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Moving borders, crossing boundaries: young people's identities in a time of change 3: constructing identities in European islands - Cyprus and Iceland

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Abstract

This is the third of a series of presentations based on the development of a project being undertaken under the aegis of a Jean Monnet Professorship. Previous papers (Ross 2010, 2011) reported on the Baltic states, the Visegrad states and Turkey. This paper focuses on two rather different European states, both islands. Cyprus is a post 2004 member of the European Union, and Iceland is a candidate country. What discourses do young people use to construct their sense of identities, in relation to their potential national identity and potential European identity? We examine these in the context of Bruter's (2005) thesis that identities can be constructed around institutional or cultural axes; Jamieson and Grundy's (2007) descriptions of 'passionate' and 'indifferent' Europeanism; and the emerging descriptions of generational changes in identity, reported variously by Fulbrook (2011) and Miller-Idriss (2009). We suggest that there are significant differences between the constructions of identities in these two locations when compared to mainland or 'continental' European societies, but also some similarities, particularly in terms of intergenerational change.

Keywords: *identities, constructivism, national, European, Cyprus, Iceland*

This is part of a larger project, about how young people in a wide range of countries conceptualise themselves in the changing socio-political circumstances of Europe, and about whether, and, if so how, they see themselves as different to older generations[1]. In the two countries being considered here, there have been particular changes and tensions that may have affected young peoples' construction of identities.

Cyprus and Iceland are both islands, not part of 'continental Europe', and thus sometimes may be perceived as being less 'European' than many of the other countries in this study. Moreover, it is at least debatable whether either is wholly European from the perspective of the traditional geographical definition of Europe. Cyprus's position, south of Turkey, should place it clearly out of Europe to at least all of those who dispute Turkey's European identity. Iceland, situated as a volcanic outcrop of the mid-Atlantic ridge, is geologically divided between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. Historically and culturally, both have been perceived as European. However, both are at

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the limits of Europe, and their island status may contribute to a sense of distance from continental Europe, and gives a much more definite frontier to the country than is usual for most continental countries. So one research aim is to question the extent to which young people consider themselves as Europeans: do they think they are part of Europe?

Iceland and Cyprus are among the smallest countries in Europe by size of population. By GDP per capita, Cyprus is at the EU average, with Iceland about 20% better off, slightly higher than the UK. Iceland is a large island but mostly uninhabitable rock, glacier and tundra. Table 1 gives some indication of the size of the two countries in relation to three other European island countries.

Table 1. Comparative data on Iceland and Cyprus, compared to three other European 'island countries'

	Population[a] Thousands	Area[a] thousand km2	GDP per head[a] euro
Iceland	310	103	28,300
Cyprus	1,140[b]	9	23,200
Ireland	4,400	70	30,200
Malta	400	0.3	18,400
UK	62,000	244	27,400

a Data for 2010 from Eurostat (epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu)
[b] Estimate: Republic of Cyprus 839,000 (as note a), plus an estimate of population in the north of Cyprus by the International Crisis Group (of 300,000)

Iceland was for many centuries a Danish territory – a very poor country, harshly ruled particularly in the 16th and 17th centuries. Limited home rule began in the 1870s, and from 1918 Iceland was technically a fully sovereign state in 'personal union with the King of Denmark'. There was substantial economic development after 1945, based initially on fishing, and then, after joining the European Economic Area in 1994, on providing complex financial services. These were so complex that by 2007 the country's external debt was six times in GDP, with the debt largely held by the banks. These crashed: relative to the size of the economy, the largest banking collapse of any country, ever. The Krona fell sharply in value, foreign currency transactions were suspended for months, and the value of the Icelandic stock exchange fell by over 90%. There has been resistance to membership of the European Union, largely over fisheries policy, though Iceland has been a member of the Schengen area since 2001, and has long been a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the internal market. But in 2009 Iceland applied to join the Union, and was accepted as a candidate country: negotiations opened in mid 2010 and may finish this year: there will then be a referendum in Iceland (opinion is currently fairly evenly divided), and possible membership in 2013 or 2014. Since the financial crisis, a left wing government has managed to largely contain the crisis: the social welfare system has been protected and unemployment is only at about 5%.

