Narratives of loss, longing and daily life: The meaning of home for Cypriot refugees in London

Helen Taylor

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Abstract

The concept of home is integral to much research in the field of refugee studies, which has looked at the settlement of refugees in the new home of exile, return to the lost home and, more recently, a negotiation between two or more homes through transnational practices. However, studies have rarely focused on what home actually means for those compelled to leave their homes. This thesis moves beyond a structural assessment of forced migration to look at the lived experience of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugees in London, in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the meaning of home. The thesis takes as its focus four key aspects of home – the spatial, temporal, material and relational – to reveal that home for the refugee is complex, multiple and in process.

What the refugee loses when they are displaced is not only the physical property of the spatial home; but also the networks and social capital of the relational home; the framed memories, repetitions of daily life and future potential of the temporal home; as well as the tastes, scents and embodied experience of the material home. It is the impossibility of all these aspects ever being reassembled, even if the physical property were to be returned, which illustrates the depth of loss that exile often represents. However, in spite of the losses they have suffered, the majority of Cypriot refugees in this study also show tremendous resilience.

The findings are based on narrative interviews with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugees, who have lived in protracted exile in London for several decades. Contributing to a narrative turn in the field, which places the refugee at the centre rather than the margins of the research, this study recognises refugees as agents in their own lives, who are victims of circumstances rather than victims per se.

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Chapter 1
The meaning of home – contextualising the study

'There's no absence if there remains even the memory of absence. Memory dies unless it's given a use. Or as Athos might have said: If one no longer has land but has the memory of land, then one can make a map.'
From *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels (1997: 193).[1]

Introduction

Dimitris[2] is a Greek Cypriot refugee from a village on the northern coast of Cyprus, which is now in the Turkish Cypriot controlled area of the island. He explained to me some of the challenges which arise when one is forced to leave one's home and make a new home in a different country:

> All these people who think it's easy to throw somebody out of their house and then give him another house a few hundred miles away, or put him in a boat and take him somewhere. If you lose your house where your roots are, you know where you grew up, it's not an easy thing. Nothing can compensate that.

Dimitris became a refugee 34 years ago and has since lived in London, where he has prospered financially and raised his family. In many ways he is the kind of migrant British governments dream of – he works hard, pays taxes, speaks good English, owns his own house, undertakes community work – yet he may very well still fail the Tebbit test[3]. In spite of being 'successfully'

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[1] Anne Michaels' novel *Fugitive Pieces* is a deeply affecting story of a Jewish boy's struggle to start a new life, after he is rescued in Poland by a Greek archaeologist. The themes of the novel – loss, longing, exile, grief – chime with many of those raised by this thesis and, time and again, I was reminded of it as I wrote. As a result, I chose to begin each chapter with a quote from the novel, which seems particularly appropriate to the discussion which follows.
[2] All refugee participants quoted have been given pseudonyms, which have been chosen to reflect their real names. So, for example, those Greek Cypriots with anglicised names have been given a similar pseudonym. Biographical notes on each participant are in Appendix 1.
[3] In an interview with the Los Angeles Times in April 1990, former Conservative Party chairman Norman Tebbit said: 'A large proportion of Britain's Asian population fail to pass the cricket test. Which side do they cheer for? It's an interesting test. Are you still harking back to where you came from or where you are?'

resettled in Britain, Dimitris can't forget the home he lost and the circumstances in which it occurred.

While he has lived what could be described as a transnational life, maintaining contact with Cyprus while living in London, his words also question the move in theory towards the concept of 'home as movement', in response to an increasingly mobile global population (Rapport & Dawson 1998: 30). While the ability to move around the world for work or pleasure is a welcome bonus of globalisation for the privileged few, Dimitris's statement challenges the embrace of universal rootlessness seen in some quarters of postmodernism (Chambers 1994). Dimitris has prospered in exile and could be said to be much luckier than many other refugees, but he makes it clear that he cannot envisage any adequate compensation for the loss he has suffered. Even if there was a political solution in Cyprus and his property was given back to him, there can be no return to the past. In the light of his statement, therefore, there is a pressing need to better understand what home means to the refugee and what makes its loss so enduring for many, even when life in exile has been largely positive. This thesis seeks to address that need. However, I am aware of the importance of not essentialising the refugee as someone who is only defined by their displacement, nor do I see all refugees as homogeneous. As the participants in this study show, while the experience of exile has been central to many of their lives it is not their only story and its effects vary for different refugees.

While home is a central concept in refugee studies – due to the defining loss of home through forced displacement, subsequent settlement or resettlement in a new home and possible return to the lost home – there is

rarely reflection on what home actually means. Yet without an understanding of the meaning of home it is difficult to assess the refugee's loss (and subsequent resilience or otherwise in dealing with that loss), the task they face in constructing a new home and the reason why the lost home might continue to be important in protracted exile. If we want to move beyond a structural assessment of forced migration – which looks at issues such as rising or falling refugee numbers, successful border controls, adequate settlement policies, impacts on host countries and measures to minimise refugee flows – and instead look at the human experience of exile, then some attention needs to be given to developing a more complex understanding of the meaning of home.

This study takes as its focus the narratives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugees living in London, who were displaced during the unrest of the late 1950s and early 1960s, or as a result of the Greek coup and Turkish military intervention[4] of 1974, which led to the partition of the island. These are stories of loss and an ongoing restlessness due to the lack of a political solution in Cyprus, but they are also stories of resilience and success in London. The collected narratives suggest that the meaning of home is of great importance for those who have been forcibly displaced. However, I accept that Cypriot refugees are not a homogenous group and differences emerge – between men and women, young and old, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, bi-communalists and nationalists. As Al-Ali points out, assumptions of homogeneity among refugees from the same country or

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[4]The Turkish military action of 1974 is referred to as an 'invasion' by most Greek Cypriots and as a 'peace operation' by the Turkish Cypriot state. I will use the more neutral term 'military intervention' throughout the thesis.

community are not helpful when trying to gain an understanding of the refugee experience (Al-Ali 2002: 102). In response, this study has set about developing a more nuanced understanding of home for Cypriot refugees.

For Cypriots living in protracted exile, the initial worries of gaining asylum or finding employment and safe housing are long past. However, the fact that the political situation that catapulted them into exile remains unresolved and they still cannot return to their homes means that questions of loss and longing have been kept very much alive. Similarly, the constant contact with Cyprus, but not until recently with their lost homes, has meant that they have had a strange and frustrating relationship with their home country. Like migrants they have travelled back and forth, phoned relatives for news and watched Cypriot TV, yet their homes have remained off limits. In addition, throughout that time they have been making a home in London.

Although this study is rooted in refugee studies, I found it necessary to also look at literature further afield and have borrowed from disciplines such as geography, cultural studies, sociology, literature, memory studies, history, anthropology and narrative research in order to shed new light on the problem at hand. In any case, refugee studies has always been an inter-disciplinary field and can only benefit by drawing on the insights of other areas of expertise. However, the most illuminating data came from the narratives of the refugees themselves, gathered in 22 in-depth interviews with first-generation Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in London[5]. These form the basis of this thesis and speak volumes about the diverse meanings of home.

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[5] The research process and methodology will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The multiple home

This thesis is based on the understanding that the meaning of home for the refugee is complex, multiple and often contradictory. While the concept of home has been present in many previous studies of refugees, this complexity is rarely reflected. Many valuable sociological studies of refugee settlement, for example, look at the importance of social networks for refugees trying to re-establish home. Legal research often talks in terms of refugees' rights to the property they have lost and the right of return home. Meanwhile, work on transnationalism looks at refugees' attempts to conduct their lives between two or more physical homes. This valuable literature, however, does not encompass the multi-faceted, lived experience of home. Just what is it that we are talking about when we talk about the refugee losing their home, returning home, or establishing a new home? What does this home look or feel like? In an attempt to answer these questions in more depth, I have developed a four-pronged approach to the meaning of home.

Drawing on recurring themes in the refugee narratives, as well as key issues in the relevant literature, I have chosen the spatial home, the temporal home, the material home and the relational home as the focus for the discussion in this thesis. These are not the only aspects of home that are relevant to the refugee, but in the process of conducting the research they emerged as the most useful for the task of better understanding the meaning of home. The spatial home deals with aspects of the physical home, such as the house and other buildings, the village and the spaces inhabited by the refugee, both in Cyprus and in exile in London. The temporal home explores the refugee's understanding of home as it relates to the past, present and

future, accepting that home is positioned in time as much as it is in place. The material home is an investigation of the sensory nature of home through tastes, scents and an embodied experience of landscape. Finally, the relational home focuses on the family and wider social networks, which produce social capital and facilitate daily life.

Some of these themes have been explored by others – Malkki, for example, has critiqued and developed our understanding of the spatial home (Malkki 1992, Malkki 1995), while Zetter has explored some of the temporal aspects of home for the refugee (Zetter 1998) – but they have not been brought together before in one study. By juxtaposing these four aspects I aim to show firstly how complex the meaning of home is for all of us, but especially for the refugee whose relationship with home has been thrown into high relief, and secondly to illustrate how these multiple aspects of home are interconnected and inseparable. For example, the meaning of the spatial home is rooted in a particular time, as Cypriot refugees making their first return visits to their lost homes recently found out. Similarly, the social networks of the relational home become meaningless, at least in the short term, for refugees finding themselves in a different spatial context where these networks can't function. The inevitable crossover between the four chosen themes illustrate how, by examining all of them in detail, we may begin to arrive at a deeper understanding of the meaning of home.

Current debates on home

When the decision to relocate has been made out of necessity rather than desire, it seems likely that the nature of belonging and the meaning of home

will be marked by complexity and contradiction. The lost home may become the 'mythic place of desire' viewed from a distance, due to the undesired and often swift nature of departure and the impossibility of return, but it is also 'the lived experience of a locality' (Brah 1996: 192). As well as the location of good experiences of the past and memories of family and friends, the lost home is the place where bad things happened, where the protection of the state may have ceased and neighbours could no longer be trusted. Similarly, the exilic home is capable of being at the same time a place of refuge and safe haven, and a place of alienation and discrimination.

In spite of this complexity, solutions offered to the 'problem' of refugees often rely on a 'here' or 'there' paradigm. The United Nations' durable solutions for refugees are settlement, resettlement or repatriation, implying an either/or of starting again in a new country or returning to one's country of origin. With voluntary repatriation being the UN's preferred durable solution (UNHCR 2006), there is a suggestion that the natural order of things is for people to be back in the place where they belong, the place where they came from. Yet this implies that both the refugee and the home they have left behind have remained static and can be reunited. As Warner points out, the solution of return 'denies the temporal reality of our lives and the changes that take place over time' (Warner 1994: 171).

While the field of refugee studies initially reflected this preoccupation, with many studies focussing on aspects of resettlement in a host country or the process of repatriation, research since the late 1990s has taken on board the potential for multiple allegiances and the existence of transnational links, which imply an ongoing connection to more than one country (see, for

example, Al-Ali & Koser 2002). Rather than seeing migrants and refugees as 'out of place', transnationalism sees flows of people as symptomatic of a globalised world. Holding ties to more than one place, transnationals initiate physical, economic, social or cultural movement between nations. Some discussions of transnationalism offer a rather mechanistic definition of the phenomenon, focusing heavily on economic activity and the regular movement of migrant entrepreneurs between two places (Portes 1999; Portes et al 1999). Rather than referring to a binary flow between a former and a current home, however, Al-Ali and Koser see transnationalism as a way of understanding the potential for a multiplicity of 'heres' and 'theres' (Al-Ali & Koser 2002: 6). In their view, 'concepts of home are not static but dynamic processes, involving the acts of imagining, creating, unmaking, changing, losing and moving "homes" (Al-Ali & Koser 2002: 6)'. This allows for the possibility that the refugee might maintain a deep, emotional attachment to the lost home, while at the same time making a new home in the country of exile, or indeed in another country altogether.

Theories of transnationalism make a convincing argument for multiple allegiances to home, as opposed to postmodern notions of homelessness, which reject connections to geographical localities in favour of a more fluid notion of home. Instead, transnationalism talks of connections to real or imagined physical and social spaces, but sees these connections as multiple, complex and in process. As Barnes states, in her study of long-term Vietnamese refugees in Australia, 'attachment to one country does not preclude attachment to the other' and 'self definition of social belonging to either country can change over time' (Barnes 2001: 409). The fact that most

of us – even those who have moved very little geographically – continually negotiate multiple allegiances to places, people, identities and ideas has been eloquently argued in much of the well-developed theory on identity and migration (Bhabha 1994; Gilroy 2001; Hall 1990; Hall 1996; Werbner & Modood 1997), but has been less of a feature in the analysis of forced migration. Yet for refugees, who by their very definition could not remain where they were and have often had limited choice about the location of exile, these issues are often more vexed.

This idea of multiplicity and dynamism, therefore, takes us closer to understanding the refugee encounter with home. However, transnational theory has focused more on labour migrants than on refugees and, therefore, needs to be used carefully when approaching issues of forced migration. Al-Ali argues that for concepts of transnationalism to be usefully applied to refugees rather than voluntary migrants, we need to move away from a view of transnationalism as purely governed by global movements of capital and labour. 'It could be argued,' she says, 'that forced migration sometimes leads to "forced transnationalism"' (Al-Ali 2002: 115). In this way, the forced migrant establishes links between one or more countries, as much out of necessity as desire, as a way of managing the crisis of exile, rather than as a lifestyle choice. I would agree with Al-Ali's assertion that it is essential 'to ground transnational practices firmly in material circumstances and avoid getting lost in postmodern landscapes of elusive hybrid nomads and cosmopolitans' (Al-Ali 2002: 100).

It is important, therefore, to bear in mind the lived experience of the refugee rather than getting carried away with a potentially fanciful notion of a

world of limitless movement. Al-Ali goes on to say that when talking about transnationalism we must be mindful of the fact that 'a large number of refugees do not have "two homes" but none' and being between places may be better described for some as 'a state of limbo' rather than liberation (Al-Ali 2002: 99, 113). Salih agrees that rather than transnational practices forging a 'sense of belonging *simultaneously* to two countries', for the refugee they may define the condition of 'living in more than one country but belonging to "neither" place' (Salih 2002: 52). In embracing complexity, therefore, it is important to note that while home may be typified by multiplicity, for the refugee the often painful loss of home may lead to a strong belief in the continued existence of a unitary, true home. So, paradoxically, the refugee – who could be said to typify the transnational moment, by maintaining multiple allegiances and undertaking travel and communication between two or more territories – may express a desire for the restoration of the certainties of a perceived static past.

The spatial home

Until relatively recently anthropology and to some extent refugee studies viewed home in terms of a fixed location – a house, village or homeland – defined geographically. People were seen as rooted in the land they originated from and, by extension, refugees were described as uprooted. However, in the past decade or more, much theory has questioned this notion, instead seeing home as characterised by a lack of fixity (Massey 1992: 13). Rapport and Dawson summarise these two contrasting theories as 'home versus movement' and 'home as movement' (Rapport & Dawson 1998: 30),

yet neither seems to be adequate in representing the refugee's complex and often contradictory attitude towards the place(s) they call home. As Uehling states, equating modernity with movement is not necessarily helpful in the study of refugees, as 'their life histories attest to the physical, emotional and psychological suffering of being displaced in a world in which citizenship, national affiliation and nation state borders still hold a great deal of significance' (Uehling 2002: 390). Exclusion from the country of origin and the increasingly fraught process of inclusion in the host country do not afford refugees the luxury of a celebration of homelessness and it is important to resist the conflation of the terms refugee, exile and migrant.

While the idea of a *natural* link between people and place has rightly been questioned (Malkki 1992: 34), the spatial home is constructed over time and as a result attachments to physical places are established. It also seems that for some groups of refugees, the Cypriots included, the very process of being forced to leave the geographical location they have called home may actually solidify the idea of home as a tangible physical place. As Kaplan notes, the experience of exile may lead to the desire for 'a coherent, recognised identity or point of origin' (Kaplan 1996: 104). It would be wrong, however, to propose that the perception of home as a tangible and fixed locale is necessarily accurate. Massey is right to assert that the notion of home as 'singular and bounded' cannot be sustained (Massey 1991: 24-29). While an individual or group may believe that their relationship to the physical space that surrounds them is singular, places are more accurately seen as cultural process, acquiring and changing meaning over time as a result of the social activity that occurs within them.

Rather than an absolute space, the physical home is a product of the cultural and historical context in which it is perceived or experienced (Hirsch 1995: 23). Meaning is attributed to space through daily practices, burial rites, festivals, and religious and political discourses, while individual and collective memories and ancestral ties bind a community to a physical place. However, the different meanings attributed to land by different groups can lead to conflict, as we continue to see in Palestine. Similarly the different meanings attributed to houses, villages and regions in Cyprus today by 'indigenous' populations, refugees and migrants may lead to much dispute over the cultural landscapes in question. As Stepputat observes some places are imagined differently by different actors (Stepputat 1994: 177), as a result of different cultural processes at different historical conjunctures.

However, rather than assess the variety of contested meanings attached to any given space it seems more profitable to discover why many refugees continue to attach such meaning to the physical location of the lost home at all – even in protracted exile. Regardless of whether this perceived home was ever a static or stable entity, many refugees feel it to be so. It may be that the very uncertainty of exile, the lack of choice involved and the often violent removal from home leads to attempts to solidify the geographical space in the refugee imagination. However, this process becomes increasingly difficult over time as the lost land becomes more distant. As a result, the representation of the landscape becomes less based on physical reality and is increasingly symbolic. As Brah explains, home is often a 'mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination... a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory' (Brah 1996: 192).

For the last three or four decades, Cypriot refugees have found a physical home in what Brah refers to as the 'diaspora space' of the culturally diverse city of London (Brah 1996: 208). Along with other migrants, they have made the spaces of the city their own. The emergence of shops and businesses bearing Greek and Turkish names, selling Cypriot food, publishing Cypriot newspapers and playing Cypriot music, all display the emplacement practices of Cypriots in London. Just as the spatial home in Cyprus was constructed over time, the spaces of exile have gradually accumulated meaning and grown in familiarity.

The temporal home

Refugees' experience of home is defined as much by time as by space. They live in exile in the present, at a physical and temporal distance from the lost home that existed in the past, unable to predict whether the future will bring return or continued exile. Zetter states that the normal continuity between the past and the future, mediated by the present, has been fragmented for Cypriot refugees, who are 'cut off from the physical and symbolic representation of the past – their homes, land, villages and sense of place' and as a result 'the past is reconstructed and preserved in mythical form' (Zetter 1998: 301). However, while Cypriot refuges may perceive the lost home to be just as it appears in their memories, Massey is right to suggest that the 'past was no more static than the present' (Massey 1992: 13), even though it may appear so to the refugee because of the sudden separation. When looking at the relationship between the past, present and the future for the refugee, it is also important to remember that they cannot be neatly separated but continue to

fold in upon each other, as their understanding of the past and hopes for the future change in line with the present reality.

While we tend to see time in linear terms, as a progression from past to present to future, the temporal qualities of home are often cyclical and repetitive. The human life cycle, the seasons, calendar time and religious festivals all bring a rhythm to the experience of home and daily life. The refugee, however, experiences 'an unexpected destabilisation of routines' which, temporarily at least, can cause them to question their place in the world (Downing 1996: 36). The re-establishment of such routines is often one of the ways in which refugees begin to manage exile and set about establishing a new home.

For refugees, memory is often seen to be crucial in keeping alive the lost home, but memory may falter when the context or frame of memory – the house, the village, social networks – has been left behind. Props of memory are lost when a person is dislocated from their country, home or the people who shared their memories of the past, so for them 'the familiar suppliers and prompters of anecdote, peoples and places, indoors and outdoors' are gone (Feuchtwang 2003: 77). Writer Slavenka Drakulic describes this feeling when she talks of the pain of becoming a refugee from former Yugoslavia:

> I knew that I had been deprived of the future, but I could bear it. But until that moment I wasn't aware that I had been deprived of the past too. Of my past I had only memories and I knew they would acquire the sepia colour of a distant, undistinguished event, then slowly dissolve... leading me to doubt that I had ever lived that part of my life. (Drakulic 1993: 32-35)

However, much work on memory sees it not as a reflection of the past, but rather as a mechanism for dealing with the needs of the present and the future, by organising fragments of experience into frames of relevance (King

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2000: 33; Stanley 1992: 128; Wood 1992: 148). As Warner states: 'The past is "remembered" as part of a creative process in the present. And that creativity is part of a vision of what we want the past and the present to represent' (Warner 1994: 171). Therefore, the home conjured up by refugee memory may look very different at different historical junctures. It is important, therefore, to take into account the events surrounding the research, which may affect the feelings and opinions of the individual refugee. For example, anniversaries of major political events in Cyprus stir up collective sentiments towards the lost homeland at political events in London, whereas first visits 'home' made by a number of Cypriot refugees around the time of this study may shatter idyllic memories of the past and call into question dreams for the future.

For the refugee, the future has often been viewed as the time when the longed-for return home will finally take place, but even those with the most passionate belief in return are also aware of the practical reasons why return may not be likely. This is not necessarily a contradiction, as Al-Rasheed sees adherence to the 'myth' of return as a way of dealing with the confusion of living between two cultures, stating that: 'The myth is, therefore, a pragmatic solution to the dilemma of being part of two contexts, two countries and two sets of norms and values, which may not only be different, but in most cases contradictory' (Al-Rasheed 1994: 200). So belief in return may not manifest itself in actual return but may serve a purpose in the present by alleviating the pain of total detachment from the past home.

The material home

In the Cypriot context, home is not just seen as the house but also the fields, orchards, farmland and cemetery where ancestors are buried (Zetter 1998: 309). Originating largely in rural communities, Cypriots have a relationship to the material home, which goes beyond the economic value of crops and rather determines the colour, taste and smell of home. The close relationship with the land brought about by working on it, being surrounded by it and being sustained by its produce means that material aspects of home feature strongly in Cypriot refugee narratives. Exile in the urban context of London contrasts greatly with the spaces of Cyprus and the lost home is often remembered as a rural idyll. Many of my interviewees talked of the special qualities of the villages that had been left behind, with their natural beauty and abundance. While such imagery is a testimony to the strength of feeling and the depth of loss felt by the refugee, it also points to the use of nature in discourses of the nation and national belonging (Bisharat 1997: 225; Schama 1991: 11), which are reflected in refugee narratives.

The earth also appears to be especially important to those from rural contexts, including Cyprus, being both the soil in which food and plants are grown and the ground in which family are buried, while the separation from ancestors buried in the home village is a source of ongoing pain for many refugees. According to Zetter, the metaphor of having one's 'roots in the soil' permeates the so-called 'myth of return' for Cypriots by implying an organic connection to the land (Zetter 1998: 309). However, such metaphors have to be read against the use of imagery from nature in discourses of nationalism, which see soil as synonymous with nation and are used to imply that certain

people naturally belong to the land (Malkki 1992: 26-27). While many refugees take a handful of the soil of home as an emotional response to the sudden catastrophe of exile, there is also a subtext of natural entitlement to the land that is mobilised in state discourses.

In exile, plants and food can often be the most poignant reminders of what has been left behind. Ben-Ze'ev found this in her study of Palestinian refugees, which showed that plants act as 'mnemonic devices... enabling a temporary (re)creation of the past' (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 141). The particular taste and smell of home points to the specificity of individual villages, each with their own significant plants (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 147), and in Cyprus each village is known for particular trees, flowers or crops that are celebrated in village festivals. Trees, in particular, often come to represent places, due to their size and longevity (Jones & Cloke 2002: 19; 29), and as a result they are viewed with great emotion. Those Cypriots making return journeys to their lost villages were often almost as distressed to find that their trees had been cut down as they were to find their houses in ruins. Trees can also be used to represent the nation, both in foundational myths and in exile. For example, the olive tree has become a powerful symbol of the Palestinian nation for those displaced from their land (Gallie 1997: 25).

In exile, the planting of trees and flowers common to Cyprus has brought about a recreation of the lost home in London. In this context, plants can be used as political symbols to signify the desire to return home, as mnemonic devices to generate memories of the lost home or as a way of making the refugee feel at home in exile. There is also a sense of community suggested by the repetition of known plants in the exile space of London, as

vines and jasmine in the capital's front gardens suggest that Cypriots live within.

Food is also a crucial element in establishing feelings of belonging and the construction of social networks and, in exile, food can become an important material symbol of home. Ben-Ze'ev notes that the possibility of recreating the past through taste and smell is more poignant for the refugee, 'not only reaching back in time, but recreating the features of a place to which one cannot return' (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 145). Sutton also points to the heightened importance of food for migrants, who eat homeland food in order to 'counter tendencies toward fragmentation of experience' (Sutton 2001: 77-78). Therefore, the material home is crucial in aiding settlement in exile, as the aspect of the lost home that most easily lends itself to adaptation to the new context, even though the tastes and smells of home can also arouse painful memories of what has been lost.

The relational home

Home is not simply a physical entity but is constructed over time from the social interactions that come to represent everyday life. As Zetter states, 'home' is a 'living organism of relationships and traditions stretching back into the past' (Zetter 1998: 310). Brah also sees home in the diasporic imagination as not only a nostalgic representation of a place, but also as the memory of the 'lived experience of a locality... as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations' (Brah 1996: 192). One of the greatest losses suffered by the refugee is the loss of these social networks that defined and facilitated daily life. In addition, refugees lose the social capital that is accrued

over generations and the intimate knowledge of the habitual daily practices of a community – what Bourdieu calls 'habitus' – which generate a feeling of being at home (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 126; Bourdieu 1990: 53).

Cernea sees the experience of losing one's social networks as one of a number of manifestations of poverty brought about by forced migration. He describes it as 'social disarticulation', which amounts to the 'dismantling of communities' social organisation structures, the dispersal of informal and formal networks' which is 'an expensive yet unquantified loss of social capital' (Cernea 1996: 22). The loss of relationships is often one of the most painful elements of the expulsion from home, as 'refugees experience the most complete dislocation of their social world' often losing extended family structures as well as their economic and political networks (Joly 1996: 163). Such networks are especially important for women who can be disproportionately affected by the rupture of social structures and may be more isolated in exile. In Loizos's study of Greek Cypriot refugees displaced within Cyprus, he found that women lamented two things more keenly than men – the loss of their dowry houses[6] and the loss of the 'compact community of kin, friends, and neighbours that had sustained their lives' (Loizos 1981: 176).

In exile, community organisations, shops, cafés and social venues become a crucial element in the reconstruction of home for diasporic communities. This need for community interaction, Gilroy believes, arises out of the construction of diasporic identities around the 'social dynamics of remembrance and commemoration' and 'locations of belonging' (Gilroy 2001:

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[6] Women in Cyprus were traditionally given dowry houses when they married. These were built by their family and gave them some financial security on entering marriage.

123-4) for those at a physical distance from home. Social networks can provide economic and educational opportunities; social, political and cultural activities; advice and information; translation; advocacy; and importantly news from those 'back home'. This process of home-making in exile can be read as a pragmatic response to the need to rebuild those social networks that were lost and to start again, or as a desire to reconstruct the lost homeland while waiting for return. Hage, however, takes issue with the belief that the reproduction of homeland practices is an attempt to reproduce home. It is rather, he believes, a settlement strategy centred on reproducing the homely feelings that earlier made them feel at home (Hage 1997: 104). It is possible, however, that for refugees rather than voluntary migrants such homeland practices may serve the dual function of enabling settlement in the here and now, while maintaining ties with the social and cultural practices of the past, in case return becomes possible at some time in the future.

