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### **Cypriot Identity as an Alternative: Grassroots Perspectives on Cypriotness and Nationalism**

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**Hellenic Observatory Centre**  
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## **Cypriot Identity as an Alternative: Grassroots Perspectives on Cypriotness and Nationalism**

**Antonis Pastellopoulos<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

This article examines how Greek Cypriots involved in grassroots pro-peace, left-wing, and anti-authoritarian political initiatives perceive Cypriot identity. Drawing on qualitative surveys conducted between September 2020 and December 2021, thematic analysis was utilised to explore participants' responses around Cypriot identity. Findings reveal a rejection among participants of Greek and Turkish national identities in favour of a claimed pluralistic Cypriot identity that emphasizes inclusivity and cultural heterogeneity. This Cypriot identity is framed as counter-hegemonic, challenging dominant nationalist narratives, yet remains ambiguously defined, often articulated in terms of what it excludes rather than what it affirms. While most participants viewed Cypriot identity as a potential pathway to intercommunal reconciliation, some participants also raised concerns regarding the possibility of oversimplifying deeper complexities.

**Keywords:** Cypriot identity, Cypriotism, Cyprocentrism, nationalism, Cypriotness

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## 1. Introduction

The present article aims to contribute empirically to the literature on Cypriot identity in the contemporary Republic of Cyprus, understood here as a non-ethnic sense of belonging distinct from Greek Cypriot and Greek national identity. Drawing on qualitative surveys conducted between September 2020 and December 2021, it explores how Greek Cypriots involved in grassroots pro-peace, left-wing, and anti-authoritarian initiatives, perceive Cypriot identity. Dominant paradigms have primarily explored Cypriot identity through the analytical framework of civic nationalism, linking it to identification with the Cypriot state and the civic life associated with it (Pastellopoulos 2022: 21). Thus, Cypriot identity has primarily been interpreted as a meta-ethnic identity focusing on civic, rather than cultural senses of collective belonging.

By drawing on empirical data, the article evaluates the extent to which dominant theoretical frameworks adequately explain notions of Cypriot identity expressed by grassroots political actors. While insights drawn from this population group remain specific and contextual, making them difficult to generalise without additional empirical research, they nonetheless offer a detailed picture of the notions surrounding Cypriot identity that have crystallised within the political traditions most commonly associated with it (Pastellopoulos 2025: 15).

The findings of this article diverge from dominant interpretations, as participants overwhelmingly perceived Cypriot identity as incompatible with, and an alternative to, Greekness and/or Turkishness. Instead, participants' articulations place culture, rather than civic loyalty, at the centre of identity. Far from being culturally thin, Cypriot identity is thus framed as pluralistic, inclusive, and heterogeneous, while at the same time being explicitly differentiated from both Greek and Turkish national identities. In turn, Cypriotness is here perceived as a competing mode of belonging that challenges the homogeneity underpinning both Greek and Turkish national imaginaries.

## 2. Literature Review

Emerging as a consolidated political force during the British colonial period (Çetiner 2025: 1201), nationalism in Cyprus gave rise to two distinct national imagined communities that maintained antithetical visions regarding the island's future, historical character and sense of collective belonging (Ioannou 2020: 14). For Greek Cypriots, constituting the majority of the population (Mavratsas 1997: 718), the island was perceived as part of the broader Hellenic world, and enosis, the unification of Cyprus with Greece, emerged as the key anti-colonial demand from the 1930s onwards (Ioannou 2020: 14). In contrast, the Turkish Cypriot community, constituting the largest minority, perceived enosis as an existential threat, leading Turkish Cypriot nationalists to initially maintain their support for the prolongation of British rule, eventually adopting the position of taksim, demanding the partition of Cyprus upon ethnic lines (Loizides 2007: 174-175).

As nationalism increasingly shaped Cypriot political life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these two visions clashed violently during the pro-enosis anti-colonial EOKA struggle of the 1950s (Ioannou 2020: 15), with tensions continuing following the island's independence, culminating in the inter-communal clashes of the 1960s (Chrysostomou 2013: 19). Since the Turkish invasion of 1974, Cyprus has been de-facto partitioned between the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a non-recognized Turkish Cypriot state in the north; and the Republic of Cyprus in the south, the original state declared independent in 1960, which enjoys international recognition and has remained under the control of the Greek Cypriot community (Athanassiou 2010: 16). While the two communities have continuously engaged in diplomatic negotiations since the late 1970s in search for a consensus allowing for the reunification of the island under a bi-communal federal structure (Ker-Lindsay 2009: 16), reunification has remained evasive.

It should be noted that nationalism is not an unchanging phenomenon, with senses of national collective belonging changing and adapting within new contexts. As Caesar Mavratsas observed, Greek Cypriot nationalism no longer entails the demand of enosis after 1974, embracing the independence of the Republic of Cyprus (Mavratsas 1998: 101). With support for Cypriot independence emerging as the new political consensus, the preservation of an independent Cypriot polity is accompanied with the affirmation of the island's Greekness, a position reflected in official historical narration, cultural and educational policy (Papadakis 2008: 132), ceremonial symbolism and the active seeking of closer diplomatic and cultural ties with the Greece (Mavratsas 1997: 728). A similar shift has also been observed within the Turkish Cypriot community in the post-1974 period, as support for the cultural autonomy and political independence of Turkish Cypriots has been gradually gaining ground (Loizides 2007: 181-182). This shift appears to be related to the effects of the island's de-facto partition on the Turkish Cypriot community, which have led to discontent both with Turkey, as well as with the motherland version of Turkish Cypriot nationalism that has dominated political life in the first decades following 1974.

In parallel, an alternative sense of collective belonging emerged after 1974 within the Greek Cypriot community, collectively referred to as 'Cypriotism' within the academic literature (Mavratsas 1997: 718). Other terms that have been used to describe political or social phenomena expressing similar, or identical positions, include 'Cypriot consciousness' (Attalides 1979: 59), 'Cyprocentrism' (Peristianis 2008: 224) and 'Cypriot identity' (Panayiotou 1992: 15). Cypriotism is associated with, but not reduced to the broader extra-parliamentary left, a term encompassing local grassroots pro-peace, left-wing, and anti-authoritarian initiatives, acting as an alternative political position surrounding collective belonging (Rakopoulos 2022: 9). As Mavratsas noted, Cypriotist positions tend to promote a de-ethnicised Cypriot identity distinct from the prevailing Greek and Turkish Cypriot senses of national belonging (Mavratsas 1998: 86). Research exploring Cypriotism has primarily focused on the expression of a de-ethnicised notion of Cypriotness, interpreting Cypriotism as a form of civic nationalism that formulates a sense of national identity encompassing both ethnic communities under a meta-ethnic civic sense of collective belonging (Pastellopoulos 2022: 21).