Cyprus has been a member of the Union since 2004. The island had a long history of being bartered between Mediterranean powers, who provided a ruling elite over the

Christian serfs and peasants. The Ottoman Empire seized the island in the early 1570s, and recognised the Greek Orthodox majority as self-governing in most matters. About one third of the population became Muslim. In 1878 Cyprus was leased to Britain in return for guarantees that it would use the island as a base to protect the Ottoman Empire against possible Russian aggression: it formally became a colony in 1925 and the population was administered by ethnicity (defined mainly in terms of religion and language) as Greeks and Turks. But by 1950 Cyprus lost most of its strategic importance for Britain. The Greek Cypriots preferred union with Greece to independence, which was unacceptable to the Turkish Cypriot minority. By 1960 an uneasy compromise was reached: Cyprus became independent, but the people were divided on the basis of ethnic origin. Inter-communal violence erupted, partially encouraged by Greece and Turkey: by 1964 Turkish Cypriots were moving into enclaves, and Turkish MPs refused to sit in parliament. In 1974 the Greek Colonels, who had seized power in Greece in 1967, backed a short-lived coup d'état in Cyprus. Turkey claimed the right to intervene, and militarily occupied the north, where most Turkish Cypriots now reside, while most Greek Cypriots live in the south. The 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' was declared in 1983, a state recognised only by Turkey. There have been repeated attempts to settle the conflict by the UN: the Kofi Annan plan of 2004 was accepted by the majority of Turkish Cypriots, but rejected by the majority of Greek Cypriots. There is now some détente as a solution is negotiated by the leaders of the two communities in talks under the auspices of the UN, against a background of an easing of the travel restrictions across the divide since April 2003.

Young people's identities and the European dimension

We use three particular frameworks in this analysis of the construction of identities. Michael Bruter (2005), analysing the emergence of mass European identity, describes territorial identities as having two component elements, the 'civic' (identification with 'the set of institutions, rights and rules that preside over the political life of the community' (p 12)) and the 'cultural' (identification with a certain culture, social similarities, values'). The second analytic framework is drawn from Lynn Jamieson and Sue Grundy's (2007) description of how some young people 'come to present themselves as passionate utopian Europeans, while for many being European remains emotionally insignificant and devoid of imagined community or steps towards global citizenship' (p 663).

The third framework is generational. Recent studies of German identities have suggested that there are not only significant differences in the ways that identities are constructed between generations, but that these are the consequence of political fractures and dissonance in national society. Mary Fulbrook's (2011) argues that the age at which people experience key historical moments, such as the transitions within German society in 1933, 1945 and 1989, can be a critical explanatory factor behind an individual or group's 'availability for mobilisation' for political expression. Age, she suggests, is 'crucial at times of transition, with respect to the ways in which people can become involved in new regimes and societies' (p. 488). We have outlined the events in Cyprus from 1974: do these constitute a similar dissonance affecting the identities of young Cypriots, on both sides of the Green Line? Iceland has been relatively tranquil, apart

from the banking crisis, or series of crises, that began with successive collapse in 2008 of the banks. Do the young people in either or both countries now perceive themselves as a generation differently available for political and social mobilisation than their parents or grandparents?

Do young people identify with the cultural and/or the civic aspects of Europe? Do they use the same components in their identification with their country? Are they passionate or indifferent about each? Do they acknowledge a multiplicity of identities, or is their identity constructed as singular and essentialist? Does their sense of identity require the construction of 'the Other', an alien identity held in juxtaposition to their own identity? This question is of particular significance to the subjects of this study: as the borders of the European Union continue to demonstrate their flexibility, are there (in the minds of these young people) limits to Europe: where does the frontier lie?

Issues of methodology

This study is focussed on how these young peoples' ideas are socially constructed, and because social constructions are created through interaction in a social context, the principal researcher (Ross) has used focus group discussions as a principal data source. He took groups of five to six young people, of about the same age, and put to them a few very open-ended questions, and then encouraged to discuss these (in English or the local language, as per the students' preference; for the latter case, simultaneous interpretation was conducted by one of the local researchers in each site). The intention was that they interacted with each other, rather than with the researcher, using ideas, language, and vocabulary of their own choosing. The discussion points were broad and encouraged discussion of how these young people described themselves, without direct reference to national, ethnic or European identities by the researchers; when such references were made by the participants, the latter were encouraged to unpack them as well as to comment on whether their parents and grandparents would attribute similar or different contents and significance to these identities. The discussion also encouraged them to comment on whether they thought all or the majority of the people in the country would think similarly to them; to talk about what contents they ascribed to the terms 'Europe' and 'Europeans'; and what their thoughts were on some countries' membership applications to the EU. Finally, the participants could comment on whether they discussed such topics with their friends, at home or at school.

The focus groups took place in Cyprus in May 2011, and in Iceland in September 2011. The interviews were carried out at a time when Iceland was slowly recovering from the crisis, while Cyprus was still assessing the potential impact. Seven locations were visited, in larger cities and provincial towns, ensuring a fairly wide geographical spread.