Other aspects of home

There are of course many other aspects of home that could have been elaborated in this thesis, not least the home as homeland or nation. However, nationalism and national identity are issues relating to Cyprus that have received much attention in recent years (see for example Bryant 2004; Calotychos 1998; Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis 2000; Papadakis 1998, 2005; Pollis 1998) and were, therefore, not chosen as a focus for this thesis, which looked at less explored aspects of home. It is nonetheless inevitable that discourses of the national home influence all other aspects of home under discussion here and, therefore, appear in the four thematic chapters. What I wished to do

here, however, was move away from master narratives – which have undoubtedly played a big role in Cyprus's troubled history – and focus on the narratives of individual refugees and their reflections on home. Of course, these individual narratives have been greatly influenced by master narratives (as discussed in the following chapter), but in this thesis the spotlight is turned on individual refugee stories and refugee agency.

Another theme that could have been developed in its own right is that of the gendered home, as home in all its manifestations is so obviously a gendered construct. However, the separation of one aspect of the refugee's identity and its relationship to home did not seem particularly helpful in this context, in trying to establish a more complete understanding of the meaning of home for the refugee. In addition, the separation of gender from the ethnicity, age or life circumstances of the refugee may have proved problematic. As Yuval-Davis states, each individual's 'social location is constructed along multiple axes of difference' and there is, for example, 'no meaning for the notion of "woman" which is not ethnocised and classed' (Yuval-Davis 2006: 200; Yuval-Davis 2007: 565). As a result reflections on the gendered aspects of home, as well as on the ways in which the meaning of home in this study was affected by the participant's age, ethnicity and life circumstances, have been woven into the discussion on the four themes under examination.

Cypriot refugees – contexts and catalysts
It is necessary to reflect briefly on how Cyprus became a country of forced migration, as well as the historic relationship between Cyprus and Britain that

frames this research. Cyprus has been caricatured as a troubled island, a place of ethnic division and inevitable conflict, partly due to its strategic location in the Middle East, 50 miles from Turkey and 270 miles from the nearest Greek island of Rhodes (Calotychos 1998: 4). Over centuries, the island has been colonised or ruled by the Greeks, Romans, Lusignans, Venetians, Ottomans and British, as well as being a major trade route (Calotychos 1998: 5; Dubin 2002: 399-414; Gunnis 1956: 5-22). As one of my interviewees, Ahmet, told me, 'There's always been trouble there. If you read the history of Cyprus... you find that all the big powers have been after it... We are a bit unlucky to be born there.' Britain rented the island from the Ottomans in 1878 and Cyprus became a British Crown Colony in 1925, when it was relinquished by the newly founded state of Turkey, and remained so until its independence in 1960 (Asmussen 1998: 261; Calotychos 1998: 5; Cohen 1994: 54). At the time of independence, Greek Cypriots accounted for 77% and Turkish Cypriots 18.3% of the island's inhabitants, the remainder being mainly Maronite and Armenian minorities (Calotychos 1998: 6).

The conflict which led to the movement of refugees began with the anti-colonial independence struggle of the 1950s. This was initiated by the Greek Cypriot armed organisation EOKA[7] formed in 1955, which called for *enosis* (union with Greece) and independence (Calotychos 1998: 6). Turkish Cypriots responded with the foundation of TMT[8], which supported *taksim* (partition of the island). This period of violence led to the deaths of over 500 people, mostly as a result of EOKA attacks, which targeted not only the British but also Turkish Cypriots and left-wing Greek Cypriots (Calotychos 1998: 6;

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[7] *Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston* (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters).
[8] *Türk Mukavemet Teskilati* (Turkish Resistance Organisation).

Minority Rights Group 1978: 6). The conflict generated the first Turkish Cypriot forced migrants, when a number of smaller villages and Turkish Cypriot districts were evacuated due to the escalating violence. Ahmet was among them, when his family had to move suddenly from south Nicosia[9] to the north of the town one night in 1958.

Post-independence, in 1963, Greek Cypriot President Archbishop Makarios introduced 13 contentious amendments to the constitution, which led to more intercommunal violence and the retreat of 25,000 Turkish Cypriot refugees into enclaves in the north (Asmussen 1998: 264; Calotychos 1998: 7; Minority Rights Group 1978: 7). By 1967, nearly 400 Turkish Cypriots and just over 200 Greek Cypriots had been killed, and the 251 mixed villages that existed in 1931 had diminished to just 48 (Calotychos 1998: 5-7). Seven of my Turkish Cypriot participants had to leave their homes during this period, when their villages were either evacuated or destroyed.

The largest refugee movement occurred in 1974 as a result of two major incidents. Firstly, the Greek junta in Athens staged a coup against Archbishop Makarios due to his failure to bring about *enosis*. In response, Turkey intervened militarily on the island on 20 July 1974 and again on 14 August, leaving many dead and 'missing' as they captured 37% of the island's territory. Cyprus was subsequently divided and an estimated 170,000-200,000 Greek Cypriot refugees fled to the south, while 40,000-50,000 Turkish Cypriots fled to the north, either during the violence in 1974 or in the

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[9] Many towns and villages in Cyprus have several different names. Nicosia for example is the English version of the name for the capital, which is also called Lefkosia by the Greek Cypriots and Lefkosa by the Turkish Cypriots. In addition, many villages were renamed after the island was divided. I will use the English name where one exists and otherwise will use the name preferred by the refugee whose village I am discussing, or the most commonly used name. Where necessary, I will refer to both pre- and post-1974 names.

population exchange of 1975 (Calotychos 1998: 8; Zetter 1991: 41). All of my Greek Cypriot interviewees lost their homes at this stage, along with two of the Turkish Cypriots. In addition, a number of the Turkish Cypriots who had lost their homes in the 1960s were forced to move again in 1974.

The official discourses surrounding refugees have differed greatly in the two Cypriot states since partition. Greek Cypriot refugees have been a constant feature in their government's political rhetoric, as their right to return and their continued longing for their homes is an essential component of Greek Cypriot calls for reunification of the island. In the north, on the other hand, Turkish Cypriot refugees have been rarely mentioned since the formation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The government's desire to establish a separate Turkish Cypriot state demands that refugees forget their old homes and as a result they have not featured in official discourse, although the change of government in the north suggests that the rhetoric is in the process of changing[10]. These conflicting narratives have no doubt affected the ways in which Cypriot refugees in London have seen themselves and have reflected upon their experiences.

Cypriots in Britain

Cypriot migrants have been coming to Britain since the 1920s and arrived in much larger numbers during the 1950s and 1960s at a time of increased 'colonial' immigration, many of them settling in north London (Mehmet Ali 2001: 6; Oakley 1989: 510; Solomos & Woodhams 1993: 14-15). Some

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[10] The denial of the existence of Turkish Cypriot refugees was brought home to me when I gave a paper on Cypriot refugees in the TRNC in 2003 (Taylor 2003). After my presentation, the under-secretary of the office of the President, who was present at the conference, questioned the content of my paper, stating that there were no Turkish Cypriot refugees.

Turkish Cypriot refugees came at the same time as these labour migrants, with larger numbers of both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugees coming to Britain after the war in 1974. Unlike their counterparts in Cyprus, who have been forced to live apart since the island was divided, Cypriots in London have lived alongside each other in exile, often attending the same schools, workplaces and shops. While there are undoubtedly differences between the two groups, they may have been made more aware of what they have in common in the context of exile – both in terms of their past lives in Cyprus and the experience of displacement in London (Taylor 2002).

It is also important to remember that Cypriots in London have not lived in isolation but have rubbed shoulders with countless others in the 'diaspora space' of London (Brah 1996: 208). The fact that migrants, refugees and 'indigenous' populations inhabit the space together facilitates 'the entanglement, the intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those of "staying put" (Brah 1996: 209)'. For second and subsequent generations of Cypriots, Cypriot identity is mixed with the notion of Britishness or of being a Londoner and even first generation Cypriot refugees have found themselves changed by the daily encounter with London (Taylor 2002). This is often brought home to them on visits to Cyprus when they are referred to as the 'Londoners' – who are seen to dress, speak and understand Cyprus differently from those who did not become migrants.

Contextualising events

A number of key events in Cyprus formed the backdrop to this research and will undoubtedly have influenced the content of the refugee narratives that ·

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make up the substance of this study. First came the dramatic and unexpected relaxation of border[11] restrictions in Cyprus on 23 April 2003, which effectively meant that for the first time in 29 years Cypriots were able to visit the 'other side' of the island. There were a reported 350,000 crossings in the first three weeks alone (Cockburn 2004: 7). Along with those simply curious to see what the rest of Cyprus now looked like, were refugees who crossed the border in order to see their lost homes for the first time in decades.

A Turkish Cypriot border guard gives directions to a Greek Cypriot crossing from south to north just after the border opened in April 2003. (Photo: Helen Taylor)

By chance, I arrived in the Turkish Cypriot north of the island for a conference the day the border opened and the next day was confronted by

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[11] Not all Greek Cypriots accept the Green Line as a border, as this implies that it is an officially recognised boundary between two states. The Green Line was first established by the United Nations in 1964 during intercommunal violence and was then modified after the war in 1974, reflecting the furthest point taken by the Turkish army.

the surprising sight of Greek Cypriots in the bar and on the beach at the Palm Beach hotel in Famagusta. The hotel is situated next to the dead zone of Varosha[12] and many came to the hotel to look through the barbed wire fences at their derelict homes. While the initial euphoria of the border opening has died down, it has had a dramatic and irreversible effect on the Cypriot psyche. After years of speculation and suspicion, Cypriots (both within Cyprus and from the diaspora) were able to see beyond the border, young Cypriots born after the war met their neighbours for the first time and refugees were confronted with the reality of what the homes they left now looked like.

A year and a day after the border opened, the referendum on the Annan Plan (one in a line of United Nations peace plans for the island) took place. To some people's surprise, the majority of Turkish Cypriots voted in favour of the plan and the majority of Greek Cypriots against. The main Greek Cypriot objections were the gradual and limited return of refugees, the right for a large number of Turkish 'settlers' to remain on the island and the continued presence of Turkish troops in Cyprus for a number of years. For Turkish Cypriots the plan offered a possible end to economic isolation and unemployment, not only because it would open up job opportunities in the south but also more crucially because Cyprus was due to enter the European Union a week after the referendum.

Without a solution on the island the Greek Cypriot south entered Europe alone in 2004, leaving the Turkish Cypriots feeling rejected by the Greek Cypriots and unfairly punished by the international community. The oil drums and barbed wire of the Green Line now represent one of the EU's most

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[12] Varosha has officially been UN territory since 1974, but is effectively controlled by Turkish forces. Once a flourishing tourist destination with high-rise hotels and golden beaches, it has become a ghost town since the war, as hotels, houses and shops lie empty.

controversial borders. The entry of the Republic of Cyprus into the EU without a solution has no doubt exacerbated the uneven economic and political development of the two halves of the island. It also mirrors the debates around Turkey's possible entry into Europe and the continued conflation of European-ness with Christianity, in spite of the low levels of religious observance among the nominally Muslim Turkish Cypriots.

Cypriots in London hotly debated these major events in Cyprus at the time of this study, with public meetings, rallies, newspaper articles and satellite TV reflecting the preoccupations of the diaspora. As a result, they formed the backdrop for the research undertaken for this thesis and informed the refugee narratives. While Cypriots in London live very different lives to their counterparts in Cyprus, at times of political change their worlds move a little closer together. For Cypriot refugees in London these events were all the more pressing as they could have influenced the possibility of return at some point in the near future, a matter of some urgency for those reaching the end of their lives.

Victims or agents?

Before moving on, a word needs to be said about the protagonists of this research – the Cypriot refugees who shared their stories with me and as a result defined the parameters of this thesis. There is an inherent tension for many refugees, which is played out in a struggle between victimhood and agency. The very process of becoming a refugee is one in which an individual is compelled to migrate against their will due to circumstances beyond their ultimate control. As Marfleet states: 'The refugee is a woman or man with the

narrowest range of choice, usually because specific local conditions have made for exclusion' (Marfleet 1998: 71). It is this element of compulsion and the absence of choice, which makes the experience of forced migration different from that of voluntary migration (although there are of course varying degrees of choice accompanying all decisions to migrate). This qualitative difference was identified by Povrzanovic Frykman when she compared the narratives of forced and voluntary Croatian migrants living in Sweden and discovered that they varied according to their different life experiences (Povrzanovic Frykman 2002). At the moment of flight at least, the refugee is a victim of circumstances and must leave their home in order to survive. They then often find themselves at the mercy of the host countries in which they seek refuge, especially as the definitions of legitimate reasons for asylum are being continually narrowed (Goodwin-Gill 1998: 30; Marfleet 1998: 71; Yuval-Davis 2007: 563). It is as a result of these ongoing restrictions, which make the lives of refugees ever harder, that there has been a vigorous and justified defence of the principle of asylum and a focus on the plight of refugees, in refugee studies and beyond.

The Cypriots featured in this study are forced migrants to the extent that none of them had control over the circumstances in which they were compelled to leave their homes and, as a result, I have referred to them as 'refugees' throughout. Most of the Turkish Cypriots fled extremist violence and a restricted life in enclaves in the post-independence unrest of the early 1960s. The Greek Cypriots (and some of the Turkish Cypriots) became exiles after the hostilities of 1974 and subsequent division of the island. An example of the disjuncture between refugee experience and state policy can be seen in

the fact that none of these Cypriots were recognised as refugees. Zetter has written extensively about the use of labels, first by humanitarian agencies and later by states determining asylum applications, which have used different terms for forced migrants in order to define legitimacy or entitlement (Zetter 1991; Zetter 2007). He found that refugees, however, do 'not conform to the convenient image (label) constructed of them' (Zetter 2007: 173).

Cypriot refugees were certainly subject to this politicised labelling, which affected the way in which they were seen by their own governments and by the states in which they sought exile. Those forced to move south or north as the island was divided, were seen as IDPs (internally displaced people) by the international community and, therefore, fell outside the protection of the Geneva Convention[13]. Turkish Cypriot refugees who fled to Britain in the 1960s could only enter as economic migrants or use British passports acquired while working for the British colonial administration. Meanwhile, Cypriots who came to Britain as forced migrants in 1974 were admitted as colonial citizens 'with special concessions' but were not recognised as refugees and many of them either returned once their leave to remain had expired, were deported, or left under threat of deportation (Cohen 1994: 54; Mehmet Ali 2001: 6)[14]. As Panos told me, 'the UK government... didn't accept we were proper refugees... It's a big headache to lose your country and then not know if you can stay in the country you came to. I remember the uncertainty at the time'.

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[13] The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as someone who is 'outside the country of his nationality' (UNHCR 1997: 51). As a result Internally Displaced People are excluded from its protection.
[14] An estimated 3,935 Turkish Cypriots came to Britain between 1963 and 1971, and 10,000 Greek and Turkish Cypriots fled to the UK in 1974 (Cohen 1994: 54; Minority Rights Group 1978: 28). By 1979, 8,000 of the latter had returned once their leave to remain had expired and a further 1,400 were deported or left under threat of deportation (Cohen 1994: 54).

However, while acknowledging the dire events leading up to exile and during the quest for asylum for many forced migrants, it is important not to view the refugee as wholly passive. As Jackson says, 'as long as we think of refugees solely as victims, we do a grave injustice to the facts of refugee experience, for loss is always countermandered by actions' (Jackson 2006: 79). This is especially true when one considers that those who actually have the capacity to migrate are not usually the weakest and the poorest, who sometimes face death rather than exile, but those with access to social networks and resources (albeit ones which have been severely curtailed) (Marfleet 2006: 194-5). Just as E.P. Thompson, in his classic text, talks of the English working class being 'present at its own making' in an 'active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning' (Thompson 1963: 9), so we must recognise refugees as actors in the troubled dramas that they participate in. This research is predicated on the fact that refugees are social agents who, faced with often terrible life events and limited choices, nonetheless make coherent decisions about their lives. Recognising this, it is important that research about refugees places them centre stage – as subjects rather than objects in their own history. In a critique of the absence of refugees from history in general (and the lack of historical perspectives in refugee studies), Marfleet states that: 'Our challenge is to undertake work that sees refugees less as mere ciphers than as *subjects* of history. This means first uncovering something of their lived experience' (Marfleet 2007: 145). In the same way that E.P. Thompson's understanding of the working class was 'embodied in real people and in a real context' (Thompson 1963: 9), research in refugee

studies must see the life histories of refugees themselves as primary evidence.

One way in which the lives of refugees can be brought to light is through narrative, which enables the refugee to exert some control over their circumstances by allowing them to define the parameters of their experience. 'To reconstitute events in a story,' states Jackson, 'is no longer to live those events in passivity, but to actively rework them' (Jackson 2006: 15). In addition, to listen to refugee narratives and to take them seriously as the subject of academic research is to counter the tendency towards the mistrust and disbelief of refugee stories in the current global asylum system. It is to accept that those best placed to teach us about refugee experience are refugees themselves, not states or policy makers. The narratives that this research is based on are seen to be of intrinsic value because they reflect the emotional truth of the refugee predicament and cast light on the meaning of home through the verbalisation of extreme and troubling experiences. The resulting testimonies are a powerful rebuttal of the prevailing discourse of suspicion and hostility towards refugees.

The next chapter will look more closely at the narrative methodology used for this study and also at the specific use of narratives in research with refugees. The following four chapters look in detail at each of the themes of the thesis – the spatial home, the temporal home, the material home and the relational home.

Chapter 2
Narrating exile – methodological considerations

'The present, like a landscape, is only a small part of a mysterious narrative.
A narrative of catastrophe and slow accumulation.'
From *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels (1997: 48).

Introduction

While first-hand accounts of refugee experience have been an element of research in refugee studies for some time, it is only relatively recently that narrative research methods have become a central mode of investigation in the field[1]. Yet an increasing number of researchers are finding that narrative offers a meaningful way of engaging with the experiences of forced migration (Allan 2005; Eastmond 2007; Nassari 2007; Powles 2004). Established social science approaches have an important role to play in analysing forced migration, for example in assessing the success of refugee settlement strategies (Bloch 2002; Bloch 2004), or documenting accurate numbers of refugees in order to provide adequate emergency relief or develop relevant policy (Crisp 1999b). However, when it comes to arriving at an understanding of what it feels like to be forced to leave your home and start again in another place not of your choosing, there is a need for a more flexible, nuanced and perhaps more poetic methodology, which allows for the expression of feelings as well as facts. As Powles argues, some issues 'can only really be communicated through narrative since they are not readily amenable to generalisation: for example the meaning of home' (Powles 2004: 20). Such narratives may also serve to illustrate 'the diversity of experience' among

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[1] Although there is a more established use of narrative in studies of labour migration, for example in the work of Mary Chamberlain (Chamberlain 2000; Chamberlain [1997] 2005).

refugees and, therefore, counter 'universalising and stereotypical descriptions' (Eastmond 2007: 253). The story of forced migration is not the same for all refugees and the search for generalisations will not always reveal the best understanding of exile. The narrative form allows for complexity and contradiction, for idiosyncrasies and the emergence of seemingly irrelevant details that may take a piece of research in a different direction and thereby lead to new knowledge.

The findings of this study emerged from in-depth interviews with 22 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugees in London, as well as contextual ethnographic fieldwork. The words of the refugees themselves, which feature in the following chapters, are what gave rise to the multi-dimensional theory of the meaning of home within the thesis – the spatial, temporal, material and relational home. Continually returning to the narratives during the research process confirmed my expectation that by listening to the stories of refugees and paying attention to the ways in which they describe their experiences we are able to learn something new about the phenomenon of forced migration. I was both challenged and moved by the often poetic language used by the participants[2] in the study, which told me a great deal about what home meant to them. When Nick explained how, on fleeing his home, he paused to water his tomatoes 'which were about ripe... and then freed the pigeons. I opened the door... and I let them go', his words are a factual account of his actions

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[2] I have struggled to find a term that best describes those who contributed to this study. The terms 'interviewee' or 'respondent' sound too passive, as they imply that those who took part simply answered questions rather than narrated their experiences. 'Participant' is a much more active term, but may be misleading as the research did not allow for the input of participants in developing the research questions, as they might have done in action research, for example. Describing those who took part as 'refugees' is an accurate description of the reason why they have been included in the research, but feels too essentialising. As a result, I move between all these terms in the hope that none of them obscures my respect for the people who played such a crucial role in this study.

under stress, at the same time as being loaded with symbolism. This kind of detail tells us more about the subject under investigation than a questionnaire or more structured interview could do. Similarly, Emine's description of her village as 'a crying land', in her account of her first return visit, speaks volumes about her sense of loss for a past that can never be regained, as well as her relationship to the landscape of Cyprus. However, my preference for narrative methods is not simply aesthetic, but is based on the assumption that the outcome that they achieve will lead to a greater understanding of the focus of this investigation – the meaning of home for refugees living in protracted exile. Here I agree with Freeman when he argues that narrative enquiry is in fact 'more *authentically* scientific' than 'systematic, precise, quantitatively-grounded empirical enterprises' in this context, in that it displays greater fidelity to the phenomena under investigation – namely 'the living, loving, suffering, dying human being' (Freeman 2005: no page number).

Stories may offer us access to those aspects of life that are difficult to quantify or explain. The refugees in this study have complicated relationships with their homes. Their Cypriot home has come to represent all the good things that were lost – the past, the property, the social networks – yet it is also the place where bad things happened, where war and violence led to exile. Many dream of going 'home', yet know on some level that they cannot – because the past can never be regained, a satisfactory political solution is unlikely and lives have been lived too long in the UK to be abandoned. Many are grateful to, or even happy in, the UK, yet resent it for being the home they didn't choose. These troublesome emotions cannot be easily elicited through research. As Craib reminds us, feelings can be difficult to express, disrupting

our 'tenuous equilibrium' (Craib 2000: 71). By telling stories about our feelings, however, we can render them manageable. 'To try to make sense of our feelings we tell ourselves stories,' says Craib. 'We look for reasons where, if there are reasons, they are too complex and contradictory to enable a story that makes sense, but most of all we tell ourselves stories to ease our anxieties' (Craib 2000: 71).

Denzin states that the 'stories we tell help us to wrestle with the chaos around us, helping us to make sense of the world when things go wrong' (Denzin 2000: xii). The stories in this study represent the ways in which Cypriot refugees have made sense of the past, present and future in such a way as to make exile manageable and life liveable. They are stories of displacement and loss, but also of resilience and hope. Jackson points out that storytelling helps sustain 'a sense of agency in the face of disempowering human circumstances', so that while 'we do not exactly determine the course of our lives we at least have a hand in defining their meanings' (Jackson 2006: 15-16). Regaining this sense of agency is crucial for the refugee, for whom 'constructing, relating and sharing stories is basic to this reclamation of [their] humanity – of turning object into subject, givenness into choice, what into who' (Jackson 2006: 104). The refugees in this study have told their stories over the last three or four decades as a way of making sense of the events that led to their forced migration. This thesis is, in turn, an attempt to make sense of their stories, individually and collectively, in order to better understand the meaning of home in exile.

The narrative self and refugee identity

To a large extent we are our stories. Our identity is constructed from the stories we tell about our own lives and the lives of others, as well as the stories others tell about us. As Andrews states, 'stories are not only the way in which we come to ascribe significance to experiences we and others have had; they are one of the primary means through which we constitute our very selves' (Andrews 2000: 77). Yet the self arrived at through the act of narration is not a once-and-for-all construction but is rather in a constant state of flux. Neither the narrator nor the stories they narrate are static, but are constantly revised in line with present needs and desires. A recorded narrative merely reflects a moment in the life-long process of individual meaning making (Lieblich et al 1998: 8; Schrager 1998: 285). It can be seen as 'a single, frozen, still photograph of the dynamically changing identity' (Lieblich et al 1998: 8), which tells us about what mattered most to the narrator at that particular time. The narrated self can act as 'a map' giving us 'something to hang on to' but, according to Denzin, we also 'need larger narratives, stories that connect us to others, to community' (Denzin 2000: xiii). This may be especially true for those who have experienced displacement, as Jackson reminds us, as 'in narrating one's own story, one salvages and reaffirms, in the face of dispersal, defeat and death, the *social* bonds that bind one to a community' (Jackson 2006: 133).

The narrators in this study constructed their identity as refugees through the stories they told of flight and exile. They also revealed the self as spouse, parent, child, worker, political activist, person of religious faith and more. In addition, the narratives highlighted the gender and ethnic identities of

the participants. According to Yuval-Davis, while we are all shaped by our belonging to 'local, ethnic, religious, national, regional, transnational and international political communities... the lives of migrants, refugees and people of ethnic minority origins are probably affected by this multiplicity of citizenships even more' (Yuval-Davis 2007: 562). It is understandable that the refugee identity is prominent in these narratives, because of the nature of the study and the stories the individuals were prompted to tell. It also seems likely that events of the magnitude of war and displacement have a profound and lasting effect and, therefore, continue to feature strongly in narratives even 30 or 40 years later. However, Loizos does sound a note of caution when he says that 'we must not over-produce refugees conceptually', adding that it is difficult to know to what extent 'we are looking at actions and beliefs which derive... wholly and exclusively from the precipitating event of dislocation' (Loizos 1999: 245). It is also the case that the construction of individual identity is sensitive to social and political currents. In his study of Greek Cypriots internally displaced in Cyprus, Loizos talked of how they gradually began to recognise their changed identity through the 'repeated use of the word "refugee" itself by the mass media, politicians, and the wider society' (Loizos 1981: 120). Similarly, Zetter has explored the imposition of refugee identity in the Greek Cypriot context through bureaucratic state practices 'whereby an individual identity is replaced by a stereotyped identity with a categorical prescription of assumed needs', creating categories which are 'absolute not relative or comparative' (Zetter 1991: 44). It is, therefore, worth bearing in mind that, while those who took part in this study self-identified as refugees and were happy (and in many cases eager) to relate narratives that

focused on the experiences of exile which defined them primarily as refugees, these identities have been constructed under the powerful influence of master narratives as well as individual ones.

It is also important not to ignore the complexity of individual identity revealed through narrative. While the refugee identity has been foregrounded by the remit of this study, equally (and sometimes more) important is whether the narrator is Turkish Cypriot or Greek Cypriot, female or male, young or old, left-wing or right-wing, a religious believer or not. These different aspects of identity cannot be easily separated out from each other, as Yuval-Davis reveals in her explanation of intersectionality, as notions of ethnicity are also 'gendered and classed', while gender is always 'ethnocised and classed' (Yuval-Davis 2007: 565). In some cases during this research, patterns emerged on the basis of interviewees' ethnicity or gender, which led to tentative conclusions about the ways in which exile affected Turkish Cypriots or Greek Cypriots, or men and women, differently. At other times, however, participants revealed a stubborn and admirable resistance to being pinned down by the generalised expectations of their ascribed identity. They offered a reminder that every refugee is driven by individual needs, desires and principles, as well as being part of a larger group which has experienced forced migration.

Studying individual lives – constructing social history

While narrative has long played a part in the recording of individual lives through the collection of life stories and oral history, the ability of narratives to build a picture of a community or group, which shares a similar experience, or

history can be illuminating in an academic context. Each interview in this study represents an individual life, not in its entirety but rather aspects of each refugee's life, which cast light on the experience of forced migration, as well as issues which were important to them at the time of the interview or were triggered by the context of the meeting between interviewee and interviewer. Although inherently valuable in themselves, when gathered together these accounts tell us something about society (both the society which led to these individuals becoming refugees and the society in which they now live), as well as about the current historical period in which displacement has intensified.