Nicos Peristianis employed the terms Cyprocentrism and Hellenocentrism to describe Cypriotism and Greek Cypriot nationalism, noting that Cyprocentrism in Greek Cypriot society stresses rapprochement with Turkish Cypriots, in contrast to Hellenocentric perspectives, which emphasise closeness to Greece (Peristianis 2008: 2). Peristianis further highlighted what he described as the dual loyalty imbedded in Greek Cypriot society. On the one hand, there is the loyalty towards the state, which is perceived as the key institution through which the island can be eventually reunified; and on the other hand, there is the loyalty towards the ethnic/national group, which demarcates the historical, cultural and linguistic points of difference with the Turkish Cypriot community (Peristianis 2008: 253). For Peristianis, this dual loyalty gives rise to a series of political positions, ranging from a balancing between the two loyalties, to the adoption of extreme positions identifying completely either with the state, or with the nation.

An alternative reading can be found in the work of Andreas Panayiotou (Panayiotou 1996: 15), who defined Cypriotism as the 'historical experience of Cypriot modernity as a systemic phenomenon' (Panayiotou 1996: 15), connecting it to the crystallisation and evolution of a Cypriot identity that has been morphed through the survival and adaptation of 'residuals', of cultural, social, historical and political remnants that have neither been subsumed; nor eradicated through Greek and Turkish national homogenisation (Panayiotou 1996: 2). Ranging from Cypriot folk culture and linguistic difference to the historical experience of inter-communal co-existence and specific elements of modernism inherited from British colonialism, these residuals act for Panayiotou as the foundations for the subsequent development of a specifically Cypriot consciousness in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Panayiotou 1996: 2).

Another significant differentiation between Greek Cypriot nationalism and Cypriotism are the competing visions over the historical character of the island itself. A key position of Cypriotist discourse is the differentiation of Cyprus from its national 'motherlands', the claim of a "sui generis character" (Mavratsas 1997: 721) that places the island outside the categories of the Greek and Turkish nations, with Cypriot identity evoked as a meta-ethnic identity acting as an umbrella term for the inclusion of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots under a single polity. The view that Cyprus is an exclusively Hellenic island is repeatedly disputed (Mavratsas 1997: 721), closeness between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is emphasised (Peristianis 2008: 224) and attachment to the cultural and geographical contextuality of the island is often evoked (Rakopoulos 2022: 8). In contrast, Greek Cypriot nationalist discourses view Cyprus as an inherently Hellenic cultural and geographical space, with most of its inhabitants understood to be ethnically Greek, and thus members of a broader Greek nation, with membership to the national community remaining a largely ancestral prerogative (Rakopoulos 2022: 47).

These competing visions are reflected in terms employed for the description of the Greek Cypriot population accompanying the traditional division between the nationalist right and the political left. The commonly employed term 'Cypriot Hellenism' (Papadakis 1998: 154), for example, subsumes the community under the broader category of Hellenism. Within such discourses, Cyprus is often further described as the 'particular

country' of Greek Cypriots, signifying that Greece remains the universal homeland for Greeks living outside its borders (Peristianis 2008: 243). In contrast, leftist discourses typically employ the term 'Cypriot people', which is perceived to be a more inclusive category, as Turkish Cypriots, as well as members of the island's smaller communities, can be subsumed under it (Papadakis 1998: 155). It has been further argued that the terms signify competing paradigms surrounding history. While the former projects the Cypriot experience as a specific expression of a broader Hellenic history, burdened by Greco-Turkish tension and conflict, the latter places the specificity of Cypriot history at its centre, emphasizing the historical coexistence of the two ethnic communities of the island (Papadakis 1998: 155).

A brief note should be made here in relation to expressions of Cypriotism within the Turkish Cypriot community. Developing within a fundamentally different social, economic and political context, Turkish Cypriot Cypriotism has tended to focus on the claiming a European identity (Ramm 2006: 539), a claim linked with negative perceptions towards the mainland Turkish population that has settled on the island after 1974, rather than merely in opposition to the influence of the Turkish state and to Turkish Cypriot nationalism (Hamit 2008: 50). Enver Gülseven highlights this dimension, noting that Turkish Cypriot versions of Cypriotism are morphed through the exclusion of Turkish mainlanders, perceived as the internal other of Turkish Cypriots (Gülseven 2020: 35). In contrast, variants of Cypriotism in the Greek Cypriot community appear to avoid clearly defining a demarcating line of exclusion (Trimikliniotis 1999), tending to stress tolerance (Pastellopoulos 2018: 14) and heterogeneity (Rakopoulos 2022: 8-9). This observation does not imply that one version of Cypriotism is necessarily more tolerant than the other, but rather aims to draw attention to the extent to which each version is consciously, rather than unconsciously, stressing cultural difference in relation to the various ethnic groups living on the island.

### **3. Methodology**

The article aims to address the following research question: In what ways do Greek Cypriot left-leaning activists who identify as Cypriot define and perceive their identity? The paper rests empirically on data collected in the Republic of Cyprus from September of 2020 to December of 2021. During this period, data were collected through the carrying out of qualitative surveys amongst protest attendees at extra-parliamentary left-wing public protests in the Republic of Cyprus.<sup>2</sup>

Qualitative surveys have been more consistently employed in the field of psychology (Braun & Clarke & Gray 2017: 251), as well as in quantitative research, which occasionally allows for limited input of qualitative data by participants (Terry & Braun 2017: 16). It is therefore necessary to reflect briefly here on the type of data generated by the method. A qualitative survey, much like its quantitative counterpart, is

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<sup>2</sup> The research design was approved by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Sub-Committee (HSSREC) of the University of Warwick under approval number 1911639965785. All participants were informed of the aims and scopes of the research prior to the filling-in of surveys; and a consent form was acquired for each participant.

characterized by the generation of data through the responses of participants to a predesigned set of questions. However, the generated data are primarily or exclusively qualitative in nature, as participants are asked to provide their responses in writing, rather than to provide responses to close-ended questions that are readily and easily quantifiable. Unlike semi-structured interviews, which are characterized by the spontaneity of response on the part of the interviewee, qualitative surveys are intrinsically reflective.