In each location two to four schools with different social mixes were selected, and in each location there were groups of 12-13 year olds and 15 - 16 year olds. Permission was sought from the young people and, for those under 18 in Iceland, and under 16 in Cyprus, from their parents. The sample is not representative, nor was it intended to be, but it did enable a diversity of views to be expressed. The focus was on young people whose home is now in the country (so where there are significant minorities or those of

migrant origin, some are generally included). Thus in Cyprus, groups included students with their origins in Albania, Moldova and Turkey (in the north) and from 'Asia Minor', Greece, Poland and Ukraine (in the south). In Iceland, some students reported origins (partially or wholly) in Austria, Denmark, the Faeroes, France, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Sweden, the USA – most of the non-Scandinavian links being more recent.

Table 2. Locations and Sizes of Focus Groups

Country	Locations	number of schools	number of classes	number of pupils
Cyprus (territory under the direct administration of the Republic of Cyprus, Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία)	near Larnaca (countryside) south Nicosia	2	4	24
Cyprus (territory administered by the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', *Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti)*	Laepta north Nicosia	2	4	31
Iceland	Reykjavik Akureyri Selfoss	8	10	58
2(3)	*7*	*12*	*18*	*113*

The origins of the Turkish Cypriots in the north were particularly significant, because of the large-scale migration there has been from Turkey after 1974; the information below and in Table 3 thus provides further insight into parental and student birthplace of these participants. Of the 31 students included in the sample in the north of Cyprus, 17 had parents born in Turkey, 10 parents born on the island of Cyprus, 4 were of mixed parentage (3 Turkish/Cypriot, one Turkish/Albanian), and 1 was of Moldovan parentage. Estimates of the population of Turkish origin and Turkish Cypriot origin vary considerably, but most international observers suggest there is an approximately 50:50 split. The mainland Turkish parents were predominantly from south-east Turkey (almost 90%): not just geographically closest to Cyprus, but also an area of significant recent upheaval and migration. Of these 17 students, 13 were themselves Turkish-born, and had migrated with their parents. Table 3 provides an overview of parental and student birthplaces for Cyprus interviewees in the north.

Table 3. Students interviewed in Cyprus (north): parental and student birthplace

Parents born Young people born	Turkey	Cyprus	Mixed*	Other	N
Turkey	13		1		14
Cyprus	4	8	3		15
Other		1		1	2
N	17	9	4	1	31

* three Turkish/Cypriot, one Turkish/Albanian

The students were asked, prior to the focus group, to write down their 'nationality' (no guidance was offered on what this might mean). The Turkish-parentage students very largely wrote 'Turk' or 'TC' [*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*; Turkish Republic], and those of Cypriot parentage largely wrote 'KKTC' [*Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti,* 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus'].

Table 4. Students interviewed in Cyprus (north):
student declared nationality and parental birthplace

Parents born Young People's nationality	Turkey	Cyprus	Mixed*	Other	N
Turkish	7	1	2		10
Turkish Republic	7		1		8
Turkish Republic-Turkish	1				1
TC/KKTC/Turkish	1				1
KKTC/TC	1				1
KKTC		7	1		8
Other		1 (KKTC/UK)		1 (Moldovan)	2
N	17	9	4	1	31

This fairly marked polarity in the population was in evidence in the focus group discussions, as will be seen shortly. Similarly, the question of 'nationality' was complex amongst students in the south: some wondered whether the translation of 'nationality' in Greek was 'ypikootita' (a term which usually refers to legal citizenship) or 'ethnikotita' (a term which usually refers to cultural identification with a nation); our response was that they could interpret it as they preferred. Students' responses indicated the multiplicity of terms used: Cypriot, Greek, Greek Cypriot, Cypriot Greek (one, Ukranian etc.). This question was fairly straightforward in Iceland, with the majority of students naming 'Icelandic' as their nationality.

The project would not have been possible without help from many people, to whom the principal researcher is most indebted[2]. Schools and parents were recruited, arrangements made for visits and, critically, help given in translating many of the transcripts. Interviews were transcribed in English (that the participants or the interpreters were using); transcripts were reviewed by the interpreters in each context, so that connotations, meanings and nuances in the languages conducted (Greek, Turkish and Icelandic) were recorded and commented upon in the transcripts. The quotes used in the paper are identified in the parentheses which follow them by pupil pseudonym, gender, age and nationality; for the latter, what the participants chose to name themselves in terms of nationality is reported. Deductive qualitative techniques were mobilised to analyse the data, exploring conceptualisations of 'Europe', 'identity' and 'citizenship' in relation to the three theoretical frameworks described earlier in the paper. Findings below are thus structured under identifications with country/nations; intergenerational changes; and constructions of European identities. Age was not used as an analytic variable in this paper.