A collection of narrative interviews may provide a record of a community at a particular period in time, highlighting the group's preoccupations when the interviews were recorded, as well as the prevailing master narratives of the society from which they originate. As Andrews reminds us, 'personal narratives are constructed within a wider social context; they both reproduce and are produced by dominant cultural meta-narratives' (Andrews 2000: 78). Dominant narratives may offer the members of a community or group a 'common story', but they can also 'estrange and muffle alternative perspectives' in the pursuit of a communal narrative (Ochs and Capps 1996: 32-3), and often contain their own internal contradictions. Certainly, in the case of Greek Cypriots one can see how the powerful meta-narratives of church and state have galvanised refugees and others in the community in common cause against the injustices that were committed against them during Turkey's military intervention. Meanwhile, those Greek Cypriots who have pointed out the crimes committed against Turkish Cypriots

in the 1960s have often been seen as traitors[3]. Similarly, Turkish Cypriots

who have rejected the state's meta-narrative of their liberation by the Turkish

army and have found common cause with Greek Cypriots with similar politics,

found it difficult to remain living in Northern Cyprus[4]. However, one should

also bear in mind what Jackson refers to as the 'two-way transformation' that

occurs when not only are personal stories incorporated into the 'narratives of

a nation', but also communal stories are changed by individuals to tie in with

their 'particular predilections and experiences' (Jackson 2006: 231). The

narratives in this study were influenced by past and present state narratives

from Cyprus and the UK, as well as other political narratives in both locations,

religious narratives, narratives about cultural norms and acceptable behaviour

(for example, surrounding the conduct of women), as well as emerging

narratives about refugees in the media and political discourse.

Schrager outlines the usefulness of individual narratives as a social

research tool, seeing each story as grounded in the social world from which it

arises (Schrager 1998). Personal narratives emerging from a group with an

experience in common – such as migration – will bear the marks of

community interaction and the collective elaboration of stories over time. Far

from devaluing the individual life story, Schrager believes that identifying the

convergences and divergences between such accounts enables the

researcher to build up a picture of a group or event, the resulting 'patterning of

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[3] For example, Peter Loizos was criticised when his writings about Greek Cypriot crimes against Turkish Cypriots were quoted by Rauf Denktash, then leader of the TRNC (Loizos [1994] 2001: 177-8).
[4] It is difficult to find written evidence of the disaffection of left-wing Turkish Cypriots but such sentiments have been expressed to me personally by some of those living in London. In addition, the fact that it is estimated that more Turkish Cypriots live in Britain than in northern Cyprus points to the likelihood that it is not just economic factors that have influenced their move (Mehmet Ali 2001: 94).

sentiments' indicating the structure of feelings within a society (Schrager 1998: 293). Eastmond, too, notes that 'by juxtaposing individual accounts, we may glean the commonalities in the experiences of a particular group of forced migrants as well as understand the internal variation among them' (Eastmond 2007: 253).

Historian E.H. Carr noted that 'society and the individual are inseparable, they are necessary and complementary to each other,' going on to say that, 'history is a social process, in which individuals are engaged as social beings' (Carr [1961] 1987: 31; 55). This makes the study of individual lives not simply an alternative approach to the study of society but an essential part of it. Indeed, I agree with Andrews et al when they state that narrative research is able to 'challenge the conventional dualism between individual and society' as 'material social conditions, discourses and practices interweave with subjectively experienced desires and identities' (Andrews et al 2000: 1).

One example of many from this study of how narrative reveals both individual desires and the social circumstances from which they arise can be found in Ömer's story. When he found his ambitions as a young man frustrated due to the economic and social marginalisation of Turkish Cypriots in post-independence Cyprus, Ömer went to study economics at university in Turkey. But when he returned to Cyprus he could only find work in a coffee shop before joining the (unofficial) Turkish Cypriot army to earn some money. His family from the Paphos region of southern Cyprus became refugees after the war in 1974, so Ömer had no home to return to when he left the army. After making it over to the UK to join his siblings in south London he found

work in the fast food industry like many of his fellow Cypriots, as once again his qualifications were disregarded, this time because of his insufficient English language skills. Once in the catering trade he felt he could not escape because of his responsibility towards his wife and three children. 'You can't take another chance,' he told me. 'You have to have the luck and the guts as well to win.' He now measures his achievement – like many of those I spoke to – in the fact that he 'managed to raise a family, grow up the kids, give them an education', with all of his children now graduated from university.

Ömer's story certainly tells us about his own desires and identities. He was ambitious enough to go to Turkey to complete his university education and also had the human resources to make it to the UK after becoming a refugee. His identity as a husband and father, who has been able to provide for and nurture his family in difficult circumstances, is also important to him, as is the fact that his children's education now gives them the chances that he didn't have. This story also tells us about Ömer's resilience in that he managed to earn a living, buy property, keep his family together and educate his children against all odds. While Ömer didn't have much luck, he certainly had guts.

However, the story also tells us something about the social and political conditions in Cyprus and the UK. We learn about the marginalisation of Turkish Cypriots in post-independence Cyprus, who didn't have the same access to education or employment as their Greek Cypriot counterparts. We also find out about the political events in Cyprus that led to the forced movement of refugees after 1974. The story then highlights Ömer's frustrations at arriving in the UK as a refugee, where his qualifications were

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once again not put to full use. While this tells us about discrimination and poor immigration policy in the late 1970s in the UK, it is also offers a clear example to current policy makers of the short-sightedness of treating refugees as a drain on society rather than a largely untapped resource. Similarly, while Ömer's tale shows the resilience of one individual refugee, viewed alongside other narratives we can build up a picture of agency rather than one of dependency when looking at the behaviour of forced migrants in protracted exile. This example shows the ways in which narratives can be used to illuminate the social context that produced them, while a collection of individual refugee narratives read alongside each other can create a more complex picture of displacement.

Narrating the past – writing the future

Narratives are often about things that have already happened, the ways in which these events have affected our lives up until this point and how we think they might affect our lives in the future. As Ochs and Capps state, 'the telling of past events is intricately linked to tellers' and listeners' concerns about their present and future lives' (Ochs and Capps 1996: 25). However, for the refugee the past may appear to exercise a greater hold over the present and the future than usual. It is not uncommon, according to Jackson, in situations of 'death and disaster' for 'one's sense of time unfolding [to be] so disturbed that the future is continually referred back to this moment in the past and cannot break free of it' (Jackson 2006: 92). The stories that the refugees in this study told did seem to focus on their lost homes and the injustices of becoming a refugee, but they were also very much about the fact that their

situation remains unresolved in the present. In spite of renewed access across the border, refugees still cannot return to Cyprus should they so desire. For them, regardless of how successful their lives have been in the UK, the events of the past still represent unfinished business in the present, which impacts upon the future.

However, while the past looms large in the refugee imagination, it is continually reassessed as the conditions of the present change. As Carr states, 'the past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present; and we can fully understand the present only in the light of the past' (Carr [1961] 1987: 55). At the time the interviews in this study were recorded, border restrictions in Cyprus had just been lifted and refugees were able to visit their homes for the first time in decades, voting was taking place on the Annan Plan and southern Cyprus was about to enter the European Union. These events brought the issues of the past crashing back into the present, at the same time as calling for a reassessment of the past in light of present realities.

When talking about the past, the narrator is in the paradoxical position of knowing now what they did not know back then, when the events they are relating happened (King 2000). As a result everything is reinterpreted, through narrative, with the benefit of hindsight, as life brings with it greater knowledge about the past. This may be more marked for those who have experienced unanticipated, life-changing events such as war or migration, which make the dissonance between then and now more evident (King 2000: 2-3). Freeman has referred to the 'sheer pain of knowing what I couldn't see, couldn't anticipate', especially in extreme circumstances (Freeman 2003: 61). Refugees often wonder how it was that they didn't see their exile coming,

couldn't be better prepared for it or be able to prevent it and may remark that they didn't predict that their exile would be prolonged or permanent. Those in this study are no exception, many of them fleeing with nothing, partly because of the haste with which they had to move but also because, as Nick told me, 'we never thought we were going to *leave*... Temporary. Go and then go back.' I interviewed Nick almost exactly 30 years after his family's sudden flight when he was able to look back on the intervening decades. He was in his late sixties when we met and, although he had made the best of his life in Britain, his narrative hindsight pointed to what he perceived as a certain lack of control over his destiny, starting from the moment of exile. 'I didn't want to stay and live here... And now this happened and you are here. You are stuck.' Nick's narrative of the events of his life leading up the moment of our interview, therefore, is inexorably altered in the light of his knowledge of how the past 30 years have unfolded. The events of that day in 1974 when he left his village have become pivotal in the narrative of his life precisely because he now knows what he didn't anticipate then – that he didn't just 'go and then go back'. Yet Nick's ability to tell his story perhaps offers the possibility of regaining 'a sense of agency' (Jackson 2006: 15-16), as it is consistent with his political activism, which provides a way of raising awareness about his experience as a refugee.

Freeman also reminds us that what is missing from a narrative of the past, told from the perspective of the present, is that 'we do not know, and cannot know, where the story in which we are engaged will lead' in the future (Freeman 2003: 61). Inherent in autobiographical narrative is an inability to know what is about to happen next, which will in turn change our perception of

the past in the future. Of course, nobody knows what will happen tomorrow and the future will always remain just out of view, but some refugees see the future as a time when the often-desired return home may be fulfilled. The end of the story we are engaged in may remain unknown, but those refugees who still dream that return to their lost homes will happen in the future may construct such an ending to their narrative in the hope that it will be realised. According to Brockmeier, the constraints of autobiographical narrative mean that 'the temporary end of the narrated life tends to appear as the *telos* of one's life history', so that all life events appear to have led to the goal which represents the end of the narrative (Brockmeier 2001: 251-2). Yet I wonder if the nature of the refugee experience necessitates a different kind of narrative, which allows for the possibility of a deferred ending in which different futures – including return to the lost home and to the past – are possible.

In search of 'truth'?

Kohli has described narrated life stories as 'structured self images' that enable the individual to highlight the aspects of their past, which seem most relevant to their present life (Kohli 1981: 65). Just as the self is under constant revision, so memories remain in flux and are employed selectively. Memory adapts in order to deal with the needs of the present and the future, by organising fragments of experience into frames of relevance (King 2000: 33; Stanley 1992: 128; Wood 1992: 148). As Spitzer explains:

> Memories are *historically situated* in a particular place and time, and recalled from the perspective of *that present*...And being situated in the present means that memory – what is 'recalled' of the past – operates within a temporal realm in which alternative versions are conceivable. (Spitzer 1994: 173).

As a result, the constructed nature of narrative and memory has led to some distrust of stories as the basis for research. Yet Freeman dismisses what he sees as 'the fetishisation of accuracy', stating that it is precisely the distance from the short-sightedness of the past that allows narrative to develop a clearer picture, 'to see and describe things *anew*, from a vantage point that will hopefully be superior' (Freeman 2003: 69-70). Riessman agrees that narratives 'are of interest precisely because narrators interpret the past in stories rather than reproduce the past as it was' (Riessman 2001: 705). The narrative produced by an individual at a particular time will reflect an 'emotional' truth[5], demonstrating the feelings the past generates for them in the present moment. It is also an amalgamation of individual and collective memories, family stories, media reports and public history. Freeman describes memory as 'a fusion of our own past experience and texts of our own past experience supplied by others' (Freeman 1993: 46). Therefore, narratives of key shared life events such as war and exile will often have been told many times before and revised in line with collective input. This does not devalue them but rather validates the belief that individual recollections, gathered through the research process, provide insight into the larger social context. The role of the researcher is not in verifying facts but in 'understanding the changing meaning of events for the individuals involved, and how these, in turn, are located in history and culture' (Riessman 2001: 704-5). Therefore, it is the function of narratives and the meanings given to

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[5] One has to be especially sensitive when discussing truth in connection with refugees, at a time when they are increasingly being accused of duplicity in their claims for asylum. Newly arrived refugees may be especially wary of divulging detailed accounts of past events, which they fear may still jeopardise their life or the lives of others, or their ability to gain asylum. In the context of this research any discussion of the 'truth' of refugee memory is meant to suggest that we all highlight different versions of our past depending on what is important to us in the present. It does not intend to question the trustworthy nature of refugees' accounts.

them that matters – for both the individual and the community – not whether individual facts can be verified.

Chamberlain believes that it is precisely the vicissitudes of memories which provide the researcher with rich findings. It is 'their impurities, their pluralities and their volatility which provide such valuable testimony,' she states (Chamberlain 2000: 157). In reference to memories of the Holocaust, Walker explains how trauma itself can disrupt memory and how paradoxically revisionists use this as evidence for the denial of atrocities. She cites the example of a Holocaust survivor who remembered four chimneys exploding during the Auschwitz uprising, when only one was actually destroyed. Although the account is inaccurate it shows that the narrator witnessed the unbelievable at a time of intense emotion. This, explains Walker, illustrates how 'fallible memory may speak to a historical truth' (Walker 2003: 106-8). An example of this occurred in my own research when Adrienne related an event that occurred just before the war, when she believed that she saw an icon of the Virgin Mary – the Panayia – weeping. (Of additional interest are the interjections of her British-born cousin L and brother-in-law S, a former colleague of mine who arranged the interview):

> Adrienne: I remember something before 1974 and it stays in my memory and it's going to stay forever. Panayia – it was a special day – and we went to this monastery... [on the] saint's day and she was crying, I'm not joking, she was crying... And tears they were coming from here, they would go there and they go away, constantly
>
> HT: On the statue?
>
> Adrienne: Yeah, I'm not joking. And people I told they said, 'Don't be so crazy, they've done something in there on the icon and it's crying'. And after a few days it was the war in Cyprus and people were saying

because something was going to happen she was crying. It's something I saw with my own eyes. [To S] You don't believe me?

S: I don't believe, no, no.

Adrienne: Honestly

HT: So you'd gone to the monastery for a special day?

Adrienne: Special day, it was Panayia yeah...

S: It's a saint's day

L: The 10th – between the 10th and

Adrienne: No it wasn't, it was before, before, it was another day, it was another

L: Yeah 'cause that was August wasn't it and it must have been in July.

Adrienne: July was

L: July was the

S: July was when they invaded

Adrienne: Yeah and people in there were really surprised seeing an icon cry and it...

S: Did anyone else see it?

Adrienne: ...was so real.

S: Did anyone else see it?

Adrienne: Everybody saw it, yeah. But I don't really discuss with anybody and I don't really see a lot of people but some of the people they were saying I was a crazy and they done something, probably put something in the back [of the icon]

The actual truth of this event – whether the icon did indeed cry – is doubted by Adrienne's brother-in-law (who apart from his ridicule of this religious 'miracle' showed great sensitivity and respect for Adrienne during the interview). He tells her clearly: 'I don't believe, no, no'. And asks her twice:

'Did anyone else see it?' My slightly incredulous question: 'On the statue?' probably also indicates that I didn't believe her either.

I initially discounted this section of the narrative as not particularly illuminating, but on reflection saw an important truth in it. For Adrienne the event has been tied in her memory to the Turkish military action that came shortly afterwards. The religious 'miracle' elevates the refugees' suffering by implying that the Virgin is crying because of the events about to befall them[6]. Her belief is not as eccentric as it first seems, as in Orthodox Christian tradition weeping icons are believed to be an omen of bad events (New York Times 1997).[7] By connecting her own traumatic experience of war and exile to the weeping icon Adrienne may feel that it has been validated. Yet the disbelief of her brother-in-law and her statement that people 'were saying I was crazy' may also indicate that Adrienne doesn't really feel that others understand what she went through as a refugee.

She says that the event 'stays in my memory and it's going to stay forever', yet there is some confusion about the date it occurred. The festival of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary is on 15 August, yet the first stage of the Turkish military action lasted from 20 to 30 July and was resumed on 14 August 1974. It could be that Adrienne is thinking of another saint's day, or that the two events were not concurrent but have become so in her mind because of her need to unite them. She seems frustrated by the attempts of

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[6] The Panayia is believed to fulfil a role as protector of the Greek nation, as well as being the link between the human family and the divine family (Bryant 2004: 198).
[7] There are more recent reports of similar events. In 1997, a 400-year-old icon of the Virgin Mary and Jesus at Kykko Monastery, 60 miles southwest of Nicosia, was reported to weep. More than 20,000 Greek Cypriot pilgrims went to visit the 'miracle', which was seen as an ominous sign for the island's future (New York Times 1997; Hadjicostis 1997).

her relatives to establish the exact date and turns the conversation back to weeping icon. It is apparent on closer examination of this narrative that it is not important whether the dates are wrong, whether the icon did in fact weep or whether it was witnessed by anyone else. The truth of this narrative can be found in the fact that for Adrienne the Turkish military intervention and her becoming a refugee were calamitous events and, therefore, the crying Panayia was a fitting omen for what occurred. Her reference to the fact that she was not believed about the weeping icon may also point to the fact that she doesn't think her account of the events of the war would have been taken seriously. Reflecting on my own disbelief of the story and my initial discarding of this section of the narrative makes me also aware of myself as a researcher choosing what to believe and what to discount.

Adrienne says about the story of the icon, 'I don't really discuss with anybody and I don't really see a lot of people'. Then later she adds, after talking freely for nearly three hours, that she had never told anyone before about her wartime experiences – neither her late husband nor her two adult sons. Adrienne's brother-in-law admitted: 'A lot of people, me included, don't really know the truth. I mean listening to what you've said tonight it's really quite moving.' Apfelbaum has spoken of how survivors of unfathomable events, such as the Holocaust or the Armenian genocide, sometimes remain silent if they feel that others won't understand or don't share their experience. 'Those who survive exist in a no-person's land of silence in which the experiences of the past receive no legitimation,' she says (Apfelbaum 2000: 1010). Some people are unable to talk about what they have experienced, but there may also be many who are unwilling to listen (Andrews 2007: 37). This

seems to suggest further that the incident with the Panayia is less about the veracity of the religious miracle and more about Adrienne's need to be believed and to have her losses acknowledged. Whether the narrated event is 'true' or not, there is certainly a great deal of truth in her narrative, which casts light on the experience of forced displacement. It is also a reminder that as researchers we need to listen out for the truth in incidents we may initially choose to discount because of our own cultural or social bias.

Saying the unsayable and the safety of words

Adrienne may have decided not to speak about her wartime experiences because she was unsure how they would be received, but she implied that she also found certain episodes painful to remember. 'All night tonight, I mean I agreed for you to come but I'm living there now,' she told me. 'I see everything come back and I'm not sure how I'm going to feel tomorrow.'[8] The extensive literature on Holocaust testimony points to the struggle between the desire to bear witness and the desire to try to forget the terrible events of the past for those who have been through some kind of life-changing experience such as war. Hartman refers to Holocaust testimonies as a 'burdened retrieval... caught between a morbid and necessary remembrance' (Hartman 1994: 2). While the narratives of Cypriot refugees are told from a very different context, they too bear the marks of a painful past and the conflicting desires to remember and forget. Maroulla, for example, is a very energetic and

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[8] Of course there are ethical implications in asking refugees to talk about difficult experiences. However, most of the participants in this study, unlike Adrienne, had told the story of their exile many times over the years and were keen to tell it again to make sure that others knew what had happened. As a result I was less troubled by the emotional impact of the interviews than I might have been if the participants had been newly arrived refugees. In Adrienne's case, I was satisfied that she was with her brother-in-law and cousin, and I contacted her brother-in-law the next day to make sure she was not too troubled by the interview.

committed campaigner for the rights of Greek Cypriot refugees. Agreeing to the interview appeared to be consistent with her political project of keeping Cyprus and the refugee issue on the political agenda, yet she found certain aspects of the interview difficult, especially when she referred to her brother who has been missing since the war. About halfway through the interview she said: 'I forgot to mention about my brother. My... my... my brother's been missing. He was in the army in '74 ... He gave his life... This is a way I can do something... This is what is pushing me to get involved in those patriotic things, you know.' She obviously hadn't *forgotten* to mention her brother, but it is a difficult issue for her to raise. As well as her own exile and that of her family, her brother is the motivation for her activism. His loss is, of course, still painful for her, as she reveals when she talks of her first return visit to the village. 'I thought if I go back to the village I would find my brother,' she told me. Her fellow villager Dimitris also mentioned Maroulla's brother during his interview and was surprised she had told me about him. 'I don't know if she had the heart to speak to you about him. Did she? ...She gets very emotional when she tells it... It's not easy for some people to... to talk about these things. I mean I was... emm... It's difficult... You know it emm... it makes me shiver when I think about it.' Both the way in which Maroulla mentions her brother and the way in which Dimitris refers to her feelings about him suggest that she is indeed 'caught between a morbid and necessary remembrance'. Of course she can never forget her brother and his story is also part of the collective history of fellow villagers, like Dimitris, who also finds it hard to talk about what happened to him. Remembering her brother is part of Maroulla's 'patriotic' impulse to do something about the refugees and the missing. Yet it

is not hard to sense the burden of retrieval for her and the fact that his loss is in some ways inexpressible.

However, the process of narrating one's life will not necessarily be painful for every refugee. For some of the younger refugees in this study who came to the UK as children, memories of the war and the first years of exile are largely second hand and as a result may be less troublesome to recount. While they are first rather than second generation refugees, they have largely inherited the memory of displacement and violence which leads to what Hirsch describes as post-memory or 'mediated memory' (Hirsch and Spitzer 2003: 81). As a result, they may be at a distance from the events in question, while much of what they recount arises from family and community stories rather than personal memory. However, it is important to remember that inherited or mediated memory may still have a powerful impact on subsequent generations and does not necessarily imply an emotional distance.

For some, the process of narration is occasionally cathartic. Of all those I interviewed, Behiye was potentially one of the most marginalised – she was divorced (which is still unusual for an older Turkish Cypriot woman in the UK), had no children and had suffered from ill health for a number of years. She was visibly upset during the interview and cried when she recalled what had happened to her in Cyprus. Yet when I said at the end of our session that I hoped the interview hadn't been too upsetting for her, she replied that the tears had washed out all the negative feelings and she felt better for talking about the past. In fact, she appeared to enjoy talking about her life and most of all having someone to listen to her and take her experiences seriously. However, as Andrews states, it is important not to

assume that the act of telling one's story is empowering or therapeutic for the narrator (Andrews 2007: 40). What did seem to motivate many in this study was the desire for their story to be recorded, either because of their political project – as was the case for many of the Greek Cypriots, or as a way to set the record straight – as was the case for some of the Turkish Cypriots who felt that history had forgotten them. As Emine explained, 'we are always scared to talk... because we are used to being isolated... Because we keep quiet. Because we know what they done to us and we can't express it.'

In some cases, according to Jackson, storytelling can also be used as 'a coping strategy' to 'be exploited when action is impossible or confounded' (Jackson 2006: 18). One example of this was the way that a number of the refugees in this study dealt with the difficult choice of whether or not to visit their lost homes after the border opened. Some of those I spoke to had not made the return journey, either for political reasons (because the island remained divided and real return was not possible) or emotional ones (because they thought it would be to painful to see their home destroyed or lived in by someone else). However, a number then proceeded to tell me what I have called proxy return narratives[9], whereby they recounted the journey which had been made by other family members. For these refugees action had been impossible before the border opened and now remained confounded by the obstacles still preventing their return. Yet at the time, when the border restrictions had just been relaxed, the air was thick with return narratives. The telling of proxy return narratives allowed these refugees to enter the process of collective narrativisation of return, using stories to replace

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[9] These will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

action, so that their political and emotional integrity could be maintained while a 'safe' return became possible through words. These narratives are also an example of the way in which communal narratives are born out of individual experience, so that the returnees' stories have been taken and embellished by new narrators who claim them as their own.

My Cyprus journeys

Just as the experiences of the refugees I interviewed affected the stories they told about their lives, my own experiences inevitably affected the way this piece of research was approached. As Andrews reminds us, 'the questions which guide our research originate from deep within ourselves. We care about the topics we explore' (Andrews 2007: 27). While I am not Cypriot, Cyprus has marked my life in a number of significant ways, which can perhaps be best explained through the stories of two journeys.

My first journey to Cyprus was in 1993 when I went on holiday with my mother and our two friends to the resort of Agia Napa. This was my mother's first visit to the island since leaving as a widow in 1956, after her husband was shot dead by a member of EOKA. Her son – my half brother – was three months old at the time. Like many other British people, they had gone to the island at the time of the colonial administration, when her husband got a job as a teacher in Larnaca. Greater political awareness might have told them that Britain's rule was coming to an end, as EOKA was formed the year they arrived and there were already murmurs of anti-colonial sentiment.

Thirty-seven years later my mother and I took a taxi to the Catholic cemetery on the outskirts of town. It took a while for my mother to find her

husband's grave, as weeds and grass covered the barely distinguishable plot and the wooden cross that had been sent out from England, which was unfit for the Cypriot weather, had long ago fallen down. There remain many unanswered questions about her husband's death. Why did they target him? Did they suspect him of informing the police? Was his death a signal to the British that civilians as well as the army were at risk? He was one of 142 British citizens killed by EOKA during the anti-colonial uprising and one of thousands who died during the decades of violence in Cyprus. Yet, as far as our family is concerned, this individual death is a defining event that has been retold many times. It is part of the narrative of our lives, almost mythological in its make-up, something that happened more than half a century ago in another world, yet still has repercussions.

By the time I was born, 11 years after the event, my mother had moved back to England, married my father and had another son. Cyprus was a long way from the Old Trafford that I grew up in and yet its ghost haunted my childhood. The 'family tragedy' was always present, in the reverent tones my maternal grandmother used for her former son-in-law, in the way that 10 years as a widow had marked my mother and in the slightly baffling fact that we had three grandmothers. I knew off by heart the story of how my grandmother had found out her son-in-law was dead when she saw the headline: 'English teacher killed in Cyprus' on the Manchester Evening News stand. I also knew my big brother had a different surname that my mother would never change and that nothing could ever be as important as the fact that her husband had been shot. I never found out my father's feelings about his predecessor, the

ghost in our midst, and I never asked why these stories loomed quite so large in our childhood.

My second significant Cyprus journey was made in 2004 with my (Australian-born, London-raised) Turkish Cypriot partner. He had not been to Cyprus for a number of years but once the border opened was keen to cross over and see his father's village in the south of the island for the first time. My partner's father left Cyprus in the 1950s and never returned, going first to Australia, then Turkey and finally England, where he died of cancer in his 40s. Most of his family, however, had stayed in the mixed village of Pentakomo, near Limassol, becoming refugees after 1974. My partner's cousin came with us on the journey to the village, which he still remembered from his childhood.

We had a tiny black and white picture of the family house from the 1950s, which my partner had found in his mother's photo album, showing his aunts and grandmother sitting under the trailing vines outside the house. The house today is barely standing. The front of the building has either been knocked down to make way for the road, been demolished for its valuable old stone or has fallen down (depending on which story you believe). Nonetheless, it remains clear that it would have been an attractive, simple house in its time. The *muhtar* (mayor) told my partner that his father had emigrated to Australia with a Greek Cypriot friend – an indication of the close contact between the two communities in this particular village. He had been stifled by the lack of opportunity in the village and was keen to escape, yet here we were trying to 'find' him in his childhood home. It was a strange journey for my partner – to 'return' to somewhere he had never been before, a 'son' of the village who found everything unfamiliar.

The Huseyin family house in Pentakomo in the 1950s (above) and in 2004 (below). The door and window in the old photo can be seen in the bottom left of the new picture.
(Photos: above – family archive; below – Helen Taylor)

We also went to visit my partner's aunt, a refugee now living in the north of Cyprus. She told us how reluctant she had been to leave Pentakor after the war and how the Greek Cypriot villagers did not want them to go. For a year, the Greek Cypriots of Pentakomo protected their Turkish Cypriot neighbours, taking their produce to market and stopping other Greek Cypriots entering the village. By 1975, however, the Turkish Cypriots were forced to leave by UN and domestic forces and were escorted to the north. My partner's aunt gave the keys to her newly-built house to her Greek Cypriot friend. The fact that they had waited a year to leave meant that the best of the abandoned Greek Cypriot houses in the north had been taken and they moved into a run-down building in a charmless village.