18 surveys were collected from participants. On average, participants were in their early 30s, and all of them were under 45 years old. Six were females, ten were males, one person didn't disclose such information, and two were genderqueer individuals. All participants had been educated to the tertiary level; one lacked a postgraduate degree, and three were pursuing or had a doctorate. All belonged to the Greek Cypriot community. Participants consisted of individuals that were either members of extra-parliamentary Greek Cypriot political groups; or were actively participating in the actions and mobilizations of such groups at the time of data collection. Participants were asked to express their views on collective belonging, the island's reunification, Cypriot identity and ethnonationalism, with language and its relationship to identity emerging consistently as a key topic in their responses. The two questions consistently returning answers involving Cypriot identity were:

1. In your view is there a Cypriot identity specific to the island, and if so, how would you describe or define it?
2. Would you describe yourself as a Cypriot/Greek Cypriot/Greek or in any other way, and why?

Qualitative thematic analysis was employed for the scrutinization of the collected data. As a method, thematic analysis is well established in qualitative social research and is typically employed for the analysis of interviews and documents (Prior 2008: 833), entailing the establishment of close familiarization with the collected data, which in turn enables the researcher to detail the perspectives and accompanied meaning emanating from these data (Bowen 2009: 32). The codes were subsequently grouped in the following three themes: Greekness, pluralism and opposition to identity.

The identification of themes was established through the employment of a standard coding process (Ayres 2008: 867) in five stages. Initially, coding was initiated through a first evaluation and organization of the data, by identifying which participants' responses were relevant to the focus of the research. This process was followed by the evaluation and establishment of a first familiarity with the data, as each set of data was examined independently to establish deeper familiarization. Following the establishment of a first set of themes, the collected data were then examined a second time, to establish in-depth familiarization and evaluate the established themes. This second round of familiarization gave rise to more precise themes, which were compared with the initial themes and evaluated in relation to the data. This process was then followed by the further scrutinization of themes, to examine internal differentiations and divergences. At the final stage, the data corresponding to each theme were again



examined in detail independently, in order to enable their presentation in a consistent fashion.

#### **4. Displacing Greekness**

A first notable observation is the consistency with which participants challenged hegemonic notions surrounding national identity. Rather than presenting Cypriotness as compatible with ethnic identification, all participants either rejected Greek national identity altogether, or downplayed Greekness in favour of a Cypriotness perceived as an alternative identification that was not reducible to 'Greekness'. Claims surrounding Cypriot identity were systematically accompanied by the rejection of fundamental notions of Greek Cypriot nationalism, representing Cyprus outside the imaginary of the Greek nation. These representations, in turn, presented Cypriotness as incompatible with notions of Greekness, as an autonomous identity differentiated from the national identities commonly associated with the island. For example, Ektoras,<sup>3</sup> a Greek Cypriot man in his late 20s, presented Cypriot identity in the following manner:

In my view Cypriot identity is a patchwork of the identities of the surrounding geographical area, and mainly of the Middle East. Beyond the obvious natural characteristics that are similar, I consider that to this broader physiognomy, cunning, the predatory economic mentality, and our interpersonal relationships have common ground. We are a social people, cheerful and giving (under conditions), but at the same time permanently suspicious, adventurous, and sometimes afraid of taking responsibility. In terms of culture, as it has been shaped through the arts, history, the interaction with other peoples and the geological and geographical features of Cyprus, I believe we have a unique and distinct identity, which is unfortunately underrepresented, overshadowed by bestowed, or adopted identities based on nationalism (Ektoras, Greek Cypriot, Male).

Situating Cypriotness within the cultural and territorial space of the Middle East, Hellenocentric positions, which claim Cyprus as part of a European, Western cultural space, are in parallel rejected. In contrast, Cypriot identity is here connected with the non-Western world, while no representation of 'purity' is attempted – Cypriot identity is signified as blended, a "patchwork" of the various identities connected with the Middle East similarly to the way Roger Christofides describes the presence of multiculturalism entrenched in the Cypriot Greek vernacular (Christofides 2010: 424). Nonetheless, this blending is claimed to produce a "unique and distinct" identity, with Cypriotness being restricted to the territory of the island. Greek and Turkish national identities are further decentred, as they are argued to be "bestowed" or "adopted", entailing a degree of artificiality, while Cypriot identity escapes such a description – the implication being that Cypriotness entails a certain degree of genuineness that local expressions of Greekness and Turkishness cannot claim. Ektoras further elaborated in his own self-description that:

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<sup>3</sup> All presented names are pseudonyms, in order to maintain the anonymity of participants.

I consider myself a Cypriot and always define myself as such. Considering that I fit at least most of the characteristics that in my opinion shape the Cypriot identity, and for obvious reasons of origin, I believe that this is the obvious choice. I love my country, with all that is good and bad in it, and I see myself as a part of the perspective for it to become as great as it deserves to be. Being an "internationalist" on the other hand, I consider myself part of the human race and more broadly of nature, equal and a peer of other living beings, and would identify myself simply as "human" in the context of a utopian undivided society (Ektoras, Greek Cypriot, Male).

Ektoras' response follows a pattern identified throughout participants' responses. Cypriot identity is presented as compatible with broader ideological perspectives emphasising inclusivity and tolerance, in this case, humanism and ecologism. This evocation of inclusiveness, as it will become apparent, is not consistent, as different participants place their focus on different aspects of this claimed inclusivity. Nonetheless, the claim itself is repeatedly made when describing Cypriot identity.

For Andreas, another Greek Cypriot in his 20s, Cypriot identity is fundamentally connected with the differentiation of the island from Greece and Turkey:

I think there is some Cypriot identity attached to the island. In essence, there are multiple Cypriot identities connected to the island, as they are shaped and changed over historical time. The common element of these multiple identities today is that they understand the Cypriot element as something separate and independent. We see this even in the most Greek-centric narratives where the Cypriot element, although included in the wider Hellenism, exists as something "special" and worth mentioning. Therefore, I believe that Cypriot identity is essentially the reproduction of the idea that we are something different from others, specifically Greece and Turkey. So being Cypriot boils down to not feeling (or feeling to a lesser extent) Greek or Turkish (Andreas, Greek Cypriot, Male).