Identification with the country and the nation

Both Icelandic and the two Cypriot communities agreed that their countries were small, and that this was a significant factor in their sense of identity. Many of the Icelandic young people referred to the smallness of the Icelandic population. This was sometimes seen as a mark of rarity value. Smallness was sometimes held to be an advantage because there are relatively so few people that you could know everyone, or at least know someone who knew someone.

Most of the indigenous Icelanders are fairly closely related. The small size of the population was in this case seen as a drawback. There was a limited pool from which to select politicians.

> We don't have as much to choose from, as if you lived in a bigger country. (Sigríður E, ♂, 16)

Smallness could lead to a feeling of being trapped:

> There's one thing I really don't like about being Icelandic – I feel we're trapped on a little island in the middle of nowhere (Angantýr A, ♂, 16)

Iceland was relatively unknown in the world, and many foreigners (particularly those they encountered on the internet) had strange conceptions of the country. There was a strong feeling that the country was independent – nine young people mentioned this as a national characteristic, in five groups. The size of the country rendered it exposed to the global economy, perhaps too small to maintain a separate currency. But smallness also put it at risk of being overwhelmed in any larger grouping, such as the European Union:

Young Cypriots, from both communities, also saw the country as being small in the European or global context, but there was the additional level-space of the 'nation': several in the north referred to themselves as living in a 'baby land', by which they meant that the 'Turkish Republic of North Cyprus' was an offspring of Turkey[3] as the parent:

> The fact is that Northern Cyprus is the baby land, and Turkey is more well known by people. (Edanur S, ♀, 15½, TC [Turkish Republic]-KKTC/Turk)

In the south, a similar discourse appeared when Greece was described as 'our mother country' (Evangelia C, ♀, 13, Cypriot). As with some of the Icelandic respondents, the size of the island also meant knowing a higher proportion of the population, but other characteristics also meant that the island was potentially less well known or 'respected', as one student noted, in the world. 'Independence' had different meanings than it did in Iceland, and in different parts of the island. In the north, independence meant taking control of the north in 1974. In the south, independence – to some – meant being autonomous in relation to Greece (or the British bases):

> A lot of us seem to wait for Greece to help us, because of our past with Greece, still. And some people think that we are united with Greece – I disagree with that, I believe that we are an independent country, and we should do things on our own … we will not improve by waiting for help from countries who are not with us, they don't care about us as much as we think – so we should act on our own. (Valeria I, ♀, 15, Cypriot)

> Half of the Cypriots believes that, and the other half believe the opposite, that we are with Greece (Damianos D, ♂, 14 ¾, Cypriot).

In these Cypriot conversations, in both the north and the south, I tried to consistently refer to the island of Cyprus, rather than use specific territorial titles or names, unless

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[3] This discourse of a 'baby land' is derived from various nationalist narratives on both sides in Cyprus which have represented Turkey and Greece as the 'mother-fatherlands' (*mitera patrida* in Greek; *anavatan* in Turkish). By implication, Cyprus is construed as a daughter or a baby in need of parental protection, guidance etc.). See Papadakis (2005) and his comments on the use of 'fatherland' and 'motherland' by such narratives.

these became the subject of conversation. What emerged was a series of discussions about not simply identities across the divide in Cyprus, but identifications of groups within both communities, divided along a series of fault lines.

The Cypriots living in the south were largely Greek-speaking, and ethnically considered themselves as being of Greek origin. But there were sometimes sharp differences over whether they would describe themselves as Cypriot, Greek Cypriot, or Greek; usually they used combinations of these labels to describe themselves.

If they professed themselves as Cypriot, what did they mean? To some this was a matter of residence and everyday experience: 'it's our homeland, our country, it's where we live' (Christina V, ♀, 12½, Cypriot Greek). But others suggested that they either were, or were also, Greek Cypriots. For example, Omiros A (♂, 12½, Cypriot) created a hierarchy of identities:

> I believe that Cypriot would be the first, because we are born in Cyprus, then Greek Cypriot, because we use the Greek language, and then, Greek, because we feel like Greeks.

But it was pointed out that this construction might only relate to their own generation:

> Our grandparents might not believe in this order, because they lived in an era of war, and they were seeing what happened at the time, and were destroyed by conquerors – and they might think that they are only Cypriots. (Evangelia C, ♀, 13, Cypriot)

