what is not' or 'what is lost', but also incorporate 'what *is*' and 'what is *gained*'. In saying this I am not claiming my study is somehow more 'valid' or 'legitimate' or even more 'original' than the others. Partly it is a difference in emphasis which is guided by the data, which reflects in turn the unique character of Cyprus as a positive space in which 'good' and 'successful' return migration can be enacted. By 'good' return migration I mean a 'return' relocation through which returnees can 'feel at home', 'find' and 'be' themselves, and contribute something positive to the ongoing social, cultural, political and economic development of Cyprus. These developmental aspects of Cyprus' contemporary evolution, which have only been alluded to *en passant* in the present thesis, could undoubtedly be the focus of further study, linked (or not) to the various migratory processes that Cyprus

has been witnessing in recent decades. But this would be a different kind of study, with Cyprus, rather than the migrants, centre-stage.

A second point, made several times throughout the thesis, which bears repeating here, is the need to look *beyond* the 'root connection'. I do believe that, in an attempt to emphasise the differences between the 'old' (or 'imagined') and the 'new' (or 'actual') homeland, studies on second-generation return migration tend to overlook the returnees' actual experiences of adjusting to a *new* country. My analysis showed that it is important to bear in mind that these individuals, despite having moved to their parental homeland, are in many ways like other migrants, settling in and negotiating a *new* reality.

Naturally, any group of migrants comes with its own particularities and historical characteristics, and it is important to acknowledge the **regional** context, and the larger social and cultural context of the nation state within which experiences are formed. First of all, and unlike participants in some other studies on second-generation return, most of my participants would frequently visit the parental homeland for holiday, or for extended periods of time, whilst growing up; hence they were not unfamiliar with the country's developments over time. Furthermore, Cyprus' colonial history and the influx of foreign residents over recent years, combined with other forces of globalisation, have brought about rapid socio-economic development, increased consumerism, and 'Anglicised' and 'Europeanised' the island, as well as caused English to be widely used for social and professional exchange. This scenario bestows British-born Cypriots with valuable tools for social, economic and professional advancement, whilst benefiting from the local quality-of-life characteristics of the island. This may explain some of the differences between the findings of my study and findings from other studies on second-generation return, for instance in nearby Greece where disillusionment and disappointment were frequent themes in the reactions of the 'returnees' (see Christou 2006a; Christou and King 2006; King and Christou 2010). It may also explain some of the *similarities* with studies on second-generation return migration to the 'British' Caribbean, as the latter shares the characteristic of being composed of post-colonial island communities (Phillips and Potter 2006). However,

more in-depth comparative research is needed to be able to establish such an argument.

On an **epistemological** level, I have been inspired by, and have attempted to follow, Abu-Lughod's (1991: 158) suggestion to experiment with 'narrative ethnographies of the particular', in which creative insight becomes the goal, rather than replicability. Perhaps there is no getting around what Geertz (1988: 144-145) has called the 'un-get-aroundable fact that all ethnographic descriptions are homemade, that they are the describers' descriptions and not those of the described', but by drawing upon collaborative, sensitive, critical ethnographic methods – and by adopting the unconventional approach of taking my writing process and descriptions *back* to 'the field' – I have tried to be explicit about the nature of reflexivity and subjectivity (both my participants' and my own) that shape my analysis. Adhering to the participants' unique articulations of 'belonging', as shaped by *their* views and experiences *today*, allowed me to move away from the more 'traditional' classifications of identity and the essentialised notions of 'culture'. This shift in focus has revealed *new* socio-cultural spaces and relations *beyond* traditional boundaries. Along similar lines, the narratives showed how experiences of 'home' and 'belonging' cannot be limited to specific disciplinary dimensions. After all, individuals do not narrate from within disciplinary boundaries, but 'from the heart'. This was illustrated throughout the various narratives, which captured the variety of physical (house, geographical locations etc.), emotional (friends, partner, family, social environment etc.) and sensory factors (landscapes, smells, sounds etc.) that contribute to one's feeling of 'belonging' (or not). The narratives showed how dynamic individual perceptions of 'home' and 'belonging' are, and how such perceptions transform and tend to change the course of an individual life, or in different spatial contexts.

In adopting a partial ground-theory approach and an empirical inductive research philosophy, I have left both comparison to existing literature and theorisation to the later part of my analysis, rather than setting out *ab initio* hypotheses or conceptual frameworks. Some concepts, it is true, had to be introduced and referenced early on in the thesis – hence there was preliminary definition and discussion of return migration,

second generation, gender and class in Chapter 1. Subsequently these concepts, and discussion of other key framing devices, such as identity (even if only to explain why I have largely avoided using this term), home, belonging, culture (especially ‘third cultural spaces’), hybridity, etc., was postponed until the latter stages of my empirical account, especially Chapter 6. This epistemological structuring of my descriptive analysis may not please every reader, particularly those who want more concepts and theory ‘up-front’, but it is consistent with my own preferred approach and with the kind of thesis I wanted to write.