While these two incidents alone don't entirely explain the choice of Cyprus as research focus, they do confirm that the topics we explore are important to us. Cyprus was undoubtedly in my life due to both my mother's experience and my partner's background and, while I was also interested in the fact that Cypriot refugees in London had been largely ignored by research, my connections to Cyprus have influenced my choices.

Ethics and the situated researcher

Situated researchers come to their study shaped by their own personal history, race, gender, class and political beliefs (Denzin & Lincoln 2003: 9). Therefore, their engagement with the field and with interviewees, as well as the conclusions drawn, will be a product of their moral and political beliefs (Silverman 2001: 260). Recognising this allows researchers to accept their

role as an active participant in the research process, rather than someone engaged in a neutral data gathering exercise (Fontana & Frey 2003: 62).

Of course my connections to Cyprus influenced my research but arguably just as important is my political standpoint. It would be disingenuous of me to pretend that I don't have an opinion on the 'Cyprus problem'. My beliefs are to the left of the political spectrum and in Cypriot terms I would probably be seen as a bi-communalist, in that I think the two communities could have lived together without the interference of external forces – although I accept that the bi-communal 'myth' that 'we all got along before the war' cannot be entirely sustained. I also think there is a possibility for a common future on the island, but have reluctantly come to accept that some elements of both Cypriot communities were prepared to sacrifice the unity of the island for *enosis* (union with Greece) or *taksim* (partition). The inability of many on both sides to admit to past mistakes has also undoubtedly prolonged the political impasse. My outlook, therefore, has been to look for the commonalities as well as the differences in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugee experience and my decision to undertake a study involving both communities was no doubt informed by my bi-communal tendencies[10].

I felt that I had to be as honest as possible to my own beliefs during the research. This often meant keeping quiet, but also meant not engaging directly in any activity that I disagreed with. I faced a few awkward moments where key informants assumed I shared their political point of view and would,

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[10] Until fairly recently, most research on Cypriots and Cyprus has focused on either Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots, mainly because of logistical problems (in a divided Cyprus) but also because of presumed differences between the two ethnic groups. In recent years, however, there have been a number of researchers undertaking research of both together (Bryant 2004; Cockburn 2004; Nassari 2007; Papadakis 1998, 2005; Taylor 2002).

therefore, promote their beliefs through my research. At a march and rally held by the Greek Cypriot community in July 2004, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Turkish military action, I met some contacts but chose not to walk with them, using the excuse of taking photographs. Similarly, at a Greek Cypriot protest outside Whitehall, I greeted contacts and took photos but did not join the demonstration as I didn't agree with all of the sentiments expressed. This was also the case at a Turkish Cypriot commemoration of the invasion when I kept my distance, taking photos and listening to slogans but not wanting to be identified with the largely nationalist tone of the demonstration. In general, I adopted the role of an interested observer and in this instance being English may have been in my favour. If I had been a Cypriot I would have been expected to declare my allegiance at my own community's demonstrations and may not have been welcome at events organised by the other community.

Referring to his research in his father's village in Cyprus, Loizos reveals the sense of hurt felt by some of his informants (some of whom he was related to) who felt that their friendship had been betrayed by the conclusions he drew in his study. He also talks of the disapproval of some members of the community when he wrote about crimes committed by Greek Cypriots against Turkish Cypriots (Loizos [1994] 2001: 177-8). I did not have the same dilemma as Loizos, as I was not related to or closely connected to my informants in the same way, but I did feel uneasy about the possibility of misleading them. However, I felt it would have been unethical to have pretended to support their cause and joined in political action simply to solicit more information for my research.

There are, of course, ethical issues to be considered when researching a community to which one is connected through family. Fábos explored some of these dilemmas when she conducted research with Sudanese refugees in Cairo while she was married to a Sudanese businessman (Fábos 2000). By 'blurring the boundaries of "insider/outsider" status through marriage' she felt she shared some of the expectations of an 'indigenous anthropologist' at the same time as 'being an outsider in terms of cultural knowledge' (Fábos 2000: 274). Marriage afforded her a certain amount of access, yet her research was constrained by the fact that she was expected to behave like a 'proper' Sudanese wife (Fábos 2000: 274; 279). Of course, being known to many of those she was researching meant that Fábos did not have the option of keeping her connections to the community hidden.

To a large extent I was able to choose whether or not to reveal mine, although this was not always possible when interviewing Turkish Cypriots, two of whom knew my partner's family and two were interviewed at a community centre where the family was known. I was generally more hesitant about revealing my connections to Greek Cypriots in case they felt they could not be honest with me. If I had been looking for scientific objectivity in the study, this would obviously have been a problem for the validity of the research. However, I knew all along that the research would be influenced by my subjectivity as much as by my interviewees' stance. Plummer has talked of the tension between the 'ethical absolutism' of professional codes of ethics and a 'situated ethics' favoured by situational relativists who believe that the ethical dilemmas of research are the same as those in everyday life (Plummer 2001: 226-7). Indeed, we often find ourselves choosing whether or not to

reveal certain things about ourselves in different settings. For exar

more unusual among the Cypriot community to live with a partner o .

child outside marriage than it is in wider British society. As a result, if

someone during the course of my research referred to my partner as my

husband, I did not correct them. If the same happened in a social setting I

would be much more likely to set the record straight or even enter into debate

about marriage. Our interactions with other people are always guided by

judgements about how much of ourselves to reveal and conceal, depending

on the context and how well we know the other people.

My main concern when conducting my research was that I didn't want

participants to assume I would be biased as a result of my connections to

Cyprus, but neither did I want to be duplicitous. As a result I chose not to tell

my interviewees about my mother's experience, worried that it would affect

the research. However, if people asked about my reasons for researching

Cypriots, I told them that my partner is Turkish Cypriot and that his extended

family are refugees. I didn't volunteer this information before the interview but

offered it if it came up in conversation. My decisions about what to say and

when to talk about my links with Cyprus were based on an assessment of the

situation as it arose, a desire to smooth the social interaction and not distract

the narrators too much from their own stories. I agree with Riessman, who

said of her study of childless women in India: 'Abstract rules did not help me

when I got into ethical trouble. Interrogating my situated emotions during ...

fieldwork and afterwards did get me through' (Riessman 2005: 486). She calls

instead for 'ethics-in-context', saying that narrative research brings its own

dilemmas, which cannot always be anticipated (Riessman 2005: 484).

The co-constructed narrative

As well as narratives being the constructed life story of an individual at a particular moment in time, they are also the product of co-construction with the researcher or listener (Chanfrault-Duchet 2000: 62). As Riessman states, 'storytelling is a relational activity that encourages others to listen, to share, and to empathise. It is a collaborative practice and assumes that tellers and listeners/questioners interact in particular cultural milieus and historical contexts' (Riessman 2001: 697). If the same person were to tell the same story on the same day to someone else or somewhere else it would evolve differently depending on the research frame that has been created by the researcher, their starting questions, the encouragement they give and the context of the interview. The gender, age, ethnicity and other biographical details about the researcher may also influence what version of a story is told. A woman may tell a qualitatively different story to another woman of a similar age than to a much older man, for example. As Chamberlain states, 'the chemistry and the politics of the interview contains within it the interplay, and autonomy, of gender, race, class, education, culture and subjectivity' (Chamberlain [1997] 2005: 12).

If a story is being told in the context of a research project (rather than being recorded or transcribed verbatim and archived as oral history intact) the construction process continues after the interview is over. According to Freeman, the recording of a narrative or life history involves two creative acts – 'that of the person who is pausing to reflect on the movement of his or her life', as well as that of the researcher who makes sense of what was said by 'creating an interpretive context within which the information before us may be

placed' (Freeman 1993: 229). The collected narratives become reworked as the narrative of the research, edited together in an academic format to create a coherent story – in this case about the meaning of home. Coles reflects on this process, stating that what we eventually present 'is *our* mix of what we have observed and experienced, as we have assembled it', as 'we work what others have become to *us* into *our* narrative' (Coles 1997: 91; 100). It is important to recognise that co-construction does not always mean equal construction – both the narrator and researcher may have their own agendas and a power imbalance often exists. The narrator certainly has the licence to talk and be listened to, but the researcher is recording the narrative for research purposes and has an agenda which, to some extent, defines the interview. While the narrator can choose what to include or omit in the narrative, it is the researcher's prompts that steer the story towards subjects that are of interest to the research in hand and ultimately decides what to include in the study. As Summerfield comments, the 'research frame influences the path through the past which the narrator takes' (Summerfield 2000: 95). Of course, the narrator may also have their own personal agenda within the interview, such as seeing it as an occasion to promote a particular political viewpoint, which they hope, will be disseminated by the researcher. The interview will, therefore, be a negotiated production influenced by the motivations of those taking part.

The story of the research

For the purposes of the study, I set out with the aim of interviewing between 20 and 30 first generation Cypriot refugees in London – equal numbers of

Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and equal numbers of men and

This was difficult to achieve in practice. Greek Cypriots were initially mu.

easier to access than Turkish Cypriots, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the

Greek Cypriot community is much better organised, providing more obvious

routes into the community. Secondly, the issue of refugees is much higher on

the Greek Cypriot political agenda, making the public discussion of the

refugee experience more common. It is also the case that the Greek Cypriot

community is much bigger. However, the population figures in Cyprus at the

time of division – 77% Greek Cypriot and 18.3% Turkish Cypriot – are not

reflected in Britain. There are an estimated 160,000-220,000 Greek Cypriots

in Britain, 70% of whom live in London (Georgiou 2002: 5), while Turkish

Cypriot communities are estimated at 70,000-80,000 (Mehmet Ali 1999: 587).

This raises the ratio of Turkish Cypriots to about 30%, and it is generally

believed that there are now more Turkish Cypriots in London than in Northern

Cyprus (Mehmet Ali 2001: 16, 94). This can largely be put down to the poor

economic situation in the TRNC, which has not been recognised by any

country other than Turkey since 1974.

It was also much easier to access men than women in both

communities. When community organisations were approached for possible

interviewees, they invariably suggested men. I tried to combat the lack of

female interviewees by specifically asking for women I could talk to and also

approaching Cypriot women's community centres. This was largely successful

as far as Greek Cypriot women were concerned, but Turkish Cypriot women

remain the most under-represented in the study. Although the Cypriots I

interviewed have been in Britain for 30 to 40 years, a small number of them

do not speak English. These are mostly older people and disproportionately women. Many women would have worked in Cypriot businesses when they came to Britain and would, therefore, have been able to speak Greek or Turkish at work. If they lived in a Cypriot area such as Haringey they would also have been able to speak their mother tongue in local shops and cafés. While men usually had to learn English for work or other practicalities, some women were able to get by without it. At the two community centres I approached to find Turkish Cypriot women, a number of women spoke little English and others were reluctant to participate for reasons I was unable to discover. In the end, I was only able to interview one woman this way, when a member of staff translated for me.

It had been my intention to conduct all my interviews in English. While I speak very basic Turkish, I speak no Greek and knew that I would be unable to learn either language sufficiently to conduct interviews. Andrews describes her experience of conducting research 'against good advice' in Germany while speaking no German (Andrews 1995). While it was a challenging experience, she came away feeling that a 'high quality of research depends on much more than [language proficiency]' – with cultural barriers a far greater obstacle to understanding (Andrews 1995: 83). In addition, she found that being an outsider sometimes meant that people were prepared to open up to her in a way they might not to those they knew. This was also the case at times in this research, as shown by Adrienne's comment that she had not spoken about the events of the war before our interview.

Unlike in Andrews' situation, however, the interviews in this study took place in Britain rather than Cyprus, among refugees who have spent decades

immersed in the English language. While some Cypriots here do not speak English, the majority do. However, in order not to exclude those who did not speak English, I decided to use ad hoc translators (a community centre worker and a priest) to conduct the two interviews that could not have happened otherwise. Of course, there are issues when using translators. You are looking for the richness in the interviewees' descriptions of their experiences, yet often you receive bare facts from the translator (especially where he or she is a volunteer rather than a professional interpreter). In addition, there are concerns about the loss of original meaning or a reduction in the depth of information provided in an interpreted interview (Welch and Piekkari 2006: 429). Yet when faced with the choice of interviewing refugees with an interpreter or not interviewing them at all, I chose the former. The interviews in question were shorter than most others, but their addition to the research was important, as they provided two of the oldest interviewees whose views were valuable to the study.

An interview conducted with a translator also carries implications for the later analysis of the material. What is being transcribed and analysed are ultimately the words of the translator rather than those of the interviewee, especially where the translation has been conducted informally, as in this case, and is not a verbatim report of the interviewee's responses. As a result, while the general impression given by the interviewee and the key facts they offer can be gleaned, some of the subtlety is lost. If a greater number of the interviews had not been in English then it would have been wise to have had the interviews interpreted professionally, which would have had additional methodological implications (Welch and Piekkari 2006: 427).

I finally recorded 22 refugee narratives between July 2004 and June 2005 – 7 Greek Cypriot men, 5 Greek Cypriot women, 8 Turkish Cypriot men and 2 Turkish Cypriot women. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and three hours and all but one were audiotape recorded (Panos, a lawyer, did not want to be taped). Although I had hoped to interview all participants face to face, the interview with Sophia was conducted over the phone. I asked interviewees if they wanted to remain anonymous in the study and the majority said they were happy to be named, some seeing participation as part of their political campaign for return. However, I decided that it would not be consistent to use pseudonyms for some and not others, so decided to make all participants anonymous.

The interviews were not based on a strict schedule, but were rather based on key themes or stories that I wanted to encourage (see Appendix 3 for an interview guide). I started each interview by opening a map of Cyprus and asking the refugee to locate their village and tell me what they remembered about it. I chose to use a map from the Greek Cypriot tourist office for this task because, unlike the map being distributed by the Turkish Cypriot tourist office which only focused on the north of the island, this map used place names that were likely to have been in use when my interviewees became refugees. Maps are obviously not neutral and display the political and social preoccupations of the map-makers (as discussed in chapter three). The impossibility of finding an impartial map of Cyprus meant that I settled on this one, however imperfect, and apologised to Turkish Cypriots if the name of their village didn't appear as they remembered it, although many still use Greek names for their village. I also asked interviewees about the

circumstances that led to them becoming a refugee, their experiences in London, whether they had made any return visits to their former homes and what their hopes were for the future. Interviews were conversational in form, allowing the interviewee to talk about their experiences, with prompting and supplementary questions for clarification or expansion.

Ethnography and photography

The narrative research was supplemented by 10 interviews[11] with community figures or representatives, one of whom was also interviewed as a refugee for the study. These included spokespersons from Greek Cypriot campaigning organisation Lobby for Cyprus, theatre company Theatro Technis, the Turkish Cypriot Women's Project and the Greek Cypriot Committee for Relatives of the Missing, as well as editors of Turkish speaking newspapers Toplum Postasi and Londra Gazete and a representative of the Greek Archdiocese of Great Britain. In addition, I attended a number of political, community and cultural events, such as the Cyprus wine festival, Greek Cypriot village committee meetings, a Turkish Cypriot dinner dance, several films in London's annual Turkish film festival, a play about Cypriots in London and the annual Greek Cypriot march and rally. This ethnographic mapping of the community was important to gain an understanding of the home that Cypriot refugees have inhabited in exile in London. It contextualised the narratives and provided me with more in-depth information prior to conducting the interviews, but it also added additional insight to the research, some of which is referred to in the following chapters.

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[11] Eight of these were conducted in person and two by phone.

In addition, the thesis includes a number of photographs I took throughout the course of this research in both Cyprus and London, which were initially intended simply as a record of the research[12]. I took many photos in Cyprus in the days after the border was opened in April 2003, which arose out of an urgent need to record the momentous events unfolding. According to Loizos, photos and videos can offer 'restricted but powerful records of real-world, real-time action and events' (Loizos [2000] 2006: 289). I was aware of this as I photographed people crossing the border for the first time in 30 years, Greek Cypriots talking to relatives on their mobile phones on the beach at Famagusta, as well as eerie images of the no-man's-land of Varosha. Coles refers to the act of doing documentary work when the researcher 'is going through an experience, a moment in time that matters – something truly witnessed... and kept in mind, as opposed to the rush of things' in every day life (Coles 1997: 232-3). The act of documenting the border crossing was one of those moments which had a wider importance. I also took photographs of political demonstrations in London, which were public declarations of the presence of the community (in the case of the Greek Cypriots at least).

As this was not a systematic attempt to document the community visually for the study, the photographs serve as illustrations which hopefully complement the narratives under discussion, rather than being the primary object of analysis themselves. Gold refers to the use of photography in his studies of immigrant communities, stating that 'images can be effectively integrated with other forms of information to improve sociological work, even if

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[12] A photograph taken by one of the interviewees of his village has also been used in chapter three, as well as the family photograph used in this chapter.

the analysis of the visuals is not the central focus,' so that the photos are not treated simply as data but as 'tools that facilitate the process of research' (Gold 2007: 142-3). It is in this spirit that the photographs have been included, as they bring another dimension to the exploration of the meaning of home by contextualising and illustrating some of the discussion. Certain aspects of the research seemed to lend themselves to visual representation and as a result have been included here in photographic form. Of course, I am aware that the images selected – both at the point of taking the photograph and of choosing which to include – were influenced by my own preoccupations and aesthetic bias. As Coles reminds us, 'who we are, to some variable extent, determines what we notice and, at another level of intellectual activity, what we regard as worthy of notice' (Coles 1997: 89). In addition, I am aware that these two-dimensional images 'are inevitably secondary, derived, reduced-scale simplifications of the realities' they portray and as such offer just one possible representation of the events they depict (Loizos [2000] 2006: 290).

Conclusion

The increased use of narrative methodologies in refugee studies appears to offer new possibilities for research in the field. Employing narratives in this study has facilitated a more nuanced investigation into the experience of Cypriot refugees, which in turn has cast new light on the meaning of home. In-depth narratives are able to reveal what it felt like for Cypriot refugees to lose their Cypriot homes and start again in London, at the same time as exposing social conditions in both home and host countries, thereby bridging the gap between individual refugee experience and the contexts of flight and exile.

Narrative is also able to explore the past and the future from the context of the present, rather than just focusing on the present conditions of exile, offering a longitudinal perspective on exile and the meaning of home.

Grouping together individual narratives from Cypriot refugees means that convergences and divergences between each story could be identified so that patterns of common experiences and feelings were revealed. At the same time, narratives that represent a rupture with prevailing patterns keep us alert to the diversity of refugee experience even among those coming from the same country or context. These collected narratives tell us much about what home meant for Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugees prior to exile, during flight and in protracted exile in London. The words of the refugees recorded here offer a snapshot of both the pain of exile and the resilience of the exiled.

Chapter 3
There's no place like home – the spatial home

'If you know one landscape well, you will look at all other landscapes differently. And if you learn to love one place, sometimes you can also learn to love another.'
From *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels (1997: 82).

Introduction

The idea of home as space – a physically delineated, geographically locatable place – is perhaps the most common representation of the concept of home. Our first instinct is often to think of home and people's relationship to it in spatial terms. Home is, as Douglas asserts, 'a localisable idea' (Douglas 1991: 289). We ask new acquaintances *where* they are from, as a way of locating them physically and culturally, making assumptions about their class, education, ethnicity, interests and influences by placing them in a recognisable setting. A home is often believed to need some kind of physical presence to be recognised as such, whether that is in an elaborate building, a tent or simply a hearth (Douglas 1991: 289; Rykwert 1991: 51). However, for some the home is not fixed in space but can be reproduced anywhere (Naficy 1999: 5-6; Rykwert 1991: 54). Naficy asserts that home 'can be built, rebuilt and carried in the memory and acts of imagination' (Naficy 1999: 6). Yet is it really true that 'you can make a home anywhere' (Rykwert 1991: 54)? Are all spaces equally accessible and attractive to everyone regardless of circumstances, predispositions and available choices, and what are the implications of this for the refugee?

At first glance, the spatial home appears to be the least complicated and most obvious of the four aspects of home under investigation in this

thesis. The spatial home can be a village, a town, or other collection of residences. It is a house or similar building, a semi-permanent dwelling. It is the landscape providing the setting for our lives. Yet the longer we look at the physical home, the more we find the ground moving beneath our feet. As Massey points out, even the seemingly constant and reassuring mountains of England's Lake District are not what or where they seem, due to the land's gradual movement over millennia (Massey 2005: 137). While we often persist in perceiving space as permanent and immutable – and by extension the home as fixed in spatial terms – in reality it is anything but. Yet the concept of a definable physical home is central to our understanding of the meaning of home for the refugee and the consequences of the loss of that home: refugees are by definition forced to leave the place or places they have called home and physically move somewhere else.

This chapter will explore this contradiction by examining recent debates on the connection between people and place, as well as the necessarily constructed nature of the spatial home. In seeking a better understanding of the meaning of the spatial home for Cypriot refugees now living in London, I will look at their ongoing relationship with the houses, villages, towns and island they have left behind. In addition, I will turn my attention to the ways in which people become emplaced through the construction of place and thereby acquire intimate knowledge of a particular location, as well as looking at the emplacement strategies used by refugees who find themselves living in a new and unfamiliar space. The streets and buildings of London have provided the spatial context of daily life for the refugees in this study for

decades and their relationship with the places of the capital will also be examined.

A place for everyone?

On upholding a ruling on the right of Chagos islanders to return home 40 years after being forced from their island[1], Judge Justice Sedley said: 'Few things are more important to a social group than its sense of belonging, not only to each other but to a place' (Borger 2007). The idea that people belong not just to a community, but also to the physical location that they have habitually inhabited, is a common one. Until relatively recently the idea that refugees *naturally* belong to the place they have been forced to leave has ironically sustained both host governments keen to return refugees from whence they came and those speaking out in defence of refugees' right to return. As a result of this tension, Turton believes, there has been a reluctance in the field of refugee studies to discuss the constructed nature of place and people's relationship to it, born out of a fear of playing into the hands of governments who wish to ignore the rights of refugees (Turton 2005: 277). If there is no natural link between people and place, the logic goes, then there is no great loss when those people have to move, as they can simply find a new home elsewhere. However, Turton urges those investigating displacement not to let policy set the research agenda, by 'grappling head on with the implications of a de-naturalising concept of place' (Turton 2005: 277).

Over the last 15 years, Malkki and a number of others (in anthropology and cultural studies in particular) have begun to enter into this troubled water,

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[1] Chagos islanders were forced to leave their homes in 1967 by Britain, who had control of the territory, so that the island could be used as a US air base.

critiquing the way in which the relationship between people and the physical home has been so far understood. According to Malkki, the portrayal (by both nation states and anthropologists) of the world as divided into discrete spatial segments and the concept of culture as rooted in these separate locations, has led to a naturalisation of the links between people and places (Malkki 1992: 34). Wimmer and Glick Schiller have been similarly critical of the way in which the social sciences have adopted a form of 'methodological nationalism', legitimising 'the project of nation state building' through the study of people seen as 'contained' within the nation state, while viewing immigrants as 'socially marginal and as an exception to the rule' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 225; 230). In these scenarios, there is a place for everyone, a place where they belong culturally. As a result, the refugee is seen as outside the national and natural order, uprooted and cut loose from their culture and moral bearings (Malkki 1992: 32-33). This 'sedentarist' thinking, Malkki believes, presents territorial displacement as pathological, rather than seeing it as a 'historical product' and an 'ever-unfinished project' (Malkki 1992: 31; Malkki 1995: 516).

However, while the idea of a *natural* connection between people, culture and discrete parcels of land cannot be sustained, the concept of movement as an everyday occurrence also seems inadequate when describing what happens when refugees are spatially displaced against their will. Certain strands of postmodernism have tended to romanticise the idea of universal mobility in an increasingly globalised world, for example Chambers who describes 'the migrant's sense of being rootless' as 'perhaps the most fitting metaphor of this (post)modern condition' (Chambers 1994: 27). While

global movement is a historical fact, it is still the case that 'the overwhelming majority of the people of the world have not migrated across national boundaries' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 232; 236). As Olwig states, 'in this excitement about foregrounding movement... we must be careful... not to over-emphasise the global and transient character of life on the loose' (Olwig 1997: 17). She goes on to caution against creating a false dichotomy between 'localised, integrated and self-contained cultural links' and 'disjunction, mobility and fluidity' as the only options (Olwig 1997: 35). So, while problematising the idea that there is a natural link between certain people and certain places, we should not reject outright the idea that physical locations acquire meaning for individuals or communities over a period of time.

While Rapport and Dawson refer to the two main theories on home as 'home versus movement' and 'home as movement' (Rapport & Dawson 1998: 30), there is perhaps more to the story than this binary opposition. Theories of transnationalism have been offered as one way of understanding the complicated relationship between (forced and voluntary) migrants and home (Al-Ali & Koser 2002). Yet, while transnationalism can be said to explain the multiple and global ties that for many transcend the connection to a unitary, spatially-rooted 'home', for others transnationalism is simply a pragmatic response to the realities of exile and may be a source of fragmentation and pain, not liberation (Al-Ali & Koser 2002: 3-7). Rather than the globalised world offering a multiplicity of 'heres' and 'theres', the refugee may feel that they are neither 'here' nor 'there' when faced with transnational possibilities (Al-Ali & Koser 2002: 6, 11). In addition, while transnationalism helps to explain how some people manage the reality of having left one home for

another (or many others), using strategies such as communication, remittances and travel, it still relies on the idea of allegiance to place – albeit multiple places (Al-Ali & Koser 2002: 8), and also reproduces the image of a world divided into discrete nation states across which one can communicate (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 233).

The concept of diaspora offers some possibility of transcending place because, as Gilroy explains, 'it disrupts the fundamental power of territory to determine identity by breaking the simple sequence of explanatory links between place, location and consciousness' and instead 'identifies a relational network, characteristically produced by forced dispersal' (Gilroy 2001: 123). However, it is not a term that is often used by Cypriots themselves to refer to their dispersals and migrations across the globe. Anthias suggests this is because the desire of Cypriots to be 'open to transformations of the self is bounded by [their] location in the border between being Greek Cypriot and being Turkish Cypriot and the construction of ourselves as opposite poles of each other', which has led to the neglect of 'ideas of hybridity' (Anthias 2006: 180). In addition, diaspora politics still requires a focus on the homeland (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 232), yet with no solution to the Cyprus 'problem' and the very visible demarcation between the north and south of the island, which still separates the two communities, it has been hard for all but the most determined Cypriots around the world to imagine an identity that transcends the internal battle for territory and the ideological battle that pits Cypriots against each other.

Given this background, it is not surprising that the responses of those I interviewed to the question of the location of home revealed contradiction and

complexity. For some, home does indeed correspond to the transnational pattern of 'here' and 'there' – London and Cyprus. 'I think I've got both homes, two sides,' Ahmet told me. 'That's the trend these days, isn't it?' Others, however, clearly believed home to be one place or the other. When asked where he considered home to be, Cemal's resounding response was: 'England! UK! London! This is my home.' While for others, Cyprus remained paramount: 'Cyprus is always the place that I call home,' said Eleni. 'No matter what.' For many, however, the question was more complex. Sophia, who was born in London before her family returned to Cyprus just before the war and became refugees, felt that there was a 'thread... of movement' that ran through her life as a result of her experience of forced migration. Likewise, Hasan said:

> ...this is in me that I constantly want to move... I want to belong somewhere. I want to say: 'Yes I belong here and I want to spend the rest of my life here.' I've been looking for that place for a long time.

For Hasan, transnationalism does indeed appear to imply belonging to neither place. Stella, too, found the reality of transnationalism a drawback rather than an opportunity: 'If you have two homelands it's a curse,' she told me. 'You're always divided between.' Only one of my interviewees, Father Georgiou (a Greek Orthodox priest) told me of his desire to transcend the spatial home, saying he had 'gone away from the place... because we shouldn't choose and divide people on places', yet his other comments during the interview revealed that this was easier said than done. As these diverse responses show, there is no simple conclusion to be drawn when looking at the relationship between the refugee and the spatial home. Of course, asking these refugees *where* they thought of as home was bound to invite a

geographical answer, but for most of those I spoke to the physical location of home was indeed still an important factor in their understanding of the nature of belonging.