A few of these young Cypriots appeared to want more formal acknowledgment of the relationship with Greece, though these were a small minority. What did 'being Greek' mean? When Eva K (♀, 13, Greek Cypriot) said 'We are Greek', Maria N (♀, 13, Greek) responded 'Which means?', to which Eva K responds with the label officially used since the 1970s which ascribes a dual or hybrid identity: 'that we are Greek Cypriot'. Various members of the same group put forward examples of how Greek and Cypriot practices differed. Marios E (♂, 14¾, Greek) said ' The citizenship is Cyprus, the nationality is Greek'. Alexandra L (♀,14¾, Greek) elaborated; 'Citizenship means that we stay in Cyprus, we live here. But we speak Greek, have the same faith [religion], the same beliefs [as in Greece]'. Being Cypriot was specifically attached by students to 'citizenship' as a legal matter of living or being born within the borders of a state (Cyprus), as opposed to being Greek which was ascribed by students a content of cultural practices, customs, language and religion-however, it was also oftentimes noted that especially in terms of language, cuisine and customs, there were additional Cypriot ones which distinguished them from the Greeks-the following quote summarises this, whilst also indicating to the historical bonds of cultural dependency which fuel the 'mother fatherland-babyland' discourses:

> We are Greek Cypriots, we live in Cyprus, but we have the same characteristics as Greeks. But they are not Greek Cypriots, they are just Greeks – because they give it- the characteristics, the language, the religion - to us, not us to them. We

> are Cypriots because we are living in the Cypriot borders. If we were living in the Greek borders, we would be Greek. (Marios E, ♂, 14¾, Greek)

The adult Cypriot divisions in the south, between those prepared to assert Cyprus as having no relationship with Greece and those who could not divorce themselves from their linguistic and cultural heritage, was reflected in the various young peoples' discussions. This political divide was alive in the schools, not least because the official narrative (adopted also in the secondary history curriculum) has maintained for decades that Cyprus has been a Greek settlement from the second millennium BCE. It may be of significance that most secondary school teachers in the south have been educated and trained in Greece.

Athina A (♀, 13¼, Cypriot, Greek) used the term *symviosi* (literally symbiosis, or co-existence): 'some people agree with co-existence, in terms of each staying on their own side, in their own part of Cyprus, and others think that this is wrong, and don't like it that they share their country with the Turks'. *Symviosi* was used in the past (and since 2008 in educational policy) to suggest from a Greek Cypriot perspective the 'fact' that the two communities peacefully co-existed in mixed villages, in a shared country before 1974, an argument which might legitimate re-unification of the island in the future (since it has happened before, it is possible again: Papadakis, 2005). But Athina uses it here in the sense of maintaining a division with two communities living separately next to each other[4].

The Turkish origin students in the north were equally divided about their identities, but along different fracture lines. Identities were again described as being based on birth, or parentage, or where one was brought up, but predominantly the young people whose parents came from Turkey described themselves as Turkish rather than Cypriot. Occasionally, a dual loyalty was admitted, and more rarely, a Cypriot identity:

> My mum and dad were both born in Turkey, but because I was born here, I see myself as Cypriot. (Hoülya B, ♀, 14½, TC, parents born in Turkey)

Those of Cypriot origin nearly all said that they were Cypriot.

Some of the mainland Turks, and a few Cypriots, denied that there was any difference between being Turkish or (Turkish) Cypriot.

> There is no difference between the two. We are all the same. We need to look at everyone as brothers and sisters, we need to stick together. (Ipek N, 14¼, ♀, KKTC)

But there were many mainland Turks who said that they felt discriminated against by some Turkish Cypriots.

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[4] Thanks to Dr Stavroula Philippou for this explanation.

> I think there is a difference. For example, places where I go to I am excluded –
> the Cypriots want this place only to be for Cypriots – we don't want this to be
> the case, so it's a problem. (Zenep K, 14½, ♀, TC [Turkish Republic])

There were acknowledged cultural differences. The discrimination was resented: the
mainland Turks' perception was that they had come to the defence of the Turkish
Cypriots, and should be thanked for this. Most of the Turkish Cypriots spoken to
acknowledge this, but it was also suggested that the mainlanders might be slower to
adapt to changing circumstances. Some of the mainlanders also recognised that they
might not be permanently resident. It was perhaps the younger Turkish Cypriots who
most resented the mainlanders: perhaps because their generation had not experienced the
events of 1974, and perhaps believing that the presence of the mainlanders was a barrier
to a settlement with the south. The mainlanders also suffered another way: when they
visited Turkey, they said they were perceived by their compatriots as being different in
some way, because of having lived in Cyprus.

Icelandic young people, unsurprisingly, had very different social constructions of what it
meant to be Icelandic. Like the Cypriots, north and south, being Icelandic was for many
just happenstance: an accident of parentage, location of birth, and upbringing. This did
not mean that the Icelandic identity was not a matter of pride for many of them. What
were the specifics of Iceland that distinguished it? There was a general consensus that
the landscape, climate and resources were very different and unique. But there was also a
sense that the Icelandic language distinguished them: they were not, however, as proud
of this as older Icelanders, many of whom I heard taking a very specific delight in this.