Having addressed the thematic, regional and epistemological contributions of this thesis, I would like to come back to the unique **British-born Turkish-Cypriot experiences**, and how they compare to those of the British-born Greek Cypriots. Although discussed in the previous chapter, I will briefly repeat the key points, and highlight what can be learned from them. A number of similarities with the Greek-Cypriot case study were identified, and hence can be found in the previous sections in which I revisited the research questions – such as the highly positive childhood memories of the ‘homeland’, the search for a better quality of life, the strategic switching between various local and international sites when it comes to the education of their children, and the ‘third cultural spaces of belonging’ developed upon return. Yet, there were also some key differences. The first is linked to the increased levels of consumerism in ‘the south’. Whilst many of the British-born Greek-Cypriot returnees were critical towards this development, the Turkish-Cypriot participants seemed overall more positive about the broad consumers’ choice across the Green Line, as they are now able to obtain products or services – ranging from shops and entertainment to education for their children – which are unavailable, or of ‘lesser’ standard, in ‘the north’. This can be connected to the fact that the northern part of Cyprus has been isolated for such a significant amount of time, whereas the south is perceived as a gate ‘outwards’, to Europe and the wider international community. More striking, secondly, was how political references (to ‘the Cyprus problem’, ‘the division’, and ‘the Greek Cypriots’) were naturally interwoven throughout the narratives of the British-born Turkish Cypriots. This indicates the direct and ongoing impact that Cypriot politics have on these returnees’ everyday lives, which appeared to

be far greater than in the case of their Greek-Cypriot counterparts. Hence, the unusual state of affairs in the northern part of the island, a territory which is unrecognised by the international community, seems to be central to the lived experiences of the second-generation Turkish-Cypriot 'return' migrants. This awareness would often lead the Turkish-Cypriot participants to reflect on their potential contributions (or restrictions) with regard to social, cultural and economic change in Cyprus.

The last point reflects both one of the limitations of my study *and* a suggestion for future research. The fact that the Greek-Cypriot narratives were not very politicised, despite taking place in such a politically-charged geographical setting, could be perceived as a weakness. This is attributable to the fact that my particular research approach privileged those themes that 'naturally' emerged from the participants' narrations of their journeys 'home', and what *they* identified as key factors, rather than me prompting them with certain themes beforehand. However, despite not specifically commenting on their own potential contribution to Cypriot society at large, the British-born Greek Cypriots clearly demonstrated awareness of the social and cultural developments on the island. Furthermore, and as demonstrated throughout this thesis, they *are* a factor in the development of new social and cultural spaces in Cyprus. This observation, combined with the 'agents of change theme' that arose from the Turkish-Cypriot return narratives, provides a grounding for future research *specifically* focusing on the role of returning Cypriot migrants (both Greek and Turkish) in societal change in the homeland.

Regarding the limitations of my study, I should emphasise once again the partiality of what is presented here. Some important voices are absent or under-represented. First of all, an important part of the participants' positioning within Cypriot society was their perceptions of how they are perceived by the native (indigenous) Cypriots. However, the voices of these native Cypriots are left unexplored. This indicates a further need for studies on encounters between migrants (both returnees and other 'new' immigrants) and non-migrants. Secondly, and for the obvious reason that my research focused on British-born Cypriots *in* Cyprus and hence my main fieldwork took place locally, the data presented in this thesis does not include accounts of British-born Cypriots who

're-returned' to the UK, following an 'unsuccessful' move to Cyprus, although I am aware that such cases are not uncommon. And finally, I would like to come back to the aforementioned limited inclusion of those second-generation returnees who are older than the greater part of the participants; specifically women over the age of 50, as some of their experiences appeared to differ greatly from the rest. Although I do touch upon their experiences, their number is too small to make generalisations. I *do* believe that my overall sample provides a fair reflection in terms of age, as, in line with the first generation's migration history, the ages of most second-generation returnees range between the mid 20s and late 40s. However, in order to bring some of the older participants' experiences to the foreground, it would have been good to apply a sampling technique which also focuses on 'generation as cohort', in addition to the main focus of 'generation as a principle of kinship descent'. Although such an approach may have provided a less accurate reflection of the second-generation returnees as a whole, it would have allowed for a fairer voice for this particular age group.

8.4 A PERSONALISED CONCLUSION: MY 'RESEARCH JOURNEY'

This research has been a long and incredibly valuable journey, which has contributed to my own development on many different levels, both academically and personally. I have often read about the very personal journeys researchers go through while conducting ethnographic studies. Mine was no exception. While gathering the data and getting acquainted with people's intimate lives, feelings and perceptions, not only did I gain an in-depth view of my participants' 'inner' and 'outer' worlds, I also made some discoveries about myself and the way I observe and interact with my own personal environment. I feel fortunate indeed to have had this opportunity to conduct research, and live my life, in this beautiful and warm corner of the world, and to engage with this extremely welcoming and fascinating group of people.

A migrant myself, equipped with a metaphorical (and often literal!) rucksack of 'hybrid' cross-cultural experiences and distresses, I too found the sense of comfort and recognition so often described by my participants, in these 'third cultural spaces of belonging'. I grew to understand the participants' appreciation for the laid-back

Mediterranean lifestyle, the climate, the close proximity between places, and the sense of identification with other 'mixed' or 'international' individuals – as well as the less 'welcomed' sides of their migration stories, such as the prejudices, loss of anonymity, lack of punctuality and frustrating formalities – because I experienced them too. I made some of my best friends during my stay in Cyprus, and there is no doubt that my position as a researcher was often blurred by the close relationships I developed with some of my participants, their families, and their friends. There were the occasional moments where I asked myself if there was a risk of getting 'too involved' or 'too settled' in Cyprus, but I believe that my own – and others' – grasp of my position as 'a researcher', as well as the awareness of the temporary nature of my research stay, guarded me from doing so. Furthermore, there was always one outsider position that remained steady throughout my research, which was the unchangeable fact that I, unlike my participants, do not have any Cypriot ancestral ties. I believe that this was an important factor in 'balancing' my insider-outsider position, providing me with the right equilibrium of understanding and affinity towards them on the one hand, and a certain degree of 'distance' and detachment on the other.

I find myself struggling to 'wrap up' this thesis. 'Checking out' of the research habitat which I occupied, and which occupied me, for the past three-and-a-half years proves harder than I thought. No words seem suitable or captivating enough to be the last ones. It has been a wonderful journey, one that I will always treasure.

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