In Andreas' view, Cypriotness is fragmented into a series of local identities, which are nonetheless held together by their commonality in differentiating themselves from Greece and Turkey. Thus, in every expression of Cypriot identity, the partial, or complete rejection of Greekness/Turkishness is central. Nonetheless, differences internal to the island were minimised by Andreas when he was asked to describe himself, as he consciously aimed to include Turkish Cypriots in the category of the 'Cypriot':

I would describe myself as Cypriot, to the extent that I believe that such a social identity can exist without having to depend on other political-cultural influences (e.g., Greek, and Turkish). At the same time, however, I recognize the fact that the term "Cypriot" has been monopolized by the Greek Cypriots, with the result that many times this category does not include the Turkish Cypriots. Therefore, depending on the context of the discussion each time, I sometimes choose to say that I am a Greek Cypriot (instead of a Cypriot), to make clear to my interlocutor my positionality and my privilege (Andreas, Greek Cypriot, Male).

As in the case of Ektoras, local claims of Turkishness and Greekness are assigned the status of an externality, as “political-cultural influences” originating outside of Cyprus. Yet, approached as a term signifying a Cypriot totality, ‘Cypriot’ is represented as a category that should, in principle, be inclusive of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Thus, for Andreas, switching between ‘Cypriot’ and ‘Greek Cypriot’ is not reflecting personal attachments to Greekness, as the terms act as contextualised signifiers over expressing this inclusivity, by projecting Greek Cypriots as a particularism, rather than as the universal community of the island.<sup>4</sup>

The rejection of Greek and Turkish national identities is directly reflected in the response of Maria, a Greek Cypriot woman in her 20s, directly challenging fundamental claims of Greek Cypriot nationalism:

I would describe Cypriotism as an “inclusive” movement, based on accepting all ethnic groups living on the island but mainly about recognizing that Greek [Cypriots] and Turkish Cypriots share a common identity, the Cypriot one. So, in a way, it is a movement that recognizes the similarities between people living in [the] North and those in the South.<sup>5</sup> We are all Cypriots who just speak different languages/dialects, some of us are religious and some are not, some are Christian, some are Muslim, but we are all Cypriots. [...] Cypriotists all are pro-reunification and pro-federation. The movement is characterized by its progressivist views and in a way, it stands against what the Cypriot System has represented since its establishment (more strongly recently with the Anastasiades Government) a.k.a. corruption, institutional racism, unsustainability, unwillingness to cooperate with the other side (Maria, Greek Cypriot, Female).

Like most responses, Cypriot identity is here again claimed as inclusive, transcending existing divisions and ethnic identifications. As a political position, Cypriotness is presented as an alternative to predominant Greek Cypriot politics, which are assigned a series of negative connotations. Thus, claims to Cypriotness are assigned a broader political meaning as a rejection of the status quo, rather than merely in relation to the ongoing division. This rejection is further extended to broader claims associated with Greek Cypriot nationalism:

If we were free, if we had peace, if we were united as a nation, I would probably have given a different answer. I would have said “I am human”, “I don’t care about nationality or ethnicity”. But I am fucking angry that since I could use

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<sup>4</sup> The extent to which the meaning attached to this shifting of self-description becomes apparent within a social interaction remains contextual. For example, in the context of the Republic of Cyprus and Greece, where the term ‘Cypriot’ is universally employed to signify exclusively the Greek Cypriot community, describing oneself as ‘Greek Cypriot’ challenges this signification on a direct, immediate level.

<sup>5</sup> The terms ‘north’ and ‘south’ are commonly employed in pro-reunification circles to describe the island’s division. For a detailed discussion surrounding the usage of the terms, see Pastellopoulos (2018: 32-39).

language, they tried to shove in my head what to think and how to feel. I remember the history books of PRIMARY, secondary, and high school, I revisited them when I was a young adult and was shocked. I am fucking angry that my teachers obediently went on to teach us about war at 6 years old, teach us about the monster, the enemy, Turkey, made us pray in class, learn the [Greek national] hymn, and sing patriotic songs that we had no idea what they meant. [...] And then they continued... tried to convince me I am Greek, tried to convince me they (the Turkish Cypriots) are Turkish. Tried to convince me that the war is all Turkey's fault because they are thirsty for blood, they are just heartless savages who take children away and turn them into Muslim soldiers. They may have gone to the extent to teach me more about the "enemy" than my own country (Maria, Greek Cypriot, Female).

For Maria, the claiming of a Cypriot identity corresponds to the dismissal of dominant representations of Turkish Cypriots and formal historical narrations. The description of Cypriots as a "divided nation" formulates a representation of a unitary national population, fragmented from the continuation of partition and the predominance of Greek and Turkish nationalist narration, perpetuating conflicting ethnic identities. Maria further articulated her position by directly repudiating Greekness, in relation to the national symbolism permeating the Republic of Cyprus:

To answer your question, I am not Greek. I am not Greek Cypriot. Why should I be Greek Cypriot and not Cypriot first and then Greek? Why not Cypriot Greek? I do not even like that, but it is a valid point to me, that even with the term Greek Cypriot, Greek goes first and Cypriot follows. The church, [the] government, and the elites are the ones responsible for making people feel like their Cypriotism is not enough. Their language is not proper. Their flag cannot stand on its own. A place without its own national anthem. A place without history because what is history if the people don't know it? I hate that the Greek flag is hanging outside every single church in Cyprus. Do not get me wrong, I do not hate any flag, a flag is just a symbol. I hate the fact that it hangs so proudly in a place it should not hang at all. And why? Because everything started from what this flag represents. [...] And instead of embracing our Cypriotism to unite the island, we still hang Greek flags proudly for the whole world to see. It is a tragedy. So no, I am not Greek, **I am Cypriot** [emphasis in original]. I embrace the Cypriot flag with its neutral non-political colours and peaceful theme. I embrace the Cypriot dialect. I embrace the Cypriots of the North. I metaphorically shit (think of it in a Performing Arts, Marina Abramovich kind of way) on our history books and the Greek rhetoric. **I oppose** all those things that place us further apart and away from peaceful reunification. **I disagree** with what we have been taught; it is not our religion, language, or "mother land" that defines us as a nation (Maria, Greek Cypriot, Female).