> So few people speak Icelandic, that makes us specific (Ásgrímur S, ♂, 17)

In Cyprus, issues of language were not raised: both languages, Greek and Turkish, are of
course also the languages of two much larger countries: in Cyprus, dialects of each are
spoken and these were often used by students as a distinguishing feature of a Cypriot
identity. Some Turkish Cypriots (Saraçoğlu, 1992) have argued that, as the distinctive
Cypriot variety of Turkish draws some 20% of its vocabulary from the Greek Cypriot
dialect lexicon – as opposed to the Standard Modern Greek lexicon- there is a good basis
for a distinctive and unifying Cypriot linguistic identity[5]. Similar arguments have been
put forth on identified links between the Greek Cypriot dialect and Cypriot identity (e.g.
Papapavlou & Pavlou, 1998). Membership of the European Union might compromise
this, one of them pointed out. Many young Cypriots also expressed rather more specific
desires for peace, but these were frequently bounded with conditions about how the other
community should behave or make amends.

In both Cyprus and Iceland, there was some discussion about the cultural factors that
defined their communities. In Cyprus (north), this was a little less evident – possibly
because the conversations tended to focus on intra-community differences and tensions –
but there were references to the Turkish, and specifically Ottoman, contributions to the
island. In the south, there were references to the culture and history that partly drew

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[5] Thanks to Dr Tözun Issa for this observation.

attention to both Greek and Greek Orthodox culture, but also, in many cases, sought to distinguish aspects of these practices that were different and uniquely Cypriot.

The Icelandic references to their culture were rather different. There were some very positive comments about the Viking, Norse and Celtic roots of the population), but more often this was seen as part of school culture: 'We all just don't' like Icelandic history because we learn about it in school, and we all really don't like school'[laughter] (Guðbjörg B, ♀, 12¾). These sorts of things were talked about and remembered by grandparents, who often talked about them too much. There was a strong sense that Iceland had changed dramatically, economically and socially, since the 1950s – 'we were just evolving so fast, our society – the culture' (Dagný H, ♀, 15¾): we will return to these generational perceptions of change later in the paper. Traditional Icelandic food was particularly mentioned:

> I don't really like Icelandic old foods, like salt meat and *Súrsaðir hrútspungar*. And the culture? Vikings are cool! I hate reading about them, but they are cool, none the less (Angantýr A, ♂, 16)

Their tastes were more modern: Icelandic food to them meant 'Lamb meat. We've got the best lamb in the world' (Sæfinnur A, ♂, 13½) – which was immediately followed by 'Pizza!' (Ragnheiður S, ♀, 13¼). 'That's not really Icelandic …' I observed: 'Yes it is!' said Geirfinnur B (♂, 12¾).

National institutions were conspicuous by their absence from discussions, in both islands. Even when prompted, comments about political structures, government and administration were dismissive. In Iceland, politicians were at least partially responsible for the economic crisis, and were also seen as impotent: these things were talked about by parents, but of no interest to most young people. In Cyprus, on both sides of the divide, comments about political structures were missing, and many of the older generation were seen as responsible for creating and perpetuating communal tensions. In other countries in this study (Ross, 2010, 2011) it has also been noted that national identity seems to be constructed more around cultural practices and behaviour than about institutional structures: these seemed to be particularly so in both these countries.

Generational changes

In Cyprus, there were differences in the way in which young people identified themselves from their parents. In the north, several of those of origin from Turkey differentiated themselves from their parents. In the south, young people were also aware of differences in how they constructed their identities. In Cyprus there were also generational differences around views of the 1974 conflicts and its consequences. The older generation was often seen as locked into forms of sectarianism:

> Yes, they've seen wars … because they lived in the period, they would think differently. Young people want peace – but they [parents/grandparents] don't because they have seen what happened during war – because we haven't, we want peace (Ecem E, ♀, 17¾, TC - Turk)

There were frequent references, everywhere, to changes in cultural taste and behaviour:

> they are old-fashioned, and we are modern. They have their own tradition, and now we create our own traditions. Their clothes, their music – we get influenced by other countries with music – and they don't like rock metal like this – they like bouzouki (Damianos D, ♂, 14¾, Cypriot)

In Iceland it was particularly noticeable that the young people identified cultural differences and changes, particularly with their grandparents' generation.

> My dad. Like when we go to camp … they're always dragging me into some kind of things – 'Oh, this is so beautiful!' – telling a lot of stories – and I'm not interested. 'Oh this place, a hundred years ago, this happened!' (Guðbjörg B, ♀, 12¾)

These attachments to the past were often analysed by the young Icelanders as having economic and/or emotional roots. They also acknowledged that their own different attitudes were in part a consequence of contemporary globalisation and the potentials for international travel.