What is important to remember about those in this study (and refugees in general) is their lack of choice about leaving the physical home in Cyprus. While global mobility may be a lifestyle choice for those who are free to choose to work, live or travel around the world, for the refugee the element of compulsion affects their relationship to the spatial home. Of course, there are different degrees of choice involved in the decisions made by many to migrate, and movement for economic reasons is often done out of desperation rather than free will. However, the involuntary removal of the refugee, often overnight, from the spatial home adds complexity to our understanding of people's relationship to place.

While it is clear that there is nothing permanent about landscapes, state boundaries, sites of dwelling or the peoples who lay claim to any of these, a person who is forced to leave their habitual place of residence (rather than choosing to do so) can be expected to feel a sense of loss and injustice. In fact, the very process of losing what they saw as their home may make them more convinced that they had a 'natural' connection to, or historical 'right' to be in, that particular place. As Kaplan explains, 'the paradigm of exile requires a coherent, recognised identity or point of origin' (Kaplan 1996: 104). Indeed, at times of crisis, the belief in the possibility of a fixed spatial home may become more marked. In her study of Croatian refugees, Povrzanovic Frykman points out that: 'In war... the physical space of home is of primary importance as a place where one's personal identity is situated and

confirmed' (Povrzanovic Frykman 2002: 127). This may explain why Cypriot refugees feel such a strong connection to the places they have left behind, even though, as Malkki rightly states, there is no *natural* connection between these particular people and the spaces they used to inhabit. Bisharat goes further, saying that 'it is precisely under conditions of... threat to connections between peoples and places that identities are most vehemently, even lethally, spatialised' (Bisharat 1997: 204). This is true both of those who have been forced to leave their land and try to hold onto the perceived physical origin of their identity, as well as of states who equate certain ethnicities or identities with particular territories in order to engage in strategies of nation building. For example, according to Yiftachel, the Israeli state's Zionist policy sets out to 'Judaize the entire Israel/Palestine space' as a result of a belief in 'its "historic right" over the entire "promised homeland" ...and on the associated Othering of the Palestinians' (Yiftachel 2005: 125-6). Similarly, conflicts in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as well as the partitions of India and Cyprus have arisen out of the naturalised linking of ethnic identities with spatial territories. Papadakis refers to the 'romantic feelings associated with "losses of historic lands" implied in the Greek and Turkish historical paradigms' in Cyprus as 'dangerous geographical imaginations', which could fuel further conflict (Papadakis 1998: 76).

Constructing the spatial home

If we start from the premise that there is no *natural* connection between people, places and culture, we then need to examine how such connections are established and why they are fought for with such passion. The spatial

home does not come ready-made, but is rather constructed over time, as meaning is ascribed to space through the repetition of daily practices. Jackson uses psychoanalytic terms to describe the ways in which 'one's being is cathected and recathected onto many others and many objects' in the search for a sense of identity, so that objects such as 'prized personal possessions, dwellings, landscapes... may become, by extension, aspects of oneself that one could not conceive of being without' (Jackson 2006: 13). In light of this, we can begin to understand how we all invest time, energy and emotion in attributing our sense of self to the places and things around us. Of course, this is not a one-off process but is rather under constant revision.

In her exploration of space, Massey proposed that 'we recognise space as the product of interrelations', as a sphere of 'co-existing heterogeneity' which is 'always under construction' (Massey 2005: 9). Space, therefore, acquires meaning when people interact with each other and the places around them, but such meanings are multiple and in progress. Space, Massey asserts, is nothing more and nothing less than 'a simultaneity of stories-so-far' (Massey 2005: 9); and Appadurai notes how space is 'socialised and localised through complex and deliberate practices of performance, representation and action', producing neighbourhoods which become the setting for social life (Appadurai 1996: 180-182). So the physical location acquires a history as people perform and remember the minutiae of daily life within it. Jones and Cloke, too, reject the idea that places are 'carved out of a pre-existing spatial container' but are instead 'created and maintained through the everyday actions of everyday life' (Jones & Cloke 2002: 76). They promote a concept of 'dwelling', which brings together factors such as people, animals, climate,

history and topography in the production of the particular characteristics of any given place at any given time (Jones & Cloke 2002: 9). So the qualities of a place are specific to that moment in time, when histories, people, organic elements and the built environment all intersect. Space, then, does not have any inherent characteristics. While it may have distinctive features, this is simply a result of what Massey describes as the 'throwntogetherness' that results from the meeting between the human and non-human elements of place (Massey 2005: 140-141).

The spatial home, then, is a construction. Rather than the easily understood, fixed physical entity we might at first have thought it to be, it shifts through time. According to Kaye, home is a concept 'embroiled in a perpetual process of transformation' (Kaye 2003: 335). Yet such changes are barely noticeable on a daily basis. The home may be engaged in a process of constant reinvention but it appears reassuringly stable (in times of peace and plenty) to the dweller. The ideal home is perceived of 'as the centre of the world... a place where personal and social meaning are grounded' (Papastergiadis 1998: 2). And over time, memories become fixed to places, establishing belief in the connection between a historical identity and a particular location (Stewart & Strathern 2003: 1). So while change is constant, there is an appearance of fixity fuelled by the human need for stability and this apparent contradiction is important for the refugee.

However, it is also the case that just as home is constructed through the experience of dwelling in a place, so home can be constructed at a distance and through absence. We saw in the previous chapter how narratives are constructed and change over time in line with the fluctuating

needs of the present. Similarly, the lost spatial home may be reconstructed in retrospect as exile continues. Chilean refugee Agosin describes how her sense of attachment to the physical space of Chile increased at the same time as her life in the USA became more stable, stating that: 'The idea of Chile is precious to me. The physical space is an obsession with me. But, like the past it is more tangible at a distance (Agosin 1994: 145)'. Meanwhile, Al-Rasheed reminds us that 'the idea of a homeland is often constructed in the period of exile', as 'exiled communities emphasise their link to a geographical centre which is perceived to be a sacred habitat' (Al-Rasheed 1994: 201-2). If this is the case, the context of exile will also influence the ways in which the lost home is constructed from afar. So, in the case of this research, life in the 'diaspora space' of London means that Cypriot refugees' memories of their Cypriot home will be altered over time under the influence of the collective imaginings of other Cypriots, as well as other inhabitants of the capital city.

The house as home

The house is central to the concept of home in many cultures, while in Cyprus the house has been seen as a symbol of the family line, economic success and social standing (Zetter 1998: 310). Stephen explained to me how his parents had built their house at great expense when they married, incorporating a number of shops, so that they had a business as well as a family residence: 'It was my mum's parents that contributed to the house cost and it was built from scratch. My parents were fairly wealthy and they were the ones who actually lost a lot at the invasion because they haven't moved on.' The fact that Stephen's parents were able to display their relative wealth

in the building of their property was a concrete sign of their status. The loss of it, as Stephen explains, is something they have been unable to recover from and, unlike most Cypriots in London, they live in rented accommodation – a difficult concession for Cypriots who usually owned their houses (Cockburn 2004: 64). It was traditional for houses to be built as a form of dowry for young women about to marry (Zetter 1991: 49) and for this reason the house had a special importance for women in Cyprus. Indeed, the loss of the house struck female refugees – 'the home-makers and often the home-owners' particularly hard (Cockburn 2004: 64). They were, Loizos explains, exposed like 'snails without shells' (Loizos 1981: 176). Kasim remembers his mother's distress each time they had to move since losing their home in Vroisha in the 1960s:

> I remember my mother crying each time we were moving because her wardrobes they are falling apart... These things matter to the ladies... I mean, the men are more concerned about the wellbeing of the family but the women care about their... I remember her worrying about her wardrobes... 'Oh careful it's already broken, don't break it again.'

Having had to leave their houses behind, intimate domestic items of furniture such as wardrobes seem to symbolise home for women, especially as the house has commonly been characterised as a female domain (Papastergiadis 1998: 7). Without their houses, these women place much store by the possessions they have saved, which represent the more settled and ordered life they lived before displacement, a life where clothes were hung in wardrobes rather than crammed in suitcases. Kasim's mother is not simply weeping about her possessions but about the loss of her place in society.

The house itself is the physical container for and location of family life, and as such is a vessel for family history and memories. As Douglas states, buildings have 'a distinctive capacity for memory or anticipation' (Douglas

1991: 294). Although it is now rare for families anywhere to stay in the same building for generations, it used to be more common for Cypriots to keep buildings in the family, adding to them as the family grew. The Cypriot house, therefore, has a role in family mythology, according to Zetter, as it 'distils the history and life of the family which is lost by enforced exile' (Zetter 1998: 310). The pain felt on losing the house as a repository for family memory was expressed by Maroulla who, on making the first return journey to her family's house after 30 years, entered what had been her parents' bedroom looking for the family history which had literally been written into the house:

> In the main bedroom... there was the wardrobe... And I opened the middle door. You know in Cyprus... when somebody [was] born in the family they opened the door of the wardrobe and wrote... the name and the date. And six of us were on the middle door of the wardrobe. And I opened that door and I saw they removed the whole wood... and leave the door there without that part inside... They didn't touch the other two doors, but that one with the names in, they break it.

Her house, which is currently being used as storage for animal feed and is in a dilapidated state, has been emptied of the history and life which gave it meaning. Maroulla's family wardrobe – like that of Kasim's mother – had been a reliable object that spoke of a 'normal' home life prior to exile. Now it no longer bears the inscripted knowledge of the children who were born there and has shed its memories.

While Greek Cypriots such as Maroulla saw their family houses taken over by others or, worse still, abandoned after the war, many Turkish Cypriots were unable to build houses at all during the violence of the 1960s. This was either due to financial difficulties or political and practical obstacles put in their way. Bülent explained how his father left his family behind in Cyprus, while he went to work in Britain to earn money to build the family house in Cyprus.

However, the project was abandoned when the whole family came to Britain to escape the intercommunal violence. 'To do anything was a real battle,' he told me. 'It was difficult to buy land, it was difficult to build a house. You've got to remember there was no such thing as mortgages and wages were really low.'

A number of my Turkish Cypriot interviewees told me how they were hampered by restrictions on buying building materials, due to fears that it would be used to build military reinforcements. As Ömer told me:

> If you wanted to build a house in your village, they wouldn't let you bring the cement and sand and bricks. No, because they try to not to give us a chance to improve, you know, life standard or economically or financially … People grow up, they get married, they need a house – we couldn't do that.

Those that did manage to build houses sometimes found their hard work literally go up in smoke when their homes were burnt down. Salih and Kasim's village, Vroisha, was completely razed after the villagers fled as a result of ongoing threats of violence.

The ruins of houses in Vroisha, photographed by a villager in 2004.

Similarly, all the Turkish houses in Ahmet's father's village, which had been built in the old style using mud bricks, were burnt down as early as 1958. They were rebuilt with concrete and cement in 1960, but were once again burnt down in 1963.

For Cypriots, being able to build a house on family land was a matter of pride, a sign of coming of age and readiness for marriage and an indicator of material prosperity. Losing these houses or being stopped from building them in the first place, therefore, was about more than simply the loss of capital, it was about not being able to fulfil one's role in the family and the community. Houses in Cyprus were generally built by men and thereafter controlled by women. For women, losing the family home indicated the loss of their domain. For the men in my study, such as the Turkish Cypriots quoted above, the inability to build the family house meant that they were not keeping up their part of the bargain in providing a secure home for the family.

For refugees like Nick, who built his marital home just one year before becoming a refugee in 1974, the loss of the house has been hard to forget. When Nick visited the house after the border opened, he found it almost unchanged. The interruption of his life at precisely the moment when he was about to begin his marriage in the house he had built for his wife, may explain Nick's reluctance to give up on his Cypriot home. Indeed, he told me that as the Turkish invasion began he initially refused to leave his house, telling other villagers: 'This is our place. That's where we should stay.'

For many refugees, keeping hold of the deeds or the keys to the house in exile is a symbolic way of keeping alive their connection with the lost home and is often a commitment to the project of return (Bisharat 1997: 214; Seed

1999: 91). Peter still has the deeds to the house his father built and passed on to him when he died, and Stella has kept the bag she was using on the day she left her home, as if any day she might go back and reach inside it for her house keys: 'That's what I carried with me over the years. It's still in my house with my keys [in it].' Meanwhile, Hasan's father kept faith with his lost home in Larnaca by continuing to pay the mortgage on the house until 1982, always believing return was imminent.

Seed has written about Palestinian refugees who have kept the keys to their lost houses for decades and, even more surprisingly, how the descendents of some of those expelled from Andalucia in the 15th century still have the keys to the family house (Seed 1999). In both these cases, and in the case of some of the Cypriot refugees I spoke to, many of the houses these keys belong to are no longer standing. Yet, according to Seed, keys (or deeds) serve as a reminder that 'prompts the exile to retell their... narrative of loss' (Seed 1999: 90-91). It is this commitment to the retelling of the story that perhaps prevents some Cypriot refugees in London from finally accepting their houses in the city as home, just as Zetter observed the refusal of Greek Cypriot refugees internally displaced in Cyprus to accept any permanence in their relocation (Zetter 1991, 1998).

The Cypriot houses described to me by my interviewees were by no means luxurious or even as newly built as Nick's and Stephen's. Some lost half-finished houses, traditional village houses or simple family houses. Peter described his family's 40-year-old house as 'pretty average'. 'We had just the basics,' he told me. 'It wasn't the sort of luxury house you can imagine now.' Yet his commitment to this modest building is passionate. In spite of

Stephen's belief that the ability of a refugee to move on 'depends on how much you've lost', this didn't seem to be the case for the majority of my interviewees. The Cypriots I spoke to did not measure their loss in terms of the financial value of the houses they had left behind. Although those who lost a lot, like Stephen's parents, felt the additional insult of losing their hard-earned capital, it generally appears to be the case that it is what the house represents that matters most, not its financial value. This is relevant to the discussions about compensation that invariably accompany any attempt at settlement in Cyprus. What precisely would refugees be compensated for? The financial value of their house and land, or the loss of all the elements that made up home at the moment of exile, which can never be replaced?

Transitional dwellings

After losing their homes, the Cypriots I spoke to lived temporarily in a variety of places in Cyprus before finally moving to Britain. Bus garages, schools, tents and derelict buildings were all makeshift homes. Some stayed longer than others, renting out houses, living with relatives or, in the case of some of the Turkish Cypriots who were displaced in the 1950s or 1960s, building new houses. Similarly in London, a variety of temporary solutions were sought and many described living in shared houses, usually with other Cypriot families. 'Those days it was so difficult,' explained Stella. 'It's not like today, you have separate flats. You had part of this and part of that... And everybody's using the same loo!'

Cemal and his family spent three years living in two attic rooms: 'The seven of us slept in one bedroom... and they had one little, grotty kitchen,

which we shared with a lot of rats and mice. The housing situation in those days were really bad.' However, in spite of the terrible conditions many of the refugees lived in when they first came to Britain, most of them laughed about these times. Some were just children at the time and would have been spared the responsibility of their parents. For others it may have been the contrast with the war they had just experienced that diminished the impact of bedsit life in London. In addition, they are viewing this period with the benefit of hindsight, from the comfort (in most cases) of their current family homes. There was no emotional investment in these transitory spatial homes, so their capacity to disappoint was diminished.

As might be expected, Cypriots in London wanted to own their houses, as they had in Cyprus, council houses were largely frowned upon and a high value was put on ownership (Anthias 1992: 66-7; Constantinides 1977: 279). Many of my respondents have lived in their current houses for many years and had usually chosen an area of London where relatives lived. Only one or two are living in rented property, including Nick, who is pleased that he is now in a council house which is 'on the [ground] floor and has a door on the road', so that it looks more like his idea of a proper house.

The fact that many Cypriot refugees seem to have gradually acquired houses in what are seen as desirable areas of London points to their ability to adapt to life in a new context, as they have recreated comfortable and safe family homes. Adrienne explained how she searched for the right kind of house in London before choosing the one she lives in: 'I feel happy here. In this house I feel secure,' she told me. She has taken great care with the

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decoration and the centrepiece is a painting she bought soon after her husband died, depicting open patio doors looking out onto a garden:

> I like the door open and I like to see the garden and I feel at home. And the nights when I'm here and I don't do much... I just stare at this picture and I live there many nights. I just live under the tree, I just sit there. Honestly, I live in that picture nearly every day... It reminds me more like a house in Limassol in the mountains. A lot of houses are like that with double doors. And in my village as well we had double doors.

Adrienne's focus on the painting suggests that while she likes her London house, she still yearns for a different kind of home, as well as perhaps for her life in Cyprus as a child. Her relationship to the picture also seems to suggest nostalgia for village life before the war as well as a desire for peace now.

Village life

When I began each interview asking participants to show me their village on a map of Cyprus and tell me what it was like, the answers were predictably spatial and quantifiable: 'It was about 15 kilometres away from the main town... only about a mile from the sea'. 'It is Paphos district and I come from the village Tera which is close to Polis.' It was 'a very small village, 250 Greek people, 150 Turkish people'. 'It's a border village... 12 miles from Nicosia.' 'My village is called Vroisha, deep in the Troodos mountains.' The refugees located their village in relation to neighbouring villages and towns, indicating the strategic importance of a village depending on its size, its proximity to important towns, or its relationship with other villages. They also placed their village within the surrounding topography – 'deep in the Troodos mountains' or 'on the plain of Morphou'. This is partly due to pride in the Cypriot landscape particular to their region, but also explains the character of a village

by its ability to grow certain crops depending on the terrain and climate (oranges in Morphou, for example), as well as the day-to-day experience of village life. Life experienced through the seasons in the Troodos mountains, for example, would be very different from time spent in the coastal town of Larnaca. The size of the village and its population were also offered as significant facts, as they illustrated the relative wealth and importance of a village. Some refugees listed buildings, such as schools and churches, to provide a picture of the layout of the village. Salih has gathered detailed statistics about his village as part of his campaign to have the village rebuilt, listing the number of houses, sheds, stables, schools, forestry buildings, cafes, shops and mosques, as well as features such as streams and public fountains, to give a picture of the destroyed village. This cataloguing of the physical characteristics of a place is both a way of keeping the memory alive and of accounting for what was lost.

Many refugees also talk about their own houses in relation to those of their relatives nearby. 'There was a lot of family around us, you know,' explained Maroulla. 'It was my house, my grandparents' house, my uncle's house, my other uncle's house.' The layout of the village, then, is important for two reasons. Firstly, it provides the setting within which daily life was acted out and is, therefore, intricately tied up with memories of life before (and during) the war. Secondly, it indicates the family and social networks that existed and were integral to the understanding of home (which are discussed in detail in chapter six). This ties in with Rykwert's belief that 'a rustic dwelling depends on being part of an articulated... layout which was understood as a body with head and members into which the homesteads were "integrated"...

[and] a house, whether it is rural or urban, can be a true home only in such neighbourly circumstances' (Rykwert 1991: 57).

As well as being neighbourly, however, the village was also capable of imprisoning or dividing villagers during periods of unrest on the island. Most mixed villages had Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot quarters even in times of peace – which meant that the poorer (usually Turkish Cypriot) houses and the better (usually Greek Cypriot) houses in the village were separate from each other. During the intercommunal violence of the 1960s this meant that many Turkish Cypriots became enclaved in Turkish Cypriot areas or entire Turkish villages (Asmussen 1998: 264). For Turkish Cypriots 'enclaved life was one of confinement, of closure, a narrowing down', especially for women; while Greek Cypriots also experienced an 'increasing lack of mobility' (Cockburn 2004: 62-3). The previously familiar physical space of the villages and its surrounding area changed, as neighbourhoods became unrecognisable, with new no-go areas and through roads becoming dead ends. Alpay described his experience of enclaved life as a child when the village was 'surrounded by Greeks... and all the walls were written with the word EOKA... You couldn't walk, you were scared to go out as a child to play in the village because all the paramilitary EOKAs were coming round.'

Bülent told me how his father was stopped and searched whenever he tried to leave their village, while Ömer described how his village was surrounded and villagers who did venture out could be 'disappeared', including his father's cousin who he believes was killed on one such journey. Many Turkish Cypriot villagers had agricultural land outside the village boundaries and it became increasingly difficult for them to work their land. For

most, the experience of being enclaved made the space of the village and its surrounding land unviable as a home. Salih described to me how his village was cut off for three months, from December 1963 to March 1964, before the villagers decided they had no choice but to evacuate:

> There was no communication between our village and the rest of the world. We could not use our vehicles for any transportation, because in order to have access to the main village, Limnitis, or the main town, Lefka, we had to cross from Pyrgos – one of the biggest, largest Greek villages in the area... For three months... the village was totally isolated and we were fast running out of food stock.

By the end of 1964, an estimated 25,000 Turkish Cypriots had left 25 Turkish villages and 80 mixed villages (Asmussen 1998: 268). An enclaved village ceases to function as a home because, although the spatial layout of the village may be maintained, it is no longer able to connect to the network of surrounding spaces. Home is usually seen as a safe place in which to stay. However, when travel to and from that place becomes impossible it can no longer function as a home – even if the physical structures still remain. This is a clear indication that the spatial home does not exist in isolation but rather acquires meaning through a series of inter-related connections with places and people. When a place is compromised by demarcations or borders it ceases to operate as a home.

Brah describes borders as:

> ...arbitrary dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural and psychic, territories to be patrolled against those whom they construct as outsiders, aliens, the Others; ...places where claims to ownership – claims to 'mine', 'yours' and 'theirs' – are staked out, contested, defended, fought over. (Brah 1996: 198)

Such arbitrary dividing lines were seen in the enclaving of Turkish Cypriots, in partitioned mixed villages or in the Turkish-only villages which became 'non-places'. Divisions were writ large when the whole island was divided by the Green Line after the war, which saw the island split in two and border villages either cut in half, closed down or left to exist in a kind of limbo.

A church remains off limits in the UN buffer zone in Nicosia. On the left is a house which is half inside and half outside the buffer zone. (Photo: Helen Taylor)

Nicosia remains a divided city[2] and a visit to it on either 'side' of the line demonstrates that a divided village or town is no longer able to maintain its spatial integrity – roads that go nowhere or buildings that are cut in half defy the expectations of a spatial home. The two parts of the city are held apart by a buffer zone patrolled by the United Nations, a no-man's land which is home only to animals, birds and plants. Although the line has been open to crossings since 2003, the buffer zone and checkpoints remain. Peter described to me what it was like for Greek Cypriot refugees who were unable to access their houses in the north:

> There's a certain road that used to take us through and go to the village. Just to know that you can go out and at a certain roundabout... one road says 'road closed'. You can see the feelings and the emotions building up.

Stella, too, described the painful experience of looking at her land, which is now in the UN occupied area of Famagusta, from a viewpoint where tourists to the south of the island have been routinely taken since the war. The hurt caused by the physical impossibility of driving down a road one knows is there, or being unable to visit a house one can see in the distance, is palpable. Refugees were in possession of intimate spatial knowledge of their villages and the surrounding area, yet that knowledge became useless as borders (physical, political and psychological) altered the roadmap of their home world.

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[2] However, the relaxation of border restrictions over recent years and the opening of a new crossing in Ledra Street in 2008, the main shopping street which was previously cut in half, means that there is much more movement between the two sides of the city. In particular, Turkish Cypriots are taking advantage of the better services in the south and personal conversations reveal that some are sending their children to English-speaking nurseries and schools there.

A house in the Varosha area of Famagusta, which has been inaccessible since 1974. (*Photo: Helen Taylor*)

A number of those refugees who have been back to visit their villages since the border restrictions were relaxed in 2003, have had an interesting reaction to the spaces they once knew so well. The streets and buildings that have loomed so large in their memories during exile appear to have shrunk when they are encountered again. Hasan describes a return journey he took with his mother when 'all of a sudden everything shrank. It was so small, so small. I was shocked. The road that it used to take me half an hour to go home, it disappeared.' Adrienne also described her sister's reaction to seeing their village again: '[She] said to me the house looks really small and looks really horrible and the roads look too narrow.' While Cemal had the feeling that 'the sky was very low, it felt as if the sky was about to crash'. This *Alice in Wonderland* experience can be destabilising for the refugee. The spatial

home is not how it was imagined to be during the intervening decades. The roads seem shorter and narrow, the houses small and even the sky appears closer. One simple reason, as Adrienne points out, is 'because you get used to bigger houses, bigger roads and better gardens' in London. Regardless of how they *feel* about Cyprus, the spaces of London are now more familiar to them. It is also an indication that, in spite of believing themselves to be intimately connected to the spaces they are revisiting, returning after so many years makes them feel out of place, as they no longer fit with the surroundings. In many cases, the spatial home they lost has been maintained by their memories and nurtured in their ongoing narratives. But in reality, the village has either changed or is not quite how they remembered it to be. 'Where I was supposed to be is not really there,' said Emine of her return journey.

Pluri-local lives

The refugees in my study had a perception of the spatial home that was one of permanence and fixity, yet the details of their narratives displayed a much more complicated relationship to place. One interesting trend I noticed in my interviews was that, while most maintain a profound allegiance to the lost village as their true and unitary home, many Cypriots were in fact living a pluri-local existence prior to exile. For a number of reasons – including work and education – upwardly mobile Cypriots in particular were spending periods of time away from the village or town they called home. Ömer went to secondary school for three years in the nearby town of Polis, living in a boarding house and only spending summer holidays in the village, before

moving to Paphos to finish his secondary education and finally to Turkey to attend university. Meanwhile, Eleni and her family spent half the week in Nicosia (where her father worked as a factory manager) and the long weekend in her parents' village, Athienou, 12 miles away.

For those whose mother and father came from different villages there was also a second family home, offering an additional location for family life. Ahmet grew up in his mother's home of south Nicosia, but remembers spending time in his father's village, Lakatameia, five miles away, where his father grew olives and other crops. In addition, some Cypriot families were already living a transnational life between Britain and Cyprus before the war. For example, Bülent and his brother lived with their grandmother in Nicosia when their parents moved to Britain to find work. This pattern of movement makes conversations about the spatial home more circuitous than might at first be expected. Descriptions of recent return journeys to the lost home[3], for example, often include detours to other villages and locations that made up the web of spatial connections experienced collectively as home. When talking of his lost home, Nick refers to the house he built in his wife's village Agios Epiktitos, which he moved to after marrying in his 30s. However, his childhood home is Kyrenia, where his mother rented a property, but where the rich memories of his early life are located. He visited both of these places when he was able to make a return journey to the north of the island.

In addition to the movements between places experienced by Cypriots on a regular basis, many Turkish Cypriots also experienced repeated unwanted dislocation. While the majority of Greek Cypriot refugees

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[3] These will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

experienced displacement as a sudden event during the war, which saw them lose their homes almost overnight, many Turkish Cypriot refugees underwent a series of movements over 10 to 15 years. Ahmet's family had to move from south to north Nicosia in 1958, during violent struggles in the capital, and were unable to access his father's farmland between 1958 and 1960. Hasan's family fled Softades for Kivisili in 1963, then moved to Larnaca and finally had to move north to Agios Sergios (now Yenibogazci) after the war in 1974. When his village became unsafe, Kasim remembers moving first to the neighbouring village of Suleymaniye where his grandparents lived, before an escalation in fighting forced them to move to the village of Güneybakan, until a refugee village was built nearby. Kasim's mother moved again in 1974 to the north, because her village had become a border village. 'Some of the refugees became refugees about five times because they had to move places all the time,' Salih told me. This repeated movement has no doubt affected Turkish Cypriots' attitudes to home and return and has disrupted, for many, the unitary memory of the spatial home. Speaking about the referendum on the Annan Plan, which was taking place at the time of our interview and included the possibility that the town of Morphou (Güzelyürt) would be returned to the Greek Cypriots, Kasim told me:

> They say to [the Turkish Cypriots]: 'We are going to move you from there again.' [The Turkish Cypriots] say: 'We are used to moving anyway. We moved three or four times. So if you are going to say to us you are going to give us a piece of land, build us, even if it is one room and say this is going to be ours, then we move.'