The rejection of Greekness is here direct and absolute, articulated through a claiming of difference vis-à-vis Greek national identity – the Republic's flag, the Cypriot Greek language variety and Turkish Cypriots are reconfigured as elements incompatible with

Greekness, the symbols of which are rejected as imposed and alien. However, despite the detail characterising Maria's response, Cypriotness remains an evasive category, with no clear definition or expanded discussion provided. This vagueness surrounding Cypriotness follows a pattern identified in the collected data, where Cypriot identity is largely defined in relation to what it is not, rather than what it is fundamentally claimed to be.

The relationship between Cypriot identity and opposition to Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalism was further proposed by Sotiris, a Greek Cypriot man in his 20s, placing Cypriotness in an inherent conflict with these expressions of nationalism:

I think the conceptual borders between the various cultural identities in general are arbitrary. This understanding is what usually dictates and informs my perception of identities in this context. Having said that, I do believe there is a Cypriot identity that arises both as a vague consolidation of customs, regional perceptions, and local traditions but also as a response to the nationalist narratives on both sides that aim to shift the identity towards a Greek or a Turkish one, disregarding the local elements (Sotiris, Greek Cypriot, Male).

A different point of view is here articulated. In contrast to previous perspectives, which retain an element of genuineness to Cypriotness, rejecting in parallel such genuineness for the claims of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalism, Sotiris reduces all cultural identities to arbitrariness. While Cypriot identity is described as a generalised assemblage of localised characteristics, the main emphasis for Sotiris rests on its rejection of Greek and Turkish nationalism, as he clarified while discussing his self-description:

The most accurate description for myself would be first and foremost a Cypriot, but I also find acceptable the descriptions "Greek Cypriot" and "Greek-speaking Cypriot".<sup>6</sup> I would introduce myself as a Cypriot first as a symbolic declaration of my refusal to follow the dominant nationalistic narrative of being Greek first, which is embedded in the dominant nationalist ideology of the island, but also because this label demonstrates the fact that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can share the same identity. In other words, since the terminology here lies on arbitrary and vague concepts for me, I choose the one that suits the political message I want to send every time I have to describe myself (Sotiris, Greek Cypriot, Male).

Cypriotness is thus here evoked strategically, signifying the political position taken in relation to reunification and the potential co-existence between the two communities. Cypriot identity is primarily employed for the delegitimization of competing political ideologies, embodying the rejection of positions which formulate national categories

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<sup>6</sup> The terms 'Greek-speaking Cypriot' and 'Turkish-speaking Cypriot' are occasionally employed in pro-reunification activist circles to describe the two communities, recognizing their differences without reducing them to ethnic or national categories.

that are seen as incompatible with reunification, as well as with the claim that a common identity can exist between the two communities.

In contrast, Alexandra, a Greek Cypriot woman in her 30s, perceived Cypriotness as an alternative to Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalism, presenting Cypriot identity as fundamentally different to a national identity:

Cypriot identity is far from a national identity. It is mainly a cultural identity that concerns the history, traditions, and culture of the world on this island. Cypriot identity is common to the communities because it is about this common experience of growing up in this geographical place, living in a society with specific characteristics that are very common between the communities, adopting the culture of this space, which is a bit of the cultures of the area but more common within the space, to use common words that may not exist in our mother tongues, and even fighting for reunification has become part of this identity, since while it may exist and is adopted to some extent by a large part of the population, claiming it within the hegemony of nationalisms, imposes the allying with the reunification movement. [...] I do not feel that I belong to any nation, and I renounce any idea of national identity, but I recognize my cultural identity as Cypriot (Alexandra, Greek Cypriot, Female).

Like other responses, Cypriotness is argued to entail cultural pluralism, while Cypriot identity is again interrelated with the geographical space of the Middle East, reflecting “a bit of the cultures of the area”, constraining Cypriotness to a specific abstracted territory. Cypriotness is represented as the opposite of nationalism, the latter always equated with its Greek (Cypriot) and Turkish (Cypriot) variants. Thus, while a series of elements commonly considered as constituents of national identification are evoked, such as common traditions, culture, history, territory and language, Cypriot identity is represented as a concept fundamentally different to that of a national identity.

The presentation of Cypriot identity as incompatible with notions of Greekness and Turkishness contradict prior findings, and particularly those of Mavratsas (1997: 721), who argued that Cypriotist positions do not deny local expressions of Greek and Turkish ethnic identities, merely employing Cypriot identity as an umbrella category aiming to subsume ethnic identities under it.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, Cypriotness is here conceived not as a complimentary identity, but as an alternative mode of identification that is in tension with Greek and Turkish ethnic identities themselves. It is further worth reflecting that in contrast to Peristianis’ schema equating Cypriotism with an identification with the state (Peristianis 2008: 253), no respondent suggested such an identification. Rather, Cypriot

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<sup>7</sup> Since Mavratsas focused exclusively on the public political discourse of a single organisation from the 1990s, rather than engaging with the private views of individuals, it is not clear if Cypriotist positions have changed historically, or if similar claims were maintained during the same period but were merely not publicly articulated in political discourse.

identity is argued to correspond to the island itself, instead of the state institutions presently claiming sovereignty over it.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, while Cypriot identity is geographically contained to the island, defined in a negative relation to Greece and Turkey, Cypriotness is at the very same time represented as a culturally inclusive category. On a minimal level, this inclusiveness appears to encompass the two main ethnic communities of Cyprus, contrasting Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalist claims over national identity, which place at the centre of their discourse a culturally homogenised national subject. Inclusiveness is often phrased in relation to culture, with respondents avoiding, in their descriptions, to offer strict limits or definitions of Cypriot identity as a category.

### 5. Cypriotness as Pluralism

The connection between Cypriotness and cultural pluralism was repeatedly observed in participants' responses, which often noted that Cypriot identity should not be confused with a national identity. Cultural pluralism was in turn consistently connected with the rejection of Greek Cypriot nationalism, in parallel to the claiming of a Cypriot identity.