Although there are some similar generational differences in Cyprus and in Iceland, there are also some significant differences. In Cyprus, the older generations are seen as perpetuating political differences – institutional differences – that relate to the island's partition. The young people understood these, were even sympathetic – but they were also impatient with them, seeing these views as obstructive to 'getting on' with the possibilities of a settlement. Nevertheless, they also had adopted many of the inter-communal prejudices of their parents and grandparents. In Iceland, the young people were impatient with the way that their grandparents (and sometimes their parents) clung to what they considered outmoded cultural practices.

Constructions of European identities

To what extent did these young people identify themselves as European, or as other to or in addition to simply Icelandic, Turk, Greek, Cypriot?

There was firstly a very specific Icelandic characteristic evident in the discussions. A consistent theme among many young Icelanders was that – in addition to being Icelandic - they were Nordic, or Scandinavian. 'I think more Scandinavia than Europe' (Hólmfríður G, ♀, 17¼). This was explained variously in terms of current links, shared ancestry, similar customs and traditions. This identity was frequently offered as an alternative to being European, although, when challenged, it was agreed that Scandinavia and the Nordic countries were European. There appeared to be a complex form of set theory operating: Iceland was part of the Nordic set, The Nordic set was part of the European set, but Iceland was not, or 'not really', part of Europe.

For a few Icelanders, the European connection was very superficial: 'We compete in the European song contest! [laughter]' (Aðalbjörg E, ♀, 17). And for some, it was almost a

revelation that Iceland could be considered European. But there were also cultural reasons for feeling that Iceland was not part of the 'real' Europe. Iceland was 'not connected' to southern or central Europe. Some had a stereotypical view of what 'a European' is, that was very different from their own self-image. Economically, it was said, Iceland was not part of Europe.

There were rather similar views expressed by many Cypriots, from across the divide. There were expressions by those of Turkish or Turkish Cypriot origin of not having a European identity. In the south, where most respondents were formally European Union citizens (through their Republic of Cyprus citizenship), there were expressions of cultural difference from what Europe was supposed to be. Some suggested that they did not feel themselves to be fully European: even with the euro, they still needed 'to behave' differently to be 'European'. These views allude to understandings of 'Europe' as high levels of 'progress' and 'development' (e.g. in environmental issues, in public administration, etc), which many Cypriots question whether they have been reached even after EU membership.

The students in the north were in an ambiguous situation, as although some would be recognised as European citizens by virtue of having citizenship to the Republic of Cyprus via their parents, others were either (or in addition) citizens of a state not recognised by the European Union ('TRNC' - KKTC) or citizens of Turkey, again not in the EU.

These comments seem to suggest that both countries felt peripheral. This was in part due to their island status: not being part of the continental mainland of Europe can make islanders seem cut off from Europe. But Iceland and Cyprus both also suffer from being on the very periphery of Europe. To include them both on maps of Europe requires a not inconsiderable reduction of scale: and in some maps, one or both countries are excluded.

So for these islanders, where or what exactly is Europe? For the Icelanders, Europe was big countries, that were warmer and had a long history – and Roman Catholic.

> when I think of Europe, I think of Italy and France and Spain all that - it's so different from Iceland! (Bergljót B, ♀, 16)

For the Cypriots of Turkish origin in the north of the island, , Europe was also seen as western Europe which, from a Turkish reference point, was different in terms of culture and behaviour – and was Christian.

> To see myself as part of something – I need to be part of their culture. I was born in Turkey, so I know the cultures of that country and of Cyprus. When we talk about Europe, we are looking at more tolerant, wider horizons, thinking in terms of culture – much more receptive. They are different from others in the way they behave …Turks have a much narrower view of looking at things, while Europeans have a much wider perspective. (Hazal G, ♀, 13¼, TC [Turkish Republic])

Many of the Cypriots of Greek origin felt that joining the European Union was positive, but had not yet made them truly European; the latter was construed as a process in train:

> Europe has got quite a few countries together – this is a very important motive – when we are united, we can improve – when everyone tries by himself (sic), he's not in a position to do very much. But if you have the will, and if we are united, we can achieve many more things. (Kyriaki C, ♀, 13 Cypriot)

Membership of the European Union was discussed very differently: the Cypriots in the south are already members, while those in the north talked specifically about the possibilities of Turkish accession. The Icelandic young people discussed the pros and cons of their current application. In all cases, however, the predominant approach was instrumental: what would be the benefits and costs (to them as individuals, and to their countries) of participating in the institutional mechanisms and structures of the Union, rather than considering it in terms of cultural unity or human rights.

Unsurprisingly, educational opportunities were prominent in their personal considerations. The free market in labour and higher education was attractive. The Icelandic young people were becoming aware of these possibilities. In Cyprus, those of Turkish origin in the north who had not become citizens of the 'TRNC' were disadvantaged in one sense: they could not easily study in higher education in the north.