The above examples of pluri-local living further complicate our understanding of the spatial home and the nature of belonging. For Nick, it is the marital home in his wife's village and the life they were just about to embark on that

he mourns the most. For others it is the loss of the village of origin, in spite of lengthy periods lived in towns that cause most pain. For those Turkish Cypriots who experienced multiple displacements, the idea of moving back to Cyprus is often unappealing, regardless of the nostalgia felt for the lost home.

This takes us back to the tension outlined by Turton between the anxiety felt by those who wish to explore the constructed nature of home, while at the same time defending refugees' rights. It appears to be true that there is no inherent link between any group of people and the space they currently inhabit, nor is there any fixed and permanent place that can be called home, as we have seen in the above examples. Instead, home can be seen as the intersection of people, place and other organic and non-organic elements at any given moment. Rather than this fact diminishing the loss of the refugee, however, I would argue that it amplifies it.

The refugee has not only lost the physical buildings that were the location of family history and daily routine, the collection of public and private buildings and streets that made up the town or village, the farmland that provided an income for the family, the neighbouring villages that were home to other family members and therefore provided an additional home to the extended family, and the towns where schooling and work took place. They have also lost the precise combination of factors that made up home on the day of exile. The neighbours about to be visited, the crops due to be harvested, the weddings being planned, the extension being built to the family home, the friends waiting to play football after school – this exact mixture can never be recaptured. While political and legal reparations might in some cases bring about the return of land or property, or compensation for loss,

they can never reinstate the collective recent history – Massey's 'stories-so-far' (Massey 2005: 9) – nor the future potential of the home that was lost on the day of exile. So displacement is not so much about the loss of place itself but the loss of home as 'a place in the world' that 'makes action meaningful through shared understandings and a shared interpretation of action' (Xenos 1996: 243). It is also about the lack of choice about when and where to move.

Island life

As well the physical building of the family house and the spatial context of the village, the island itself looms large in the mind of the refugee. As Jepson states, 'an island is an easily imaginable whole' and 'an island's boundary where it meets the sea – is non-negotiable' (Jepson 2006: 158). Being an island makes Cyprus open to iconic representation in graphic form, allowing it a constant presence in many refugee homes. The outline of the island is ubiquitous, appearing on cheap souvenirs (such as tea trays and plates), on gold necklaces worn by young Cypriots, on signs and even on the country's post-independence flag (currently only used in the Greek Cypriot south and, ironically, designed by a Turkish Cypriot).

Graphics of the island are also used in political propaganda (both in Cyprus and London), especially by Greek Cypriots campaigning for the island to be reunified. A common image is that of the island showing the north dripping with blood, to depict the Turkish military intervention in the north and the loss of the northern section of the island. These images seem to suggest the island as a body suffering amputation.
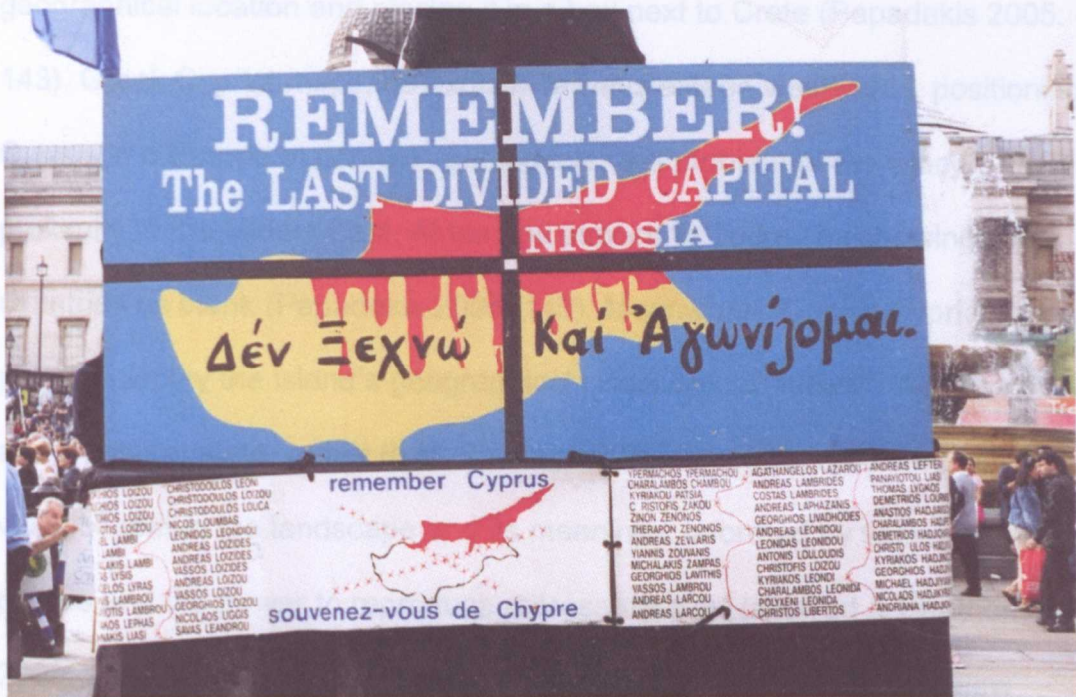
A poster at a Greek Cypriot rally in central London in 2004, 30 years after the Turkish military intervention. The blood pouring from the top of the island signifies the Greek Cypriot lives lost and the taking of the north of the island. *(Photo: Helen Taylor)*

Cyprus is also represented on maps of the island. The physical presence of a country can be represented on a map as eminently containable – even more so if the country is an island and can be depicted whole and alone, floating in a blue sea, without any bordering nations. 'Maps', Turton asserts, 'are signs' which 'tell us where things are in the world... and in so doing they facilitate movement'; their usefulness, however, 'clearly depends on the reality it represents *not* moving' (Turton 2005: 262). Mapmakers have had a difficult time with Cyprus over recent decades. The island may not have moved, but parts of it keep mysteriously disappearing and neighbouring countries seem to fade out or come into view. Papadakis recalls how the maps he was shown at school (in post-1974 southern Cyprus) showed the island's connection to Greece by removing Cyprus from its actual

geographical location and placing it in a box next to Crete (Papadakis 2005: 143). Greek Cypriot maps, he explain, 'always extend westwards, positioning Cyprus in a European context', getting over the problem of the island's proximity to the Middle East, Africa and especially Turkey by showing these countries as blank (Papadakis 2005: 143). Meanwhile, Turkish Cypriot maps proudly display the island's geographical closeness to Turkey[4]. As Stewart and Strathern state, rather than charting reality, 'maps represent multiple ways of seeing the landscape and its meanings, informed by social memories, politics and the power to reproduce representations' (Stewart & Strathern 2003: 11). The map I used to prompt the refugees during each interview offered just one possible physical and political representation of Cyprus and as such was problematic. I was asking the refugees about their towns and villages before 1974, but the map I showed them was produced recently by the Greek Cypriot authorities and showed the Green Line dividing the island.

Mapmakers have encountered numerous problems when trying to depict post-war Cyprus. Do you show the 'other side' at all? Do you use Greek or Turkish names for villages? Cockburn sums up the dilemma: 'How to draw a political map of Cyprus that will not offend a great many Cypriots?' (Cockburn 2004: 67). The maps currently being sent out by the island's two tourist information offices in London interpret the island differently. The 'Visitor's Map of Cyprus' sent out by the (Greek Cypriot) Cyprus Tourism Organisation (and used in my interviews) shows the whole island with villages and towns named in Greek. A feint grey line and the words 'area under Turkish occupation since 1974' indicate the northern portion of the island,

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[4] Cyprus is 50 miles from Turkey and 270 miles from the nearest Greek island of Rhodes (Calotychos 1998: 4).

which makes up the unrecognised Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Glancing at the current map as a tourist, it would be possible to miss the 'border' and the words altogether and believe that the island is still whole. This is in keeping with the political project of the Greek Cypriot government for a reunification of the island and a return of refugees. In order that this project is not undermined, there can be no acceptance of permanent change or borders, name changes of places in the north, or depiction of the island as divided.

In contrast, the Turkish Cypriot tourist map shows a much thicker and more obvious green line separating the north and south of the island. Towns and villages in the north have been given Turkish names, with no indication of previous Greek names. In contrast, there is much less detail on the south of the map, with whole areas blank, but those that have been listed appear with their Greek name first and their Turkish name in brackets. This may be in recognition of the fact that many Turkish Cypriots in the north will have come from these villages and may have known them by their Greek names. As a minority population many Turkish Cypriots, especially those from mixed villages, spoke Greek (Ladbury 1977: 313). Salih, for example, always refers to his village by its Greek name of Vroisha, although on the campaign literature for its reinstatement he also used the Turkish name of Yagmuralan in brackets. The Turkish Cypriot map shows detail for the north of the island, with places of historic and natural interest pointed out. In the south, however, the only site referred to is that of Halsultan Turbesi, a famous Muslim site. The ancient ruins of Paphos, for example, are ignored. Once again these map-making strategies reflected the political agenda of the former Turkish Cypriot

government, which was until recently in favour of a permanent division of the island[5]. As a result, it was only necessary to show detail for the north, with sketchy information for the south as background information. The use of Greek names on the southern part of the Turkish Cypriot map may also support the political project for a divided island with a Turkish north and a Greek south. In addition, using the new Turkish names for places in the north without their Greek names is based on the assumption that they will remain under Turkish control.

The persistent depiction of the island on maps, flags, souvenirs, stamps, coins and political propaganda may point to a number of things. Firstly, it may simply be due to 'a greater emphasis on graphic imagery in societies affected by politicisation, democratisation, and consumer and cultural shifts that emphasise the visual' (Black 1997: 9). The ability to reproduce graphic images cheaply and easily facilitates their extensive use. However, it is also an indication of historic battles over the space itself. The use of the outline of the island on the country's first flag after independence from Britain may have been a declaration of the island's ability to stand alone as a country in its own right, without colonial control. Now, however, the continued use of the island's form by the Greek Cypriots may be a declaration that Cyprus should remain whole and therefore be returned to a politically unified state. Also, the presence of the map of Cyprus on souvenirs in Cypriot homes in London points to the continued presence of the island in the Cypriot refugee imagination. The island's physical form is emblematic of the spatial

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[5] The new president of the TRNC, Mehmet Ali Talat, is seen as more moderate than his predecessor, Rauf Denktash, and is open to the possibility of reunification of the island.

home and, as such, is a reminder of what was lost, as well as being integral to the identity of the islanders.

Emplacement strategies

If *dis*placement describes the process of separation from a place which has acquired meaning through daily practices, then *em*placement is the process by which that place is given meaning (Hammond 2004: 79). The elements of the spatial home examined above – the house, village and island – have all become loaded with meaning as a result of daily practices and rituals prior to exile. Emplacement strategies may include rites of passage such as naming ceremonies, used as 'social techniques for the inscription of locality onto bodies' (Appadurai 1996: 179); as well as the creation of graveyards and burial grounds as a way of literally placing the community into the land they inhabit. Birth and death rituals 'inscribe the landscape into the fabric of socialised meaning', while everyday practices such as house-building, cooking, farming and celebrating public holidays constitute the 'interworking of place, identity and practice in such a way as to generate a relationship of belonging between person and place' (Hammond 2004: 145, 9, 83). In Cyprus, christenings (for Greek Cypriots), circumcisions (for Turkish Cypriots), burials, weddings, cooking and village festivals all contributed to the creation of an intimate relationship between people and place. Being christened and married in the village church, the church that your parents or grandparents were also married in, is a gesture loaded with meaning about the continuity of place and community.

Emplacement is also about the mundane, about having insider local knowledge of the best shops, the coolest place to sit on a hot day or which neighbour makes the nicest pastries. On returning to Kyrenia for the first time in 30 years, Nick sought out a narrow passage near the harbour with a few steps leading to the sea. This spot epitomised the insider knowledge that had emplaced him in Kyrenia as a young boy:

> ...everybody who... is from Kyrenia and... grew up around that area there, he knows those steps because they are the only place you could sit in the summer time and... breathe fresh air in the heat... And that's exactly what I did. I said: 'Oh now I have to sit here and enjoy it. Now I know that I am in Kyrenia.'

The extensive spatial knowledge that the refugees possessed prior to exile was temporarily lacking when they first arrived in London. Maroulla found getting around London and shopping difficult: 'I didn't know how to use the trains, how to use the buses. I didn't know the language... I couldn't go to the shops.' Similarly, Stella found London difficult to negotiate: 'London was chaotic. It was scary. We lived opposite Tufnell Park station. It was a shock to my system. I was scared to go out in the night, the buses, the tube. We never had any of these back in Cyprus.' This sense of being unable to deal with the day-to-day negotiation of the city's spaces can be disorientating and disempowering for the newly arrived refugee, as Salih explained:

> Obviously it takes time to get used to a new system. For example, city life for me it was very strange and ... it was actually scary because everything was different. And I felt, for example, isolated and sometimes I felt lonely. Sometimes I felt that I wouldn't be able to succeed.

These descriptions highlight the importance of emplacement and the ways in which a lack of knowledge of the spatial home may disempower the refugee. However, far from the refugee being an unskilled and anonymous person, as

they are so often portrayed in the media and even NGO literature, it is the unfamiliar context that temporarily disempowers the refugee. The refugee does not lack the skills to carry out everyday tasks, but has not yet been emplaced in the new spatial home. It is also important to remember that not all refugees feel similarly disempowered or frightened by their new surroundings. Cemal told me that far from being scared he was 'absolutely fascinated' by London and was 'amazed by how big everything was'. 'You know it felt like you could travel for a week and never reach the end of London,' he enthused.

In exploring the ways in which migrants establish a feeling of being 'at home', Hage refers to the four building blocks of familiarity, security, community and a sense of possibility (Hage 1997: 102). Familiarity, he says, is the possession of maximal spatial knowledge and practical know-how (Hage 1997: 103). An example of how a lack of familiarity disempowers a newly arrived refugee comes from Stephen, who came to Britain when he was a child. Recalling his first day at school in London, he described the difficulties he had in finding his way back to his new home:

> I remember the first day I came back from school... I didn't know which house I lived in. They all looked the same. I know they've got numbers ... Now I know the difference between terraced houses in England. I have no problems with them now. But at the time, I remember the first day after school, me and my brother spent about 10 minutes looking for the house.

He tells the story in hindsight as an amusing anecdote about his child self. Now he appears to be very much a Londoner and is a teacher at a local school, with intimate knowledge of the capital's streets, houses and restaurants. As an adult he possesses the maximal spatial knowledge and

practical know-how. But at the time, the physical surroundings – the buildings, the streets, the uniformity of the houses, in contrast with the familiarity of his home town of Morphou and the distinctiveness of his family home, all served to reinforce his lack of emplacement. Even though he left Morphou as a child, he still recalls the town's layout:

> ...if you sort of picked me up and put me in my town, I could walk to school from whatever street you put me in. I could walk to my granny's house, my uncle's house, my house. Even though I was only nine at the time I'm fairly confident that I could go there.

By stating that he still possesses intimate spatial knowledge of his home town in Cyprus, he is identifying himself as an insider, someone who belongs to the town. Even though in reality the place may now have changed beyond recognition, Stephen feels that the lost spatial home has been preserved in his memory. Meanwhile, his transformation in London, from the refugee child with minimal spatial knowledge to the adult Londoner with maximal awareness, coincides with Massey's assertion that place changes us, 'not through some visceral belonging (some barely changing rootedness, as so many would have it) but through the practising of place... place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us' (Massey 2005: 154).

One positive way in which the spatial home in London has differed from that in Cyprus is that there has been no physical division of the two communities in exile. Even though they moved to slightly different areas as they prospered, with Greek Cypriots being the more economically successful, the spatial home of London has been one where the possibility of co-habitation has been kept alive. Although some community centres, cafés and shops only serve one of the communities, many attract loyal customers from

both, and those community centres with a left-wing management established prior to 1974 remain open to both communities. Of course, while there are no physical barriers between the two communities in London, there may still be psychological, cultural, social and political barriers which divide them. As Cockburn states, 'the Line lives, though in varying forms, wherever Cypriot communities have taken root' (Cockburn 2004: 40).

Home from home?

As well as being changed by new places, it is also the case that migrants and refugees change the places they move to, as Gardner illustrates in her study of Bengali elders in East London (Gardner 1999). She explains how the strategy of building mosques made Britain more Muslim and therefore more suitable for the community, making the immigration of women and children to the country more acceptable (Gardner 1999: 68). Castles and Davidson refer to place-making as a spatial extension of home building, which allows for the reshaping of neighbourhoods as a result of 'ethnic clustering', as houses, shops, markets and public spaces are acquired for the community (Castles and Davidson 2000: 131-2). Such changes have been enacted by Cypriot refugees – and by the Cypriot migrants that preceded them – on London.

The central London boroughs of Islington, Camden and Hackney were among the first to house a substantial Cypriot community, but it was further north that the imprinting of Cypriotness was most successful. The north London borough of Haringey was so closely linked to the Cypriot community that the Green Lanes area of the borough became known as 'little Cyprus'. 'Good old Haringey,' as my interviewee Stella called it. Now, even though

many Cypriots (especially Greek Cypriots) have moved further away from the city centre to boroughs such as Enfield, Barnet, Brent and Waltham Forest (Constantinides 1977: 278; Ladbury 1977: 306), the shops and cafés in Haringey still bear the marks of Cypriotisation. The area 'constitutes an ecological centre' of the Cypriot community where 'ethnic concentration and association are instrumental in perpetuating the ethnic category' (Anthias 2006: 182). Shops such as Yashar Halim's bakery on Green Lanes, community centres such as the Cypriot Community Centre on Earlham Grove, men-only cafés named after the villages of origin of their members, places of worship such as the St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church on Wightman Road, all indicate the successful emplacement strategies of Cypriots in London. This is not Cyprus and looks nothing like the lost home – the busy, urban streets of the capital and its brick buildings are a world away from the towns and villages of Cyprus. However, it has been made familiar through the establishment of Cypriot culture within the 'diaspora space' of London (Brah 1996: 209).

Eleni describes the feeling of encountering this familiarity in Wood Green and Southgate, which was a world away from the East London – and distinctly un-Cypriot – area of Wanstead where she lived:

> I remember my boyfriend... used to bring me to Wood Green... It was like going to the fair. I saw the Greek writing on the shops... in Greek characters and Greek letters and Greek words... And I remember the first time I came to London. I was staying with friends... in Southgate. ... And I remember waking up to Greek voices, people speaking in Greek outside my window... and I jumped out with such excitement because I thought I was in Cyprus.

The excitement Eleni feels at seeing Greek writing and hearing Greek speech is stimulated by the encounter with aspects of the lost home. For a brief

moment she could be in Cyprus, as she hears Greek voices outside the window, while the unfamiliar space of London becomes Cypriotised through the physical act of inscribing Greek words on the otherwise English buildings.

Home-building strategies, such as the establishment of recognisably Cypriot elements in the unhomely London landscape, may fulfil two purposes: Firstly, they may help the refugee build a relationship with the new place they are living in, so that meaning is gradually attributed to the once unfamiliar context. However, they may also be a way of keeping alive the lost home in exile. This can be seen in Palestinian refugee camps where the project of return has been sustained for generations and as a result the possibility of permanent resettlement has often been rejected. Streets, markets and neighbourhoods in refugee camps are named after lost Palestinian villages (Bisharat 1997: 214), so that camps become 'memory areas, where the permanence of the homeland is registered in everyday life' (Dorai 2002: 94). However, Hage believes that home-building in exile, which uses intimations of lost homelands as 'affective building blocks', is more about settlement than escape strategies, as people 'seek to foster the kind of homely feeling they know' in order to feel at home in the new context (Hage 1997: 104-105). He goes on to say:

> ... when people yearn for a communal life, their understanding of such a life is guided by the kind of communal feelings they remember having had in specific situations in the past. This is why this yearning for homely communality translates into an attempt to build the past conditions of its production. (Hage 1997: 105)

The recreation of a feeling of being 'at home' in a new context is often a difficult task and sometimes an impossible one. In her study of Tigrayan refugees returning to Ethiopia, Hammond examines the success of a

government organised 'return' which took refugees back to a different region of the country than the one they were forced to leave (Hammond 2004). Her investigation of the emplacement strategies of the 'returnees' observes how they transformed an anonymous space into a place imbued with meaning. She concludes that if home is not a geographic location but a concept, it can be reinvented – even if it takes generations – the crucial factor being community formation (Hammond 2004: 10-11, 215). But can the meaning of home ever be divorced entirely from the spatial? In the case of Cypriot refugees in London, while it is possible to argue that the anonymous spaces of London have been tamed and to a large extent the community has regrouped in exile, London has not been accepted as a replacement for the physical Cypriot home by many in my study.

Hammond may be right that, in the case of the Tigrayan refugees in her study, home may be functionally reinvented in a couple of generations when the physical home is relocated. However, the circumstances and length of exile may impact upon this possibility. The Palestinians are perhaps an extreme example of this, as the continued occupation of their land and ongoing oppression means that those living in refugee camps maintain a continued commitment to return to the physical home, while educating subsequent generations about their lost villages. This illustrates that the passing of time is no guarantee that home will be recreated in a new location. For many first generation Cypriot refugees, the acceptance of London as a replacement home may not be possible. For subsequent generations it may be easier, but political and cultural attitudes towards the lost physical home will influence the attitudes of the future and the sense of possibility perceived

in Britain. The following exchange with Nick illustrates how important the reasons for leaving Cyprus and staying in London can be in affecting attitudes towards home:

> Nick: Being a seaman I've been all over the world ... There is no place I haven't been... [But] I never found a place that I would say, 'Oh, here is a place I would stay'...
>
> HT: So London could never replace Kyrenia?
>
> Nick: No, no, no because... it isn't home... If you came here just to live it might have been a different thing but because we ... didn't choose – I didn't want to stay and live here... And now this happened and you are here. You are stuck. That's the thing a lot of people say. We come here to visit and we stay and now we are prisoners... Because it's not your choice and when your family's growing up, children go to school and then they go to higher school and then they go to university and then where is your life going to? It's going to the edge. You get the train of no return.

The physical metaphors used by Nick – of being in prison, going to the edge, on a train of no return – imply that he hasn't accepted London as a replacement home, because of the lack of choice behind his reasons for coming to the country. Far from London becoming a physical home, he seems to represent it as being spatially antagonistic. Ironically, however, he feels trapped here precisely because the family have become successfully emplaced. Nick's life is now intricately bound up with the spaces of London and his children know no other home. Nick has been functionally emplaced in London – because of his ability to work, educate his children, be an active member of community groups, buy Cypriot food and equip himself with local knowledge – and yet he just cannot accept it as home. So what exactly is missing? Is it the house he built at the start of his married life and lost a year later? Is it the village? Is it Cyprus itself? Or is it a more complicated recipe

that combines the spatial with other meaningful elements of home? One of the crucial factors that he points to is the lack of choice involved in London becoming his 'home'. This lack of choice differentiates forced migration from the movements of countless others across the globe.

Conclusion

In spite of its apparent solidity, the spatial home has proved to be a complex and slippery concept. Far from being fixed, easily locatable and quantifiable, it has shown itself to be constructed, in progress and sometimes on the move. For the Cypriot refugee, however, the idea of the spatial home remains profound. It is important to recognise that while the spatial home is in no sense fixed, the experience of exile may itself solidify the refugee's belief in the integrity of the home they have lost and their right to return to it. While Malkki and others are right to point out that there is no *natural* connection between any group of people and a particular place, it is necessary to recognise the intense relationship that is established over time between communities and the spaces they inhabit.

While the spatial home is indeed constructed, it is the process of construction that itself engenders a belief in connectedness and rightful belonging to a place. So the repetition of daily mundane practices and important rites of passage connects people to a place. The sense of being emplaced, of possessing maximum spatial knowledge of home, is an important element in establishing a sense of belonging. Similarly, the lack of emplacement explains the temporary disorientation and the sense of being de-skilled felt by many refugees on arriving in a new place.

Cypriot refugees have a complex relationship to the spatial homes they lost in Cyprus. Many were already living pluri-local lives before they became refugees, living away from the village for school or work for example, while others had the experience of living in enclaves, which severely curtailed their freedom of movement within the spatial home. The 'home' in question also varies depending on the refugee. For some it is the family house passed down through generations, while for others it is the newly built marital house or the house they lived in with their parents. The spatial Cypriot home is multi-faceted, comprising the house, the village and the island itself – with the house often being the most acutely missed. Attitudes to the lost home are also affected by experiences prior to exile, with the multiple forced migrations of Turkish Cypriots in some cases weakening the bond to the spatial home.

It is evident that the spatial home is not fixed and Cypriot refugees have a complex and fluctuating relationship to it. However, rather than this undermining the importance of home to the refugee, this examination of the spatial home has shown that home cannot be reduced to the purely physical but must rather be understood as the intersection of place, people, time and material elements of home. While Cypriot refugees mourn the loss of the physical house, it is not the financial value of the property but what it represents which is missed. In concentrating on questions of return or compensation for financial loss, many discussions about the 'refugee issue' in Cyprus fail to truly grasp the meaning of home for the Cypriot refugee. It is not the spatial home alone that was lost, but the place combined with the future potential, social networks, national projections of home and the relationship

with the land that existed at the particular moment of exile. This complexity

heightens rather than diminishes the sense of what it means to lose a home.

Chapter 4
Rhythms of life – the temporal home

'The Shadow past is shaped by everything that never happened. Invisible, it melts the present like rain through karst. A biography of longing... This is how one becomes undone by a smell, a word, a place...'
From *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels (1997: 17).

Introduction

Time is crucial to the meaning of home. As Douglas states, 'a home is not only a space, it also has some structure in time' and is defined by the regular rhythms of home life (Douglas 1991: 289). Our experience of home is marked by the human life cycle and its attendant events (such as birth, adolescence, old age and death), as well as the passing of calendar time, annual events and the seasons (which determine how we inhabit the spatial home and the food we eat). While we tend to think of time in linear terms – as the movement from past to present to future and the journey from childhood to old age – the temporal aspect of home is more likely to be cyclical, repetitive and sometimes chaotic. Daily routines, as well as birthdays, religious festivals and political commemorations introduce a circular rhythm into home life. Meanwhile, unexpected events such as war or illness destabilise the linear trajectory of our lives. It is also the case that while past, present and future are often perceived as discrete, they can never be neatly separated and each continually inform and change our perceptions of the others.

Recurring events such as the days of the week and seasons continually bring the past into the present and allow us to anticipate the future. Through repetition, home becomes defined by these events and their accumulated meaning, just as the house and other residential buildings act as

containers for these temporal evocations of home. However, as Rapport and Dawson remind us, conferring upon home the capacity for memory and anticipation doesn't recognise the fluidity and movement of our lives (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 7). Therefore, the idea of a unitary physical home that acts as an ongoing repository of the memory, experience and anticipation of home seems less and less likely. As a result of this mobility, most of us experience a mixture of yearning, nostalgia and sadness at the loss of past homes, or satisfaction at our escape from unhappy or problematic homes. We also dream of future homes that may or may not ever materialise, at the same time as being embedded in the experience of our current homes. The refugee, however, may encounter all these emotions writ large, as the usual fluid relationship between past, present and future has been disrupted by the forced displacement from home. The refugee has been removed from the frames of memory provided by the lost home, while the present is often precarious (especially for the recently exiled) and the future, although sometimes filled with dreams of return, can be typified by uncertainty.