The extent of this pluralism varies – nonetheless, the claim that Cypriotness entails inclusivity and cultural heterogeneity is a fundamental aspect of Cypriotist positions surrounding identity. For Max, a genderqueer Greek Cypriot in their 30s, Cypriotness is primarily characterised by pluralism:

[Cypriotness is] all those pieces of cultural heritage that shape the Cypriot identity, distinguishing it from others. It is at the same time its pluralism. In religions, minorities, Armenians, Latins, Maronites. Thus, it is an identity which gives room for openings, it can mean many things. And today, where Cyprus has people from many countries, being a Cypriot can also be an identity expressed by a person who has a migratory background. It is not a single, static identity. It has fluidity, openness, and is shaped by the people who identify as Cypriots, with all the influences that have affected this identity throughout time, historically. Whether this was from conquerors, colonialism etc. All those who passed and left their mark and have fermented and influenced what we are today (Max, Greek Cypriot, genderqueer).

Cypriot identity is presented both as distinct and as pluralistic, encapsulating the cultural differentiation existing on the island. It is envisioned as an inclusive category, argued here to potentially include both locals and migrants, having an ever-changing content, being shaped by a multiplicity of historical influences, as well as by the individuals who claim this identity for themselves. Nonetheless, Max emphasised the rejection of the ongoing division as the key reason for personally claiming a Cypriot identity:

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<sup>8</sup> This observation does not of course contradict the centrality of the state in representing the nation over a specified claimed national territory; but does provide a challenge to schemas arguing that examples of 'civic nationalism' merely entail an identification with civic and political institutions.

[I describe myself] as a Cypriot, because this is what I feel expresses my identity as a person born in Cyprus, as well as in connection with my vision of a reunified Cyprus. It is how I see myself beyond the distinction of Greek and Turkish Cypriots. And I would like there to be a space for accepting and shaping oneself as a Cypriot. With no further explanation needed. I feel happy about what connects me to my place, the people, the environment, the space, the traditions, the music, the tastes, the memory (Max, Greek Cypriot, genderqueer).

Cypriotness is here employed as a signifier transcending existing ethnic divisions, as a self-description identifiable with the desire for a reunified Cyprus. The category of the 'Cypriot', lacking an ethnic prefix, is represented as being void of inter-communal tension, in harmony with the experiences and emotional attachments that Max places on the island. Artemis, a Greek Cypriot woman in her 30s, also connected Cypriot identity to a reunified Cyprus:

Cypriot identity does not exist on paper, but I believe it exists in the minds of the people around us. Greeks recognize this diversity, I often heard "they are Cypriots" when I was studying in Greece. They make fun of the way we speak, so they recognize it. Cypriot identity for me is not something nationally superior. It doesn't have purity. It does not discriminate against others. Cypriot identity, however, aims for the reunification of the Cypriot communities. And with this reasoning, it remains alive amid so many attempts to eliminate it. [...] I would not like to narrow its boundaries by setting criteria, but geographically we can say that it includes the entire island, from Akamas to Karpas (Artemis, Greek Cypriot, Female).

Like other descriptions, Cypriot identity is here again presented as 'impure' and inclusive, lacking clear boundaries of exclusion, connected at the same time with the prospect of reunification. This is emphasized by the phrase "from Akamas to Karpas", referring to the Akamas and Karpas peninsulas, each located at a different side of the island. The phrase is often employed in pro-reunification political chants, as a representation of a holistic Cyprus. The hesitance to articulate specific criteria further reflects this claim of inclusivity – while the identity is here restricted to the territory of the island, Artemis avoids placing ethnic, cultural, or other preconditions for claiming Cypriotness as an identity.

For Paris, a man in his 30s with both a Greek Cypriot and a migratory background, Cypriot identity remains in an ongoing process of shaping itself:

Yes [there is a Cypriot identity], but it seems not to be clear. I'm not sure how to phrase this, because there's a bunch of layers I'm thinking about. On one end, I sometimes think that because the colonial British named the islanders 'Cypriots' first, they named a population that was indeed a blur from a previously Ottoman pluralist empire, before shaping the Christians and Muslims to Greek and Turkish Cypriots. This is one theory. But also, perhaps that Cypriot identity is uncertain because it takes time to a) disidentify from Greek or Turkish nationalisms b) build



a pluralist identity that embraces all its history (Paris, Migratory Background, Male).

Two hypotheses within which Cypriotness is perceived as pluralistic are presented here by Paris. The first connects the concept with early British colonialism, a period prior to the rise of Greek and Turkish nationalism, leading to the concept corresponding to a culturally pluralistic society. The second perceives Cypriot identity within an ongoing process of formation, emerging in opposition to Greek and Turkish nationalism, on the one hand, and through the consolidation of a pluralistic identity, on the other. Paris further expressed the view that Cypriot identity has developed, up to the present moment, through the differentiation of the Cypriot population from Greece and Turkey:

In the domain of nationalism though, I think that to call and identify as Cypriot would mean being an orphan. If we play with this a little more, the natives could be a pair of orphan siblings. The reason I say this is because if partition happens, there is somewhat a loss of the other that is also a part of yourself. On one end, I've seen Greek-speaking Cypriots separating themselves from Greeks, the same way Turkish-speaking Cypriots separate themselves from Turks. Either of the two Cypriots so far has, though, defined themselves over the years through this separation, in their own relative way, despite the borders [checkpoints] being closed till 2003 (Paris, Migratory Background, Male).

Cypriot identity is here presented as fragmented, with members of each community defining their Cypriotness in opposition to their corresponding Greek and Turkish national identities, primarily claiming their Cypriotness by differentiating themselves from the national 'motherlands'. The employment of the term "orphan siblings" by Paris precisely indicates this process, as each community produces a sense of Cypriotness for itself; but does not necessarily actively develop a broader conception of Cypriotness. Paris concluded his response by arguing that:

In meeting together, the differences are felt from the different context each Cypriot was raised in, as if 'Cypriot' was always defined in resistance to something (the motherland). But then, if partition happens, I think it would mean losing a part of yourself. So perhaps, in meeting the other Cypriot, I think there's a case for either being left in the tragedy of fending for yourself an identity, or that it can become a starting point to collaborate and grow as a co-identifying identity. I think if I could imagine an alternative Cyprus, [that would include a] historical education which would invoke all the cultures that passed through the island; and cultivate [the idea] that to be Cypriot is a pluralist inclusion, of all that historical culmination to its present existence (Paris, Migratory Background, Male).