Some young Icelanders thought that joining the Union, and particularly the Eurozone, would be an advantage. But against this, there were many fears that Iceland's natural resources would be appropriated in the Union.

> The big countries will get more power over Iceland, and our natural resources. (Fjóla H, ♀, 17½)

In the north of Cyprus, some young people saw advantages in Turkey joining the Union, while others were critical of both the fact that Cyprus had been allowed to join without Turkey also joining, and the way that the Republic of Cyprus was accepted as speaking on their behalf in the Union. But other students were sceptical of any advantages membership might bring, and even of the existence of the European Union. There was equal instrumentalism in the south: in addition to the economy and higher education, the European Union's prime function was seen by some as settling the island's division.

Some tentative conclusions

These two societies have some significant differences, as well as similarities, that seem to impact on the way that young people construct their identities. In Iceland it was striking that most young people showed little overt concern about their Icelandic identity. They could be proud of it, but it didn't define them. Many of them were comfortable expressing a range of contingent identities.

The situation was very different in Cyprus, where most were more specific about their national, ethnic or cultural identities. There were complexities and multiple identities as much as there were in Iceland – were you mainland Turk or a Cypriot Turk, were you a

Greek Cypriot, a Cypriot and/or a Greek? But these sorts of locational or territorial identities mattered much more to these young people than they did to the Icelanders, perhaps because they were also construed as cultural and perhaps also because of the ongoing division and complexities that entails for EU citizenship. These markers were significant in a very powerful way in these young peoples' lives – in a very similar way that they were to the *parents* and *grandparents* of the young people I spoke to in Poland, Hungary and the Baltic States (Ross, 2010, 2011). This can perhaps be interpreted by how situations of conflict and political high tensions require the response of a singular and possibly passionate identity, while sustained periods of low tensions allow identities to become more malleable, multiple, less intense, and less significant. But the young Cypriots, across the divide, expressed various multiple identities, as has been shown, despite high tensions (as compared to Iceland).

But the Icelandic and Cypriot situations were similar when we consider the institutional – cultural axis that Bruter proposes. In both situations, there was little attachment to the institutions of the country: there were remarkably few references made to political structures, symbols or institutions. In Cyprus the affiliation to a state or country was significant, but this did not, apparently, extend to the institutions of the state. What was significant was the culture of the country – food, music, festivals, history. But this culture was not necessarily the traditional culture (by which we simply mean the culture of their parents and grandparents) – it was the young people's own (more modern) culture, which in some instances was a culture of specific rejection of the older culture.

This leads to the second similarity: that of generational change. These young people were constructing national/ethnic/cultural identities that were generationally different to those of their parents. This was manifest in different ways in each of the islands. In Cyprus, there was a frustration across the divide with the identity positions assumed by many of the students' parents and grandparents. They could sympathise and empathise with their older relatives who had been displaced or worse, but the essential elements of the conflict were now almost forty years old – and forty years is a very long time ago for a teenager. The quarrels were legitimate, but were in need of resolution. Constructing a political identity in the context of such an old dispute was very different from doing so when the conflict was recent and fresh. These young people were constructing identities that were prepared to challenge accepted histories, were able to be flexible to accommodate new positions, if these could possibly contribute to bringing about some form of resolution.

Generational change was also evident, in a rather different way, among the young people of Iceland. The generational changes here were different: it was not situations of war and conflict that had dominated their parents and grandparents lives, nor was it the recent economic crisis, but the very rapid economic transformations of the 1950s and 1960s, and the impact of globalisation. The older generations had maintained their traditional cultural roots: the value given to the uniqueness and purity of the Icelandic language, the history and literature, the foodstuffs and the seasonal festivals. The impatience these young people were demonstrating in their construction of new identities was with this veneration of the past: they might be critical of American culture and of European institutions, but they were adopting them in their own way. Was pizza an Icelandic food? 'Yes it is!'

International relationships were also part of the identity construction in both contexts. Here the geography becomes significant: islands – perhaps particularly small islands – are significantly 'distant' from the mainland, in that they require sea or air journeys to connect them, with significant ports of entry; there are more permanent and natural boundaries and frontiers than there are in any continental state. Situated also at the very fringes of Europe, it is not surprising that young people on both islands felt very ambivalent about their attachment to Europe. Europe was not only distant, but different and excluding. In each country, different distinctions were drawn – in Iceland it was culture, climate, history, while for Cyprus it was wealth, behaviour, development. Both islands had a similar view of where the 'real' Europe resided – the large countries of western Europe – Spain, France, Italy and Germany. To them, this was the European heartland - and a heartland to which they felt only peripherally attached.

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