In his longitudinal study of Greek Cypriot refugees internally displaced in Cyprus, Zetter describes a 'triangular set of relationships [which] express the continuity between the past and the future, mediated by the present' (Zetter 1998: 301). This continuity, he believes, has been fragmented for the refugee who has been 'cut off from the physical and symbolic representation of the past – their homes, land, villages and sense of place' (Zetter 1998: 301). Similarly, Downing talks of the way in which people ordinarily 'navigate a space-time continuum in which they chart their positions within socially constructed time, socially constructed space and among socially constructed

personages' (Downing 1996: 36). Displaced people, however, experience 'an unexpected destabilisation of routines' which forces them to 're-examine their primary cultural questions' such as 'where are we?' and 'who are we?' (Downing 1996: 36). The forced removal of the refugee from the socially-constructed time, space and people that constitute the lost home may, therefore, challenge their understanding of their place in the world. In his study of Jewish refugees in Bolivia, Spitzer concludes that our identity is a synthesis between the present and 'the recollection of past experiences', as well as 'one's idea *in the present* of the nature and promise of a *future*' (Spitzer 1994: 173). Due to the forced removal from the past and the uncertainty of the present and future, the meaning of home comes into question and the refugee's sense of who they are and where they come from may be on shaky ground.

However, there is a danger in characterising the refugee as someone who is pathologically unable to function in exile in the present when removed from their lost home and their past. Recognising this, Sørensen criticises what she terms the genre of 'relocation studies' within the field of psycho-social theory, which is preoccupied with the psychological dimension of displacement and sees the present as characterised by 'a lack of coherence', while the displaced person is 'a kind of social non-being' whose 'sense of integrity' is threatened by the 'encounter with the unfamiliar' (Sørensen 1997: 145). In such an analysis the displaced person risks being seen as 'pathological in a space in-between' if they are unable to reconstitute home by settling in a new place (Sørensen 1997: 145). Therefore, when looking at the temporal home and its importance for the refugee there is a danger of

becoming overly concerned with the past (the time when the idealised home was lost), or the future (the time when the idealised home will be regained), while ignoring a present when the refugee may very well be displaying great resilience or satisfaction with their new situation, albeit initially undesired. It is also all too easy to fall into the trap of conflating the move from 'past' to 'present' to 'future' with the move from 'home country' to 'host country' to 'home country' when looking at refugees' experience of the temporal home. This linear, temporal inevitability belies the often complex journeys refugees make through time and space, backwards and forwards between countries, often keeping alive the past, while living very much in the present and exploring future possibilities.

Presenting the past

In much refugee-based research, the present is seen as a liminal state between the idealised lost home in the past and the longed-for return to that home in the future (although attitudes to return of course depend on the reasons for flight). One example is in Eastmond's study of Chilean refugees where she states that: 'The past and the future are the important reference points. The future seems to extend directly from the past, with the present as a temporary anomaly, a suspended existence' (Eastmond 1997: 12). Life in the present in exile may be seen as meaningless, even though it is more real than the past or the future. It is also problematic to only think of the past in terms of the refugee's life in the home country prior to exile. Refugees who have lived in protracted exile, like those in this study, have accumulated many years of history in the host country. Indeed many of those I spoke to have

spent a far greater portion of their life in England than in Cyprus. As a result, their present location is the setting for the accumulated past events of life in London during three or four decades. As Tonkin states, the past is used to distinguish 'now' from 'then' but there are many 'thens' (Tonkin 1992: 9).

For Cypriot refugees the powerful 'then' of the lost home, which is also characterised by being 'back there', is joined by the many 'thens' of going to school in London, of getting married, having children, moving from one house to another and changing careers. As Kasim told me: 'I came [to England] as a teenager. I've been here now for 34 years... first job, first house, education, friends are all here now. And family, children born here, grew up here.' History or the past can, according to Freeman, be seen as 'the trail of past events or "past presents" that have culminated in now' (Freeman 1993: 47). The present may be this year, this month, this week, today or even the very moment we are living in. The past, therefore, includes everything leading up to this moment and the future is everything that will come after.

It is also important to remember that 'back home' has not been frozen in time simply because the refugee is absent from it. This can be difficult to grasp in the context of Cyprus where, as Killoran explains, the idea of 'time, space and history being frozen at the border between the north and the south is a ubiquitous image' (Killoran 2000: 130). The lost houses and villages of my Cypriot interviewees do not only exist in the past, simply because their memories of them are mainly pre-exile. Apart from the few cases where villages were totally destroyed during the conflict (as was the case with Salih and Kasim's village Vroisha), most Cypriot towns and villages continue to have a life in the present. They may have new names (Agios Sergios in the

north is now Yenibogazçi, for example) and many have changed immeasurably, with extensive building especially in the towns of the south, the mass migration of Turkish 'settlers' to the north and the more recent arrival of migrant workers in the south, all of which proves that these locations continue to have a life in the present.

I was caught out myself by this slippage between past and present, when I asked interviewees to show me the location of their village. Without thinking, I oscillated between the past tense question of 'can you show me where your village *was*?' to the present tense, 'show me where your village *is*'. Most of my interviewees either didn't notice or were too polite to comment, but Emine corrected me when I asked her where her village *was*. 'Where my village *is*,' she replied firmly, her reply showing that for her the lost village is very much alive in the present. This insistence was made all the more poignant because the return journey she has made to her home since the border opened revealed a place almost totally absent of any of the buildings and other features she remembers from the past.

For refugees who are newly arrived in a host country and are trying to pursue their claims for asylum while surviving on a day-to-day basis, the concerns of the present, such as the need to find somewhere to live and gain permission to stay in the country, are paramount and for a while may obliterate consideration of the past and future. However, for those refugees living in protracted exile, like those in this study, whose immediate needs for leave to remain, housing and employment have been met, the symbolic importance of the past and the future seem to paradoxically increase as exile continues, at the same time as life in the host country becomes more

predictable and mundane or, in other words, more 'homely'. Agosin, who was exiled from Chile, believes that 'being cut off from [her] past made [her] more intensely aware of [her] memories' (Agosin 1994: 142). While Lebanese exile Habib states that the importance of her lost home increased as it became more internalised and less located in the external world. 'Nostalgia grew with time, as the idealised home was less and less able to provide stability and order,' she says (Habib 1996: 96-7). For the refugee living in protracted exile it appears possible that the longer exile continues and the more distant from the past the present appears to be, the likelihood of mythologising the lost home increases.

Snapshots of past experience

The narratives of life in London collected for this study were much more perfunctory than those of war, flight and recent return journeys to Cyprus. Dimitris, who is expansive about his village, the war and the political campaign for return, sums up his life in London succinctly and with a touch of irony: 'I came to England and we got married eventually and... got into the [restaurant] business and we stayed there... So we had two kids and we lived happy ever after.' There could be a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the refugees in this study have been in protracted exile for decades. If they had recently arrived and were preoccupied with the difficulties of gaining permission to stay in the country, or finding housing or employment, then the trials of the present may have been uppermost in their mind. However, after initial difficulties, for most in this study life in London has been fairly 'normal'. Jobs have been acquired, houses bought, gardens planted, children born and

educated. In short, life has gone on. As my interviewee Alpay says, 'over the years you make a life and a living'. In contrast, for many of them by far the greatest drama of their lives was provided by war or inter-communal violence (which for some included the death or disappearance of loved ones), the forced removal from their home (for some more than once) and the difficulties of starting again in a new country. In addition, the fact that their lost homes remained off limits for decades was like an open wound that kept alive the desire for restitution and the dream of return for many.

It is no wonder, therefore, that in the context of an in-depth interview, the most compelling stories (to narrate and to listen to) are those of the difficulties of war and exile, as well as their necessary counterpoint – the tales of idyllic life before 'paradise' was disrupted. Stephen confirms this by telling me, when 'you think of past experience, you sort of think of snapshots and it's always the very good and the very bad you remember'. Similarly, first return journeys back home were related in detail because they were recent events (at the time of the interviews) as well as being the culmination of decades of longing. For some they were deeply distressing, for others a glimpse of the possibility of return and for a few simply the satisfaction of their curiosity. The fact that the refugees in this study remember the war and their flight from Cyprus in such detail may be partly because of the deep and lasting impact it has made on their lives, as well as a commitment not to forget the crimes of the past. Indeed, for some Cypriots remembering has become an explicit political project. Maroulla refers to the Agios Amvrosios village committee as 'something to help us not forget our village... and keep the flame alive'.

Similarly, the relatives of those who went missing in Cyprus try to ensure that their family remain on the political agenda.

By far the most coherent, lengthy and detailed narrative episodes in the interviews in this study were flight stories and accounts of return journeys. Many of my interviewees, who were vague about many things (including a number of the men forgetting which year they got married), could remember the date and the hour that key events happened during their flight. Behiye, whose interview was one of the least detailed, told me that she fled her home on 21 December 1963. 'I can still remember it now,' she told me. 'I can never forget.' Meanwhile, in his account of the Turkish military intervention of 1974, Nick recalls that the planes came over Kyrenia at 4.30am. These episodes are remembered in detail because they were truly life changing, but also because the narratives will have been retold many times over the years. As a result, they will bear the marks of other villagers' accounts of flight. The recollection of private memories is often done in a social context so that shared versions of events are built on and exchanged (Engel 1999: 41-42; 87). As Chamberlain reminds us: 'The memories of others, and about others... enter into our own memories; memories are both inherited and transmitted' (Chamberlain 2000: 156). This does not make personal memories untrustworthy but rather signifies the merging of personal memory with collective memory where important social events are concerned, so that it becomes difficult to discern where one's own memories start and others' memories end. This is especially true for those who were very young at the time of the events in question who have, therefore, inherited memories of the lost home from their family.

Generations of exile

While all those in this study were first generation refugees to the extent that they personally left Cyprus for the UK, the age at which they did so varied from two to 45 years old. As Loizos has pointed out, the place of birth may have less impact on the experiences of exile than the stage in the life cycle the refugee was at when they became displaced (Loizos 2007). Referring to his own research with Greek Cypriot refugees, he asks whether 'the fact that they were all displaced in the same month of 1974 means that they are usefully aggregated into the phrase "first generation refugees"...' when in fact 'the impact of displacement, their life-course "situated" perceptions of displacement, and thus their internalised experiences, differed' (Loizos 2007: 204-5). The refugees in this study who left Cyprus as young children can be expected to have different recollections of the war and the first years of exile than those who were already married, had children of their own and maybe elderly parents to care for. Becoming a refugee has a very different meaning for a small child than for an adult who has to worry about the safety of the family, the journey to another country and all the subsequent difficulties of exile.

Adaptation to the new home in exile also varies depending on the age at which someone becomes exiled. According to Downing, children adapt more quickly because they have more basic 'spatial temporal orders' based on simple activities such as playing, eating and resting, in places such as the home, the neighbour's house or in the street (Downing 1996: 46). As a result they are 'more resilient to relocation' and less bound by the 'learned social geometries of adults' (Downing 1996: 46). Panos agreed, telling me that exile

'was more of a shock for my parents. It is easier for young people to adapt'.
Cemal confirmed this, saying that his parents have never fully recovered from
the experience of becoming refugees, but for him and his siblings the
transition was much smoother: 'The children, we adapted very quickly. We
adapted to poverty, we adapted to everything. We just took everything in our
stride. But I remember my mother crying constantly and my father drinking – a
lot.' It is also the case that, once immersed in the school structure in exile,
children have a better chance of learning the language of the host country
and the peculiarities of the host culture from their peers. However, as a result,
migration can exaggerate the generation gap (Bottomley 1992: 134), as the
identities of the young are more easily hybridised.

Second and third generation refugees inhabit a different temporal
home from the first generation, as they try to 'manage memories and
perceptions' inherited from their parents of the lost home that they 'know' in
intimate detail yet have often never seen (Loizos 1999: 259). Hirsch uses the
term 'postmemory' to refer to the memories that the children of exiles and
survivors inherit from their parents, at a 'temporal and spatial remove' from
'that decimated world' (Hirsch 1996: 662; Hirsch and Spitzer 2003: 81).
Developing the theory to respond to the lasting effects of the Holocaust, she
says that 'postmemory characterises the experience of those who grow up
dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories
are displaced by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic
events that can be neither fully understood nor re-created' (Hirsch 1996: 662).
While the experiences of Cypriot refugees are vastly different from those of
Holocaust survivors, Hirsch believes that postmemory may apply to the

second-generation memory of other collective experiences (Hirsch 1996: 662). I found an example of this at the annual Greek Cypriot rally in London to protest against the Turkish military action of 1974, where I observed a young Greek Cypriot carrying a banner bearing the words 'Morphou – we shall not forget'. The man carrying the banner is not old enough to have been a refugee himself and will have no personal memory of the town. Yet the banner suggests that the narratives of loss from his family have permeated his own consciousness to such an extent that he now demonstrates his own inability to forget that which he did not experience. At the same time, the banner talks of a political commitment to campaign in the future to right the injustices of the past done to the family.

A young Greek Cypriot carries a placard about the loss of Morphou in the north of Cyprus, at a London demonstration in July 2004, 30 years after the town was taken.
(Photo: Helen Taylor)

Subsequent generations of refugees may feel a kind of nostalgia for a place they have not even been to. Hirsch talks of her parents' home as 'an imaginary city', referring to the 'elegiac aura of the memory of a place to which one cannot return' (Hirsch 1996: 664). In some cases, this feeling of nostalgia is specifically encouraged as a political project in order to keep alive the memory of the lost home and retain temporal continuity with the past. In highly-charged political situations, such as in Palestine/Israel, there is a greater importance in keeping alive the 'memory' of past injustices. For example, Loizos states there is a political purpose in 'perpetuating knowledge of trauma' in Israel because it encourages subsequent generations to fight and reminds the rest of the world of its inability to prevent the Holocaust (Loizos 2007: 196). In Palestinian refugee camps, meanwhile, work with young people focuses on 'adopting the faculty of nostalgia in relation to the *idea* of Palestine' in order to 'generate the memory of a loss that was not suffered directly' (Allan 2005: 53), so that political commitment to return continues. Although it remains an open wound for many refugees, the situation in Cyprus is nowhere near as volatile, mainly because the partition of the island did at least end the violence. In addition, refugees now living in Britain are at a physical remove from the daily reminders of the ongoing division of the island. However, it is still the case that feelings run high and there is political capital in the transmission of memory from one generation to the next.

Although leaving Cyprus when he was just a child himself, Stephen is now trying to pass on his memories to his daughter, who was four years old at the time of our interview. 'If you ask her where she's from, she says Morphou,'

Stephen told me. 'She was never born there, she's never been there but... she's from Morphou. Even though she's only half [from the village] because my wife is from another village... She can understand... they took our house but we gonna get it back one day.' Stephen's transmission of his memories of the lost village to his daughter is part of a political project that keeps alive his commitment to regain the house. He wants his daughter to be aware of her connection to the village and her right to return there should the political impasse continue.

While postmemory refers to the mediated memory of second generation refugees, it might also be relevant when looking at those who experience war or displacement as young children and supplement their own memories with those of their family and community. Someone who becomes a refugee as a very young child is in the strange position of being a witness who remembers nothing, an exile who does not know what the lost home looks like. This is seen in Bülent's account of his family's flight in 1963, which happened when he was just two years old. He has no personal memory of the conflict but has heard about the events from his cousins so knows 'bits of what happened but... it's obviously not an eyewitness account'. He refers to his inherited memory when he tells me: 'The '74 war I have a little bit more memory of, first hand memory from speaking to my cousins that is.' His understanding of what happened prior to exile is derived from the stories he has been told by his family and others, as well as via public narratives. The reasons given for his family's flight are general: 'lots of the Turkish villages were abandoned... People got scared and kind of left their villages and went and lived in almost like ghettos'. But the 'memory' he has of the lost home is

enough for him to have strong opinions about the treatment of Turkish Cypriots during the inter-communal violence.

Although Bülent didn't experience this discrimination himself, he has inherited memories of it and recognises it as the reason he became a refugee. He feels that the experience and the sense of injustice that comes with it belong to him. Bülent's parents told him very little about the war or their lost home, which he thinks is partly down to their difficult experiences and partly because 'they tend to be quite cold and not very forthcoming'. He is not at all sentimental about the physical building of the lost home or his father's village. 'My dad kept saying about how nice the village was... When you go there though, I mean the surroundings are nice, but as the village goes, it's just dreadful really.' This lack of sentimentality is probably a result of both Bülent's age at the time of flight, as well as his parents' inability to talk about the past.

At the other end of the continuum from very young refugees, are the very old. Due to the time that has elapsed since the conflict in Cyprus nobody who was in later life when they became a refugee is included in this study, yet those who came to the UK in middle age are now approaching old age. The protracted nature of exile from Cyprus has a particular poignancy for them, as the possibility of return in their lifetime looks less and less likely. Older refugees also have an important position in the community. They are often seen as 'the living source of communal identity' because of their memories of the lost home and as a result their deaths are seen as the loss of a link with the past (Hirschon 1998: 207). The death of refugees in exile can be a cause of sorrow for the community at large, rather than simply the immediate family, as Hirschon found in her study of Asia Minor refugees. The same can be said

of Cypriots exiled in London who see the death of older refugees as a further

distancing from the possibility of return. With many of those who became

refugees as adults now dying, keeping alive the lost home is left to the

imperfect and inherited memories of those who arrived in London as children.

Nostalgia and the burden of the past

The concept of nostalgia is often invoked in discussions of the relationship

between the refugee and the lost home. The word itself comes from the Greek

nostos – meaning return home – and *algia* – meaning a painful feeling (Hirsch

and Spitzer 2003: 82; Hollander 1991: 33). Nostalgia is now more commonly

used to refer to a bittersweet longing for the past, rather than the pain or

sickness that such longing causes. However, in the context of forced

migration both meanings are relevant, as the refugee usually remembers both

positive aspects of the past at the same time as recalling the harm done to

them that led to their flight (Hirsch and Spitzer 2003: 84).

In this study, in spite of painful memories, there remained a strong

commitment from many interviewees to the idea that the lost home was an

idyllic place of beauty, productivity and communality, in other words, the

epitome of homeliness. This image can never provide the whole truth, as

Cemal admits when he says that he misses the freedom of the life he had in

Cyprus as a child, but 'in an idealistic way... My image of Cyprus is not a real

one'. We all feel a sense of nostalgia for aspects of the past – a particular

place, person or period of our lives that fulfilled certain desires or needs. Yet,

for the refugee, nostalgia may become a preoccupation because of the way in

which loss and dislocation occurred. Loizos refers to the way that the Greek

Cypriot refugees he encountered would 'talk with great feeling about the superiority of their village' and be 'constantly reminding each other of the old life' and 'what they would have been doing at home' (Loizos 1981: 129-131). In this way, nostalgia serves a purpose in exile by allowing the refugee to recall the lost home and, therefore, keep it alive. Stewart believes that by 'positing a "once was" in relation to a "now" [nostalgia] creates a frame for meaning... By resurrecting time and place, and a subject in time and place, it shatters the surface of an atemporal order' (Stewart 1992: 252). Of course, the home that is recalled from the perspective of the present is not the home as it was but the aspects of home that have been chosen as worthy of remembering. As Graham and Khosravi state: 'Nostalgia is never only about 'the past' as it was. The past is actively created in the attempt to remember it. There is no unmediated link through memory to past states and events' (Graham & Khosravi 1997: 128). The past, therefore, is used to serve the needs of the present.

Some memories, however, are not those of the idyllic past, but those of the conflict that led to flight. For Greek Cypriots traumatic memories are generally confined to the war and its immediate aftermath. The fact that the flight and the resulting pain were caused by an outside force – the 'Turks' – means that the positive memory of an idyllic home can remain intact, while the invasion of the Other into that paradise can be seen as an aberration. For Turkish Cypriots it appears to be more difficult to separate out the traumatic from the positive because the danger and violence were more prolonged, came from Greek Cypriot extremists within their own country and in many cases overshadow happy memories of home. When I asked Alpay to tell me

about his memories of his village, he kept returning to memories of violence and marginalisation. The village 'was surrounded by Greeks in 1963... and all the walls were written with the words EOKA', he told me. Even when he is able to recall 'memories of the village which I miss very much', he quickly reminds me (and perhaps himself) that 'security was always a top priority'. Memories of home for Alpay have little to do with nostalgia and more to do with a painful or fearful remembering. He makes a telling comment when he says to me, 'the village, the memory is not safe', as if even allowing himself the luxury of nostalgia about the positive aspects of the past may be dangerous. Of course, it is important to bear in mind that the choice of what to remember and what to forget is a political as well as an emotional act (Cosslett et al. 2000: 5), and will be governed by the political opinions of the refugee in the present, as well as by official discourse.

Of the Turkish Cypriots in the study, Salih is the one with the most positive memories of Cyprus and is the only one who is engaged in an active political campaign for return to his village. Salih's account of his lost home seems almost filmic, as he describes a 'very green village... surrounded by tens of thousands of pine trees... a beautiful place... with its natural streams'. He has bad memories of how the villagers had to flee, the village was burnt to the ground so they would not return and the hardship they faced, yet the overriding impression from his narrative is one of yearning for a natural and happy life in a beautiful and abundant village. If it is the case that memory 'is more often a way of dealing with present and future needs then a mere testimony to the past' (Wood 1992: 148), then Salih's presentation of largely positive memories of home could be explained by his desire for the village to

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be rebuilt and the villagers to return. Just as the majority of Greek Cypriot refugees seem to concentrate on peaceful co-existence because it supports their project for reunification and return, so Salih concentrates on good memories because they reinforce his present wishes.

While many choose what to forget for political reasons, Dimitris found he had no such control over his memory when he suffered from amnesia as a result of injuries sustained when his fiancée's flat in Famagusta was bombed as he fled Cyprus. However, his medical condition also mirrors his troubled relationship with the past. He has no memory of the three weeks after the bombing and he can't remember being cared for by an acquaintance in Limassol. More recently he started 'finding things which I am missing from my memory'. At a recent school reunion not only was he unable to recognise his former best friend, but didn't remember ever knowing him. 'This is all part of losing my memory after the bomb... After so many years of finding... stories you... never knew happened... The truth of the matter is that some of the people, I don't even remember.' While this is clearly a result of Dimitris's amnesia, it mirrors the twin fears of many refugees when contemplating return – that of not being recognised and of failing to recognise others (Eastmond 1993: 51; Eastmond 1997: 154; Muggeridge & Dona 2006: 420). Whether Dimitris fails to remember people he once knew because of his amnesia or because of how they have changed during his prolonged exile, the experience troubles him because it points to a lack of connection with the home he once knew intimately. Peter also refers to his fear of going back to his village to find previous inhabitants gone: 'You go to certain neighbourhoods and you feel all of a sudden that door is going to open and a certain person will greet you, but

that will never happen'. Once the refugee is no longer recognised and fails to recognise others 'back home', their sense of belonging to that place becomes even more tenuous. While their memory has preserved the lost home as it was, peopled by the inhabitants of the past, in reality the refugee may not be recognised by anyone and may not recognise their home.

The inventory of the past

The imposing presence of the events of the past explain why the present is often neglected in favour of the past and future – by refugees and researchers. However, not only is the present home the lived experience of daily life, it is also the perspective from which recollections of the past and projections of the future take place. According to Warner: 'The past is "remembered" as part of a creative process in the present... [as] part of a vision of what we want the past and present to represent' (Warner 1994: 171). Therefore, memories may tell us as much about the present as they do about what actually happened in the lost home. Memory deals with the needs of the present by organising fragments of experience into frames of relevance (King 2000: 33; Stanley 1992: 128; Wood 1992: 148). In a study of Jewish refugees in Bolivia, Spitzer explored how memory was used 'to connect [the] present to a particular version of the past' as a 'creative tool of adjustment' (Spitzer 1994: 167). This entailed the recall of a particular version of European bourgeois culture which focused on coffee shops, theatre and music and not the horrors of Nazism, enabling the refugees to feel 'at home' in the context of exile (Spitzer 1994: 169).

When considering refugees' attitudes to the present, it is also important not to assume that drawing from the inventory of the past necessarily implies a lack of engagement with everyday life in the new context. According to Hage, nostalgic feelings can be mobilised to 'guide home-building in the present' as 'people seek to foster the kind of homely feeling they know' as they 'attempt to build the past conditions of its production' (Hage 1997: 105). Rather than a form of homesickness, which is seen as a 'refusal to engage with the present, and a seeking of an imaginary homely past as a hiding place from present time and space', he sees nostalgia as a 'memory of a past experience imagined from the standpoint of the present to be homely' (Hage 1997: 104-5). This applies to the eating of home food (which is discussed in detail in chapter five), as well as the mobilisation of cultural activity and the observance of religious, cultural and seasonal festivals. According to Downing, the fact that the loss of the socio-temporal order brought about by exile 'may render social life chaotic, unpredictable and meaningless' means that there is often a need to re-establish the ordinary activities of daily life as soon as possible (Downing 1996: 41-42).

For the refugee, therefore, drawing on the cultural resources of the past is not necessarily a backward-looking strategy, but may be a way of coping with the present. The continued observance of religious and other cultural festivals which existed 'back home', for example, marks the passing of time for refugees, as well as offering a connection with the past (Downing 1996: 37; Hirschon 1998: 196). Many of those I interviewed took part in regular activities, such as annual dances, political demonstrations and religious events, which bring together members of the community. The Agios

Amvrosios dinner dance, for example, serves a number of cultural and political purposes. Firstly, the event reunites members of the village who are able to share food, music and dance in the same way they would have done in Cyprus. Secondly, it transmits Cypriot and village culture to the second and third generation. Finally, the event is part of the village committee's ongoing political campaign for the village to be returned to them.

Ritual and memorial

During our interview Maroulla showed me a video of the Agios Amvrosios dinner dance, which included 12 girls walking into the centre of the hall in candlelight holding pictures of the villagers who went missing during the war, while a recording of the church bells of Agios Amvrosios was played and the names of the missing read out. Just as state-sanctioned memorials and days of remembrance construct collective memory, public rituals such as this village ceremony 'merge individual sorrow or joy with communally prescribed forms of observance' (Hartman 1994: 16). This highly ritualised episode recognises the personal pain and loss of the relatives of the missing, at the same time as connecting the missing to the wider political issue of justice for their families and return to the village of all refugees. It also connects second and third generation children to fellow villagers, who were victims of the violence which led to the expulsion of all villagers from their home, by including them bodily in the ceremony. The ringing of the bells is an audible evocation of the past, a reminder of the sounds of the lost home, while the photographs have the unmistakable and incongruous look of family snaps

from another decade, which have taken on an iconographic role as the distilled representation of a missing person.

Referring to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, Hirsch describes the poignant use of family photographs which serve a number of purposes. Firstly, the 'utter conventionality' of the pictures 'makes it impossible for us to comprehend how the person in the picture was exterminated', while the pictures also 'provide a... narrative about the Jewish world lost in the Holocaust' (Hirsch 1996: 668). In addition, the conventionality of the photos allows identification by those not connected to the event, so that they 'expand the postmemorial circle' (Hirsch 1996: 668). The use of family photographs of the missing by both families and by the state in Cyprus points to the power of these images in creating memorials, as well as encouraging political action. The wall of snapshots of the Greek Cypriot missing, placed next to the observation point in Ledra Street[1] in south Nicosia, served as a reminder to all those looking north that these faces from the past were victims of the violence that occurred 'over there'. However, unlike the personal photos that are carried by relatives, these domestic pictures have been reframed by the government, so that alongside the private meaning they have to their families, they now carry a public and political message. As well as bearing witness to those that suffered during the war, such photographs are also a reminder of the impossibility of returning to the past.