Pluralist inclusion proper is thus delegated as a desirable, future prospect, in which Cypriot identity will no longer be defined primarily through a negative relation with each community's motherland, but through the formation of an identity emerging from inter-communal interaction and collaboration. Phrasing partition as a partial loss of oneself,

a supra-communal conception of Cypriot identity is however already here at play – as the usage of the word “tragedy” to describe defining one’s identity exclusively through one’s ethnic community, additionally indicates. Paris was one of the few participants who did not exclusively self-identity as a Cypriot, stating that he perceived himself as “Cypriot, Filipino, Spanish, Guatemalan, and probably some Arabic too”, adding that “[p]erhaps I can’t ever be fully one thing, but I recognize aspects of myself that came to be from all the histories that arrive where I am”.

The claim to pluralism contradicts Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalist positions, which place at the centre of their discourse a culturally homogenised national subject. Cypriot identity is in contrast consistently represented as an inherently non-national identity, and Cypriotness as an anti-nationalist mode of identification. This observation reaffirms prior findings found in the literature, which noted that Cypriotists reject the label of ‘nationalism’ for the description of their own views, perceiving themselves as being anti-nationalists instead (Mavratsas 1997: 723). The meaning attached to the term ‘nationalism’ in Cypriotist discourse is however not theoretical, but contextual – nationalism is equated with its Greek and Turkish variants, as well as with a policy of discrimination, racism, and intolerance. Opposition to nationalism is therefore understood to entail a rejection of a specific type of politics centring around ethnic identity, typically associated with conservative, right-wing politics, while at the very same moment reaffirming an alternative imagined community attached to the territory of the island.

As opposition to Greek Cypriot nationalism is an underlying aspect of all Cypriotist expressions, Cypriotness is represented as its opposite. This relation becomes more readily apparent when we examine the claims being made in respect to culture. Where Greek Cypriot nationalism makes claims of a homogenised, static, and monolithic cultural identity, Cypriotness is argued to entail heterogeneity, pluralism, inclusiveness, and adaptiveness, elements that make it incompatible with dominant nationalist discourses. Thus, Cypriot identity is represented as an identification standing outside the ideological claims of Greek Cypriot nationalism, taking the appearance of a floating signifier, acquiring meaning through its utilisation for the invalidation of hegemonic forms of nationalism.

These expressions fluctuate between claims of potentiality and actuality, with Cypriotness sometimes projected as a future, desirable possibility, while at other moments argued to permeate existing social reality. Nonetheless, while inclusiveness and pluralism are consistently evoked as integral to Cypriot identity, the meaning mediated through these claims is less consistent, as the extent of this pluralism changes depending on each response, with positions including standard bi-communal visualisations, multi-religious/communal representations, to broader conceptualisations of identity aiming to further include migrant populations. What remains consistent is the representation of Cypriot identity as inherently non-homogeneous. Yet, unlike Greek (Cypriot) national identity, Cypriotness is vaguely defined, reflecting the broader claim of inclusivity. The lack of strict criteria for inclusion

sustains the image of Cypriot identity as non-restrictive, open, and flexible, entailing no fixed markers of inclusivity and exclusivity.

Another point worth noting is the uneasy relation that participants have to the concept of identity itself. Unlike Greek Cypriot nationalists, who maintain a strong sense of national identity, viewing it as an unchanging characteristic, perspectives over Cypriotness maintain a more hesitant view, often noting that identity is flexible, historical, and amendable. While most participants utilised such readings of identity to criticise primarily Greek national identity in Cyprus, the tendency to challenge the very concept of identity itself was, on some occasions, further extended to question Cypriotness as a category as well.

## **6. Questioning the Centrality of Identity**

While Cypriotness has been typically represented as an alternative to both Greekness and nationalism in general, a few participants questioned the usefulness of invoking Cypriot identity as an alternative. Thus, in some responses, the very notion of having a generalised identity was challenged. Katerina, a Greek Cypriot woman in her 30s, doubted the positive influence of identities, while in parallel contemplating how claims to a Cypriot identity can be employed in relation to inter-communal reconciliation:

I have a bit of a problem with the concept of identity, because it sounds like something fixed and unchanging... Something objective and "true"... Which it is not. In the end, each element of identity exists in relation to something else from which I differentiate myself, and this creates practical problems. [...] On the other hand, I understand why the promotion of a Cypriot Identity could be an element that promotes reconciliation. In this case, I could name elements that constituted a positive version of "Cypriot Identity"... Well, we are a people who loves the sea and has a sense of pride, and humanity... Or I could focus on material common elements (e.g. that have to do with our common experiences due to the environment and our "land")... Or on the similarities in the way we pronounce our otherwise different languages... Or in our shared historical experiences (e.g. collective uprisings) or traditions (e.g. food). However, I know how fluid and "ideological", as Althusser would say, the idea of "national identity" is, whatever "nation" it may be (Katerina, Greek Cypriot, Female).

The response of Katerina demonstrates how generalisations surrounding Cypriotness can be articulated with relative ease. While viewing the notion of identity with suspicion, Katerina offers several descriptions of what she describes as a "positive version" of Cypriot identity, a conception of Cypriotness that includes both communities, potentially assisting the process of reconciliation. In describing herself as a Cypriot, Katerina focused on the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion embedded in the various identities existing on the island:

Spontaneously I would say Cypriot... Maybe if they ask me to clarify I would say Cypriot who speaks Cypriot Greek. I certainly wouldn't say Greek, and if I said Greek Cypriot -which sometimes I do- I would feel uncomfortable. It is what I

said before, national identities create problems, I would prefer not to predispose someone towards who I am, based on where I am from (meaning also coming from a specific section of a population, a section carrying historically generated characteristics). But if I had to answer, I would not say Greek Cypriot or Greek, because it refers directly and intensely to the differentiation with Turkish Cypriots... A division that, even in the way I present myself, I would like to erase (Katerina, Greek Cypriot, Female).

For Katerina, her self-description acts as a rejection of Cyprus' existing divisions separating the local population into different ethnic groups. Cypriotness is thus here employed as a signifier of identity that is perceived to lack national characteristics, transcending dominant national categories, in contrast to Greekness, which is understood to be inherently exclusionary towards Turkish Cypriots.

Lastly, for Athena, a Greek Cypriot woman in her 30s, a unified Cypriot identity is presently non-existent, its possibility restricted by the ongoing hegemony of Greek and Turkish national identities:

Cypriot identity is full of cracks and ruptures. It is certain that there is no single Cypriot identity, as it is not possible to have a single state – at present, or the near future. Beginning from the fact that the Greek and Turkish national identities were imposed as the dominant narratives in Cyprus, and until today express all authoritarian and state structures and relations, then it is difficult to support that there is acceptance (common acceptance) of Cypriotness. Nonetheless, I personally believe that it is possible for a Cypriot identity to exist, precisely because it is connected with the island in space and time. It is a formation that has been shaped with all its specific features, through a series of historical experiences that took place in this geographical-political frame. I still believe, however, that the present educational framework, in which we have been brought up and continue to grow up in, makes the diffusion and acceptance of Cypriot identity quite difficult (Athena, Greek Cypriot, Female).

Greek and Turkish national identities are here represented as imposed, in contrast to Cypriot identity, which is argued to be instead connected with the island historically and spatially. Nonetheless, Cypriot identity is reserved here to the position of a potentiality, blocked at present by the predominance and entrenchment of Greek and Turkish national identities in formal state institutions, repressing any widespread affirmation of Cypriotness. Yet, in her own self-description, Athena rejected the term 'Cypriot', arguing that its use sidelines contemporary and historical differences between the various Cypriot ethnic communities:

I object generally to national identities, but tend to use the term Greek Cypriot, because due to my feminist background, I believe that it is important to recognise and talk through differences, without trying to simply eradicate them without any meaningful discussion. In the present historical conjecture, I believe that Cypriot identity over-simplifies and generalises the discontinuities, the

displacements, inconsistencies, and the complexities of the history of this place (Athena, Greek Cypriot, Female).

Athena further elaborated that her position was rooted in intersectional feminism, which views the multiple identities imposed upon women as “crossroads of relations of power and exploitation”. She thus emphasised the need to “articulate discourses surrounding this multiplicity”, rather than removing existing differences through the utilisation of categories that turn them invisible in political discourse:

[I]t is difficult for me, AT THE PRESENT TIME, to accept Cypriot identity, because I would be erasing the historical conjecture through which my privileged position (as a Greek Cypriot) is systematically (re)producing the marginalisation of other identities, and in this particular context, of Turkish Cypriots. Therefore, it is important for me to recognise these differences (that place me in the position of the Greek Cypriot) and name them, historicise them, and place them in specific frameworks, in order to take responsibility of my positionality and therefore continue to fight for a future in which, perhaps, the adjectives placed before the noun ‘Cypriot’, will no longer be necessary (Athena, Greek Cypriot, Female).

Thus, the objection towards the utilisation of the term ‘Cypriot’ for Athena’s self-description, rests on the perceived need to recognise and address differences of power and privilege, which the existing terminology surrounding identity reflects more readily than the all-encompassing term ‘Cypriot’. Much like Cypriot identity, the usage of the term is nonetheless retained for a future in which the currently employed terms will no longer signify such differences, rendering them politically obsolete.

The perspectives outlined in this section constitute a small minority of the views expressed in participants’ responses. Nonetheless, their distinctiveness highlights the extent to which the concept of ‘Cypriot identity’ outlined by most participants remains largely disconnected from other identity markers mediated by processes of racialization, class stratification, gender inequality and heteronormativity. This is not to say that participants were indifferent to these forms of social inequality, as all of them actively participated in political groups and public mobilisations addressing and protesting them. Rather, this observation is applicable to the conceptualised category of ‘Cypriot identity’ itself. As the category depends upon the claiming of a distinct, yet unifying pluralistic identity, identity markers reflecting non-cultural social relations are externalised, becoming imperceptible through the category.

## **7. Concluding Remarks**

The literature surrounding Cypriotism has often emphasised the meta-ethnic character of the ideology, arguing that Cypriotist expressions propose a sense of Cypriotness that does not centre on cultural considerations, prioritising a civic identity over and above existing ethnic identities, without necessarily directly challenging and opposing them (Mavratsas 1998: 86). Notably, Peristianis argued that Cypriotism and Greek Cypriot nationalism correspond to diametrically opposed positions, with the former prioritising loyalty to the state, and the latter loyalty to the national group (Peristianis 2008: 2). The

findings presented here stand in contradiction with such an interpretation. While we can here reconfirm that Cypriotism rejects ethnicity as a central element of Cypriot identity, the senses of Cypriotness explored in this article place culture, rather than civic considerations, at the centre of their articulation. Cypriot identity is conceptualised and claimed as culturally heterogeneous, pluralistic and inclusive, at the very same moment as it is represented as different from Greece and Turkey, demarcating this difference in cultural, rather than civic terms.

The claimed differentiation from Greece and Turkey is further extended to a parallel challenging and rejection of Greek and Turkish national identity, with Cypriotness placed in an antagonistic relation to them, opposing their corresponding national imagined communities. Thus, the evocation of Cypriotness does not act as an accommodation of conflictual ethnic identities but is itself a claim to an alternative competing cultural identity, displacing the centrality placed upon Greek and Turkish identification within Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalism, disconnecting Cyprus from Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalist meta-narratives surrounding the island's ethnic and national character. Rather than accommodating Greekness and Turkishness through the evocation of a culturally thin, minimalist civic identity, claims to Cypriotness offer an alternative mode of imagination, where the ethnic and cultural homogeneity entailed in Greek and Turkish national identity are both challenged and rejected, representing Cyprus, both historically and culturally, as a pluralistic; rather than as a monocultural space.

Cypriot identity is further asserted here as non-national, inclusive and culturally heterogeneous. Cypriotness itself is left largely undetailed, with its descriptions characterised by vagueness and generalisations, tautologically reproducing the claim of its pluralism and inclusivity, in contrast to the hegemonic nationalist ideologies Cypriotism opposes, which remain rooted in homogenised national categories. The extent to which conceptualisations of Cypriot identity draw upon facets of national imagining is nonetheless consistent and noticeable. While these facets are already reflected in vague evocations to Cypriot traditions, culture and history, they become apparent in the demarcation of Cyprus as fundamentally different from Greece and Turkey on a cultural level, in the increased attention placed on the inclusion of Turkish Cypriots over other communities, and the attachment of 'Cypriot identity' to a specific geographical territory.

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