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[1] A new border crossing was opened here in 2008 and the observation point removed.

When I visited Maria Elia from the Greek Cypriot Committee for the Relatives of the Missing at her home in London, a large photo of her missing brother was on the wall. She told me: 'I look at photos of me at 21 with him – to me he is always that age. I look at myself and I have aged.' The disjuncture between family members frozen in the past and the physical evidence that life has moved on for those who survived is a particularly difficult reminder of the passing of time, which mirrors the refugee's perception that their home has been frozen in the past while they have moved on elsewhere. The usual pain of bereavement is magnified for relatives of the missing who have no

resolution for their grief. Maria Elia's mother died recently, still believing that her son was alive, saving money from her pension each week to give to him when he returned. For Maroulla, whose brother is also missing, the repetition of the ritual at the dinner dance must be both a painful reminder that her brother was lost during the war, as well as a reaffirmation of her political resolve to find out what happened to him.

The ceremonial and collective engagement with the past can also be seen through the regular commemoration of political and religious anniversaries by Cypriots in the UK. Most Greek Cypriots in London observe the major festivals of the Greek Orthodox calendar, even if their church-going is erratic at other times. Political commemorations for the two communities in London mirror the political anniversaries marked in Cyprus on the two sides of the island and give the refugees agency by making them feel they are doing something practical to end their exile, as well as allowing them a public space in which to remember their lost homes. Papadakis and others have written extensively about the ways in which the island's two communities have chosen which events from the past to memorialise, in order to best support the political projects of the present (Calotychos 1998: 10; Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis 2000; Papadakis 1993).[2] As a result, the official narratives of the two communities have mirroring yet opposing directives regarding how the past is kept alive in the present. The desire of Greek Cypriot refugees to return to their homes and the commitment not to forget the Turkish occupation

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[2] Greek Cypriots generally focus on the struggle for independence from the British between 1955 and 1960, and the betrayal of the Greek junta and the Turkish 'invasion' in 1974. The violence against Turkish Cypriots that took place between 1960 and 1974 is largely ignored, so the belief in peaceful co-existence can be sustained. Meanwhile, Turkish Cypriots commemorate the killing of 1963 and 1967, and celebrate the Turkish 'peace operation' of 1974, to 'prove' that the two communities cannot live together (Papadakis 1993: 141-144).

are expressed in the slogan *then xehno* (I don't forget), while the Turkish Cypriot slogan *unutmayacagiz* (we won't forget) refers to the martyrs and heroes killed during the intercommunal violence (Papadakis 1993: 143).

Children from the two communities are 'socialised in these two antagonistic histories' through the education system, history books and their families in Cyprus (Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis 2000: 170), and while young Cypriots in London do not absorb these stories through the state education system, they are still powerfully present in community schools, as well as political, family and community narratives. These two 'histories' are played out in the annual political demonstrations held by Cypriots in London. While small numbers of left-wing Cypriots from both communities reject these master narratives through events such as bi-communal peace initiatives, the most visible political demonstrations reproduce them.

Most of the fieldwork for this study took place in 2004, coinciding with the thirtieth anniversary of the 1974 Greek coup and Turkish military intervention. As a result, Greek Cypriots in London organised many political meetings, talks and rallies, the largest being the annual march and rally in Trafalgar Square around the time of the anniversary of Turkey's military intervention of 20 July. The attendance of Greek Cypriot refugees at annual events marking the division of the island is multi-faceted. Firstly, it is a way of showing an ongoing commitment to the lost home in public. The names of lost villages, towns and regions in the north are chanted during the demonstration as a way of illustrating that they have been remembered. Similarly, the exiled

muhtars[3] (mayors) of Kyrenia, Famagusta and Morphou were all present at the rally. The continued use of their title of office 30 years on is an indication of the refusal to accept that these towns or villages are permanently lost. The mayors, like the villagers themselves, must be seen to be ready to return and resume their positions of responsibility. Regardless of the stability of their lives in the UK, these refugees continue to mourn publicly their lost homes.

Greek Cypriots demonstrate in London in July 2004, on the thirtieth anniversary of the Turkish 'invasion'.
(Photo: Helen Taylor)

The metaphor of memorialisation – not simply for those who died during the war but also for the land itself and the lost villages – is visually

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[3] The use of the word *muhtar* by both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is an example of the ways in which the island has been influenced by diverse cultures. The word, which is Arabic in origin and is also found in Turkish, is still used by both Cypriot communities.

displayed through the carrying of a wreath spelling out the word Cyprus, the wearing of black and the depiction of the map of Cyprus with the top half bleeding, as if the country itself has been wounded. Secondly, as Papadakis points out: 'Discourses of the past do not just describe the past. They also implicitly express each side's view of the desirable future' (Papadakis 1993: 144). The use of the slogan 'we will return' is a commitment from the perspective of the present, to return to the homes of the past, at some point in the future. It is a slogan filled with hope, due to its positive nature, which is at the same time hopeless, because the past can never be regained.

Turkish Cypriot demonstrations at the time of the anniversary were small in comparison to those organised by the Greek Cypriots. Those that did attend appeared to have a nationalist agenda and the range of the political spectrum represented at the Greek Cypriot events was not in evidence.

A small Turkish Cypriot demonstration outside the Turkish embassy in London, marking the thirtieth anniversary of the Turkish 'peace operation'. *(Photo: Helen Taylor)*

The most likely reason for this is that there is no coherent political project for the majority of Turkish Cypriots to organise around. The fact that there are estimated to be more Turkish Cypriots in London than in Cyprus (Mehmet Ali 2001: 16, 94) may also mean that Turkish Cypriot identity is more diffused. The Turkish Cypriot left has been largely marginalised and those who are active take part in small bi-communal peace demonstrations or stay away from political activities perceived to be nationalistic. Clearly many support the status quo – a separate state for Turkish Cypriots – either because of their own experiences of inter-communal fighting or because of their acceptance of the dominant state narrative. While many were excited at the time of the Annan Plan that change might bring an end to the economic embargo on the north, there is still a general unease about a united Cyprus. While individual refugees talk about a desire to return, the active discouragement of this project by the Turkish Cypriot state and a fear about future violence in a united island means that Turkish Cypriots in London have been much less politically organised than their Greek Cypriot counterparts.

Return – myth, project or dream?

When the future is discussed in reference to exile it is often assumed that it will herald the return to the lost home. Return has traditionally been seen as an end to the refugee 'cycle'[4] and repatriation is presented by the United Nations as its preferred 'durable solution' to the problem of forced migration.[5]

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[4] The refugee cycle is traditionally seen as flight from the home country, exile in a host country and return to the home country.

[5] The UNHCR's three durable solutions to forced migration are settlement, resettlement and repatriation. They state that: 'repatriation is now often regarded as the most desirable durable solution – provided that return is genuinely voluntary and sustainable' (UNHCR 2006: 130).

According to Dona and Berry: 'Return is a central feature of the refugee experience. It is part of the definition of being a refugee and of the involuntary nature of refugee migration' (Dona & Berry 1999: 180). But over the past decade or more, those in the field of refugee studies have increasingly questioned the possibility, likelihood and desirability of repatriation as a widespread solution (Black & Koser 1999; Warner 1994).

Aside from practical difficulties affecting the success of return – such as the continuing education of children in the host country, ongoing political unrest and the lack of housing or employment in the home country (Koser 2002: 141) – return may not be politically, physically or psychologically possible for many refugees. Those wanting to return to the former Yugoslavia after the war, for example, were faced with the reality that the country they had left no longer existed and some needed visas to visit the towns they had lived in for decades (Black & Koser 1999: 9; Jansen 1998: 95-96). The hardest obstacle to surmount in the project of return, however, is the fact that the clock can never be turned back and the past cannot be regained. There is, therefore, no possible restitution of the lost home. This is, in part, what makes the refugee's loss so great. While physical property may be regained or compensated for financially, the lost home is gone forever. Warner agrees, stating that repatriation as a solution 'denies the temporal reality of our lives and the changes that take place over time' for the refugee, for the people that stayed behind and the home country itself (Warner 1994: 170-171). Massey, too, notes that when people talk about going home they often imagine 'going "back" in both space and time' which ignores the fact 'that you can never

simply "go back", to home or to anywhere else' as both you and the place you left behind will have moved on (Massey 2005: 124).

A number of those in this study were aware of this reality. In spite of his strong feelings about the right to return, Dimitris admitted sadly: 'It's not feasible for me to go and live there and start the life which I stopped 30 years ago.' However, it can be difficult for refugees to come to terms with the fact that the country they left behind has moved on without them. The nature of exile means that refugees are, for the most part, denied access to their former home and, therefore, lack any visual or experiential confirmation that all is not what it was. As a result, they may still understandably imagine home to be preserved in the state it was when they left, even if rationally they know this cannot be the case. This was eloquently explained by Eleni:

> ...my initial reaction [on hearing that the border had opened] was: 'Oh my god.' Thinking of people that lived here... 30 years ago they had what they called a beautiful house. A beautiful house 30 years ago, even if you lived in it, it wouldn't matter what you did to it, it wouldn't be a beautiful house 30 years on. It would be an old house. So all these people that left the beautiful house or land... would go back to a derelict maybe existing bit of a wall. But they have all these beautiful memories of their home and a house. And that picture is in your head. It doesn't go away and it doesn't move with the times. So people's memories would be like a snapshot of what their house was as they saw it the last time. And although they've grown and they've got children and grandchildren, their home is still there but not moved forward.

According to Stein: 'Although the refugees' memory and image of home may be idealised and frozen at the moment of flight, conflict and politics may have transformed the homeland, the home town and the home folks' (Stein 1997: 162). This was definitely the case in Cyprus. Cypriot refugees in Britain were able to visit the south (if they were Greek Cypriot) or the north (if they were Turkish Cypriot) of the island after it was partitioned in 1974,

without being able to visit their own homes on the other side. As a result, Greek Cypriots in particular saw massive changes in the south, mainly as a result of the growth of tourism, but it was hard for them to imagine changes to their homes in the north. The pace of change in the north has indeed been slower, with the biggest visible difference being the arrival of Turkish 'settlers'[6]. While the number of mosques has increased to serve these new arrivals, other forms of construction have not been as rapid, although areas such as Kyrenia have seen faster development in recent years. Turkish Cypriot refugees have seen a much less dramatic change in the north of the island. However, images of the south – where their former homes are – have filtered through to them in Cypriot holiday brochures, on the internet and via satellite TV. It is also important to remember that Cypriot refugees in London have not lived a segregated existence during the 30 to 40 years of exile. Some of them have friends from the other community, while many of them also have English friends, some of whom may have brought back photos or reports of how things have changed in Cyprus over the intervening years.

In spite of their emotional belief in, and desire for, the preservation of their lost home, most of the refugees are aware that the reality has moved on and in some cases believe the physical alteration of their homes and villages to be an explicit policy to prevent their return. As Dimitris told me: 'They are building, changing the character of the place and making it impossible for any of us to go back.' Similarly, Hasan sees the turning of cemeteries into fields or sports pitches by both communities as 'a kind of destruction which destroys

[6] It is difficult to arrive at any concrete number for Turkish 'settlers', who were often poorer and less educated people from Turkey, encouraged to move to the island in order to increase numbers of ethnically Turkish inhabitants. Figures are anything from 40,000 to 74,000 (Calotychos 1998: 11; Camp 1998: 139), but it is not clear if the second and third generation are being counted or are indeed now defined as Cypriot.

the identity, the imprint of the previous so they don't have a claim to it. I think that was sort of the elimination of the fairy tale.' The Cypriot refugee in London, therefore, has been managing their memory of the lost home against the drip-drip of information that indicates how it has changed.

Peter found it especially hard to envisage how his home might have altered. He has not visited his village for political reasons, seeing the relaxing of border restrictions as a 'political game'. Yet the most powerful motivating factor in his refusal to return is his fear at being confronted with the present reality: 'I remember the village as it was. It's going to be heartbreaking going there and seeing how it's going to be now. People tell me it has changed anyway so I'd rather keep the memory as it was.' However, it is not simply the fear of seeing how different his home is that seemed to distress Peter, he also seemed genuinely anguished when he recalled his young self, who he imagined to be frozen in time within the lost home:

> I left when I was 17 and a half. And to me when I go back, I haven't grown in that area... It's just a big void of 30 years... It's just the fear of being faced with the reality... At the time in '74 I had no responsibilities, nothing... The week before the coup, I finished the high school... and I was gonna do my national service... That was the plan I had at the time ...You can't just go from 17 to 47 overnight can you?

Peter is expressing nostalgia for his youth as much as he is for his lost home, but he can no more turn back the clock on his life than he can truly regain his village. When he became a refugee, he was a teenager on the verge of adulthood and his future potential is expressed in 'the plans [he] had at the time'. In London, he has aged from 17 to 47, while his parents have reached old age. He is now a parent of three young men and is in a position of responsibility at work. Yet he talks as if he left his 17-year-old self behind, so

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that the teenager with a life ahead of him is somehow trapped in the memory of the lost home. The loss of future potential is one of the costs of exile that is very rarely accounted for. While Peter has built what appears to be a successful life in exile in London – married with three children, owning a house, having a second career in the prison service (after working as a motor mechanic) – he did not have the chance to explore the paths his 17-year-old self in Cyprus might have chosen. Such paths might have offered better or worse options. Peter might still have decided to emigrate. Yet the fact remains that exile meant having 'the narrowest range of choice' (Marfleet 1998: 71) at a pivotal point in his life and his distress at revisiting his lost home and being confronted with that fact illustrates just how deeply it affected him.

Emine's description of her return journey to her village displays the confusion that results when the image of the lost home is confronted by present reality. For Emine this emerges in her use of the present tense to describe the return journey to the village, while actually recalling the village in the past: 'You enter this beautiful village... really, really lovely with the birds singing. You know in my dreams it's like a dream village... and I'm so excited you know'. When things are not as she expects, however, she thinks she is in the wrong place – 'maybe I remember wrong you know' – until she sees that the houses have been demolished and the trees cut down. 'There was, imagine this, nothing.' Her dream of an idyllic village has become 'a nightmare' and she finds the experience temporally and spatially disorientating. 'When I went back I was not where I was supposed to be. And then where I was supposed to be is not really there. I am nowhere.'

The impossibility of return to the circumstances of the past, as well as the potential pain an attempted return might cause, would seem to mitigate against a belief in the project of return, yet for many refugees return remains a preoccupying goal. Of course, there are a number of factors which affect commitment to the project of return. Firstly, the reasons for flight impact upon the desire to return (Al-Rasheed 1994; Kunz 1981), and the prolonged experience of inter-communal violence and marginalisation of many Turkish Cypriots, as opposed to the sudden expulsion that befell the Greek Cypriots after the Turkish military intervention, seems to have impacted the two communities differently. While Greek Cypriots lost their homes during one catastrophic interlude in 1974, many Turkish Cypriots were forced to move a number of times during the inter-communal violence. Kasim told me how this had affected many Turkish Cypriots, recounting a conversation with his late father: 'Once I said to him: "There may be peace and we may go back to our village." And he said: "We left the village. Our lives are safe. We can make new lives." He knew he'd never go back to that village. I don't think I can.' As a result, it is perhaps unsurprising that greater ambivalence towards the project of return was expressed by the Turkish Cypriots, who perhaps found it harder to imagine a prosperous and happy life for themselves in Cyprus. Ömer sums up this feeling when he says: 'It's not very nice being in the war. You know somebody come try to kill you and you survive, how can you forget that?' However, the fact that so many refugees do retain a commitment to the project of return, in the face of insurmountable obstacles, is perhaps the most remarkable thing. Within the bounds of this study there were certainly mixed

feelings about return, but the majority expressed some kind of desire to be reunited with their lost homes at some time in the future.

Other factors which influence attitudes to return include the length of exile, the age of the refugee, the age of their children and also their gender. Stella revealed to me what she saw as a difference in attitudes to return from men and women. 'Mostly men want to go back and not women, because women were in an inferior position at the time,' she told me. 'I think [the men] are dreaming of their coffee shops and playing cards, and having ouzo at the taverna, which will never happen [because] a: they are aged and they cannot take it any more and b: the world has changed.' This observation is a reminder that memory is also gendered and a return to the conditions of the past may be less desirable for women than men, in spite of nostalgia for the lost home.

Cemal points out that age is also a factor affecting the reasons for staying in the host country, with pensions and healthcare of great importance for older refugees and children the main pull for the middle-aged. The longer exile lasts, the harder it is to discount connections with the new country. As Cemal says, 'if you spend as long in a foreign country, much longer than you actually did in your own country, then this country becomes your home... no matter how insulated you might be from the indigenous society'. Having children who were born or have spent most of their lives in the country of exile has been seen as a crucial factor in the transition from a present which is based on a past-oriented outlook to one that looks at future potential, while having children who have not lived in the homeland has been seen as a major factor mitigating against return (Bloch 2002: 145; Zetter 1998: 312). Peter's

political and emotional desire to return is tempered by his commitment to his sons: 'I can't go straight away… because I've got to see my priorities now. I can't turn round now to the boys and say: "Oh you go to uni, go and find a job because I'm going to Cyprus"… Basically it's gonna be like, well, we abandon our properties in '74 and I can't abandon [the boys] now.'

A temporary condition?

In spite of the factors mitigating against return, many refugees continue to see their exile as temporary even when it is protracted. Just as the past is remembered according to its relevance to the present, so too plans for the future tell us as much about the ongoing experience of exile as they do about the likelihood of things to come. When exile is viewed as temporary it exposes the current desires of the refugee and their attitude to their present circumstances. Politicised refugee communities, such as the Palestinians, Chileans[7] and Kurds, often continue to refer to exile as temporary as a way of demonstrating their ongoing commitment to the homeland (Eastmond 1993; Gallie 1997; Wahlbeck 1999). The same could be said of those Greek Cypriot refugees campaigning for the right of return. Zetter's longitudinal research into Greek Cypriot refugees rehoused in state housing in Cyprus found that although they 'convey a powerful sense of permanency' in their daily lives, 'they have retained the conviction – despite all the objective evidence – that their exile is temporary and that they will eventually return home' (Zetter 1998: 304). For these refugees, Zetter argues, it is the loss of continuity with the past – distinguishing them from the non-refugee Greek Cypriots they live

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[7] Before a change in the political climate in Chile made return a possibility in the 1990s.

among – which makes mythologising return and declaring the temporary nature of exile important (Zetter 1998: 308). The Cypriot refugees in my study certainly displayed a 'powerful sense of permanency' in their present lives. Most own their own houses, many have good jobs and children at university and they participate in London life to a greater or lesser degree. The paradox is that those refugees who are most successful in exile may find themselves trapped by their very skill in adapting to their new situation, as the prospect of return becomes more and more difficult due to the enormity of what they would have to leave behind. As Kasim explained, 'everything we own, that we worked for, my wife and I, it's here in London now'.

Many Cypriot refugees certainly saw their exile as temporary in the early years and this belief seems strongest among older refugees. Andreas, my oldest interviewee, told me that for his generation 'their only hope is to go back'. The majority of those in this study were middle-aged and came to the UK as children or young adults. Many, however, referred to their parents' refusal to see exile as anything but temporary. Sophia said that her father still tells the family to pack their bags every time there are peace talks, while Stephen confirmed that his parents continue to see exile as temporary, saying: 'they haven't given up hope'.

Some of the refugees expressed contradictory attitudes to return within their narratives, with a general desire to return often being tempered by a pragmatic acceptance that home life is now largely located in London. Black and Koser describe the possibility for many refugees of maintaining a long-term symbolic aspiration towards home, at the same time as accepting that staying in the host country offers the most practical solution (Black & Koser

1999: 16-17). Al-Rasheed describes this adherence to the 'myth of return' as 'a pragmatic response to the dilemma of being part of two contexts, two countries and two sets of values' (Al-Rasheed 1994: 200). The dream of return is not abandoned but its impossibility allows the refugee to get on with living in the location of exile. Of course, for some refugees return does become possible and they are faced with the very real choice of whether or not to go back. As Nixon states: 'With the end of exile, that loaded phrase "back home" is challenged utterly in all its temporal and spatial implications. "Back home" can no longer serve as a place and time quarantined from the realm of choice' (Nixon 1994: 116).

Returning to the past or back to the future?

When the border that divided Cyprus opened for the first time in almost 30 years in April 2003, many of those who had been internally displaced in Cyprus rushed to see their lost homes, afraid that the opportunity would be taken away as suddenly as it had arisen. They were soon followed by refugees from the diaspora (as well as other curious Cypriots, tourists and international researchers). The first visit home after exile is an emotionally loaded event, which can have a major impact on the individual and their attitude towards home and host countries. According to Muggeridge and Dona, the first visit home after protracted exile 'occupies a unique place as the intersection of imagination and reality', representing 'a complex interplay of social, political, economic and emotional factors' (Muggeridge & Dona 2006: 426, 429). For some it can be a difficult and destabilising experience, as it was for Habib when she made a return visit to Lebanon after the end of the

war and found her homecoming as traumatic as her flight, as 'home was not to be found and the past was not to be recreated' (Habib 1996: 97; 101). Similar sentiments were expressed by some of those in this study, many of whom found their return journey immensely distressing.

Emine told me that she had been so excited when the border opened, saying: 'I couldn't even dream that I would see my village one day'. But when I asked her to tell me about the trip she said: 'I try not to talk about it. It's so hard.' Her house and other buildings had been demolished and many trees cut down. The reality is so at odds with the idyllic image she has maintained throughout exile and there is no evidence that the family ever lived there. They appear to have been erased from history, echoing Marfleet's assertion that refugees have often also been neglected by official historical accounts (Marfleet 2007: 145). 'It was like I had a nightmare,' Emine told me. 'It wasn't true,' she adds, rejecting the tangible proof that her home is no longer the same. Rather than reinforce her desire to return, Emine's visit had the opposite effect. She says that she doesn't know if she can go back to the village again and clearly regrets the intrusion that the reality has made on her memories of home. 'I don't want to go back, never, ever, ever again.'

When she heard the news of the border opening, Eleni says she worried about how the sudden possibility of return would affect the women who attended the community centre where she works. 'My first reaction was how bad this is going to be for these people because they are going to be devastated, because they will see homes that they don't recognise.' This sums up the experience that Maroulla had on returning to her village, when she found the doors of her house 'looking like they abandoned 100 years' and

the garden bare. Even though she had seen previous videos of the village taken by other returnees, she says she 'never expected to see [her] house in such a state' and found the experience very emotional. Her sadness was magnified by the fact that her brother has been missing since the war. 'I thought if I go back to the village I would find my brother,' she told me. As a result of the distressing nature of the visit, Maroulla has also reconsidered her attitude to return.

When Ömer made the return trip after the border opened, he was upset to find little trace of the Turkish Cypriot residents that had lived there. He still feels a strong connection to the village: 'I love my village. I like to go and live there because that's where I saw the sunshine, I born, so I never forget that.' But he is resolutely unsentimental about it, arguing that Turkish Cypriot villages were kept in a state of underdevelopment, remembering the lack of electricity, phones, roads and running water. He places security above nostalgia and explains how the experience of violence in Cyprus has affected attitudes to return. 'Of course [the refugees] were sad to leave their villages. Everybody wants their land and everything. But as I said... first comes security... No one wants to go back. They do, you know, but not to go back and live together like it used to be.' The visit didn't change Ömer's attitude to return because he never expected he would go back. The impact of return on the refugee, therefore, obviously depends on experiences prior to flight as well as attitudes before return, as those who have the greatest expectations are likely to be the most disappointed.

Just under half of those I spoke to had made return visits to their lost homes and most of them found the experience difficult, although not all found

it distressing. Nick told me that in order to visit their village after the border opened, he and his family decided to 'suppress all emotions', indicating their anticipation of a painful experience. Unlike many refugees who find little evidence of the lost home when they return, Nick found 'the same house, the same furniture' he had left behind. The house is a kind of living museum to the married life he and his wife had just started, with a picture his sister painted as a wedding present still on the wall and their cushions and curtains just as they had left them. 'After 30 years exactly the same... [just] in a little bit bad condition.' It is more surprising that Nick found so much in its original state, than it is that others found so little after 30 or 40 years, and it is not clear why things have been preserved to such an extent in some refugee houses. There may be an element of respect for the former owners (especially if the current inhabitants are also refugees, as is the case with the Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of Nick's house), as well as the fact that many of those who ended up in refugee houses may not have had the money to replace furniture and household items, either because they were refugees themselves, or because they were 'settlers' from Turkey with relatively little income. For Nick the overall experience of return is not a negative one and seeing his marital home unusually preserved means that return still seems a possibility to him.

'A kind of fruit you cannot eat'

Although the relaxation of border restrictions during the period of this research prompted a flurry of return visits, a number of my interviewees (mostly Greek Cypriot) refused to return for emotional or political reasons. Panos explained

his strong feelings about visiting his house: 'I don't want to go to Famagusta until there is a solution. I saw it from the Green Line with binoculars in 1992. I don't feel it's right to go back... I find it very difficult that people can go and see their houses and [then have to] come back.' Stella, also from Famagusta, feels the same. Like Panos she used to look at her land from a viewpoint in Dherinia:

> I could see my windows and it used to be torture. I used to be sick for a week. And then I said now, this is torture, why? It doesn't do me any good. Because you look at it. It's like a hunger. You see a kind of fruit, you cannot eat.

Stephen also had strong political and emotional objections to making the journey. 'I can't get over the fact that I can visit my house for a day and any other person can visit anytime they want,' he told me. ' I mean the Turkish family that live there, they might be lovely... but if I go back I will throw them down from the balcony.'

A number of those I spoke to expressed more emotional reasons for not making a return visit. Adrienne didn't want to return because of her memories of the violence that occurred during the war and the fear that it might happen again. 'Nobody knows how I feel and nobody knows how much it hurts inside me, so if I go there it's going to bring the memories about my dad, the memories about my fears.' At a distance of 30 years, the fear she felt is still very real and has so far prevented her from returning. Kasim has also been unable to visit his village, which was almost completely destroyed in 1964. He tells me that he is 'not ready to go back, I'm not ready to face it at the moment... It would be emotional I think,' adding that he wants to hold on to 'the romantic memories that I have of the village'. In this way, Kasim is

exercising choice about how he remembers his village, even though he had no choice about the circumstances of his leaving, and is therefore able to exert some control over his situation.

Those Cypriot refugees who have found the thought of making a return visit to their home too painful or politically questionable, even though they would like to know what their homes look like now, have sometimes displaced their dilemma by a kind of proxy return. A number of those I spoke to recounted what was essentially a return narrative, but was in fact the story of a relative or neighbour's visit to the village. This enables the refugee to avoid witnessing the changes that have taken place and thereby protect themselves from the emotional impact of such an experience, as well as keeping their political principles intact, at the same time as gathering information about the lost home.

Peter had both political and emotional reservations about making a return visit, but his teenage son and father-in-law made the journey a few months after the border restrictions were lifted. Near the beginning of our interview he pointed out three framed photos of the village on his wall, which were taken by his son, whose motivation for going was curiosity, 'because he'd heard me for so many years talking about it,' Peter explained. The pictures gave Peter the first glimpse of his lost home in 30 years. 'How did I feel? I'll be honest with you, because [my son] phoned me and told me: "Granddad said the house is exactly the same as it was before." I was more or less expecting it anyway. It just felt a bit weird really.' Unsure what to do with the visual evidence that his house and village still existed, Peter looked at the

pictures once and put them on one side. His son subsequently framed them and hung them on the wall, 'just to torment me', Peter laughed.

Adrienne also showed me photographs of her village taken by her son and brother. Her description of the photos is light-hearted, in contrast to the obvious distress she felt at the thought of making a physical return herself. 'That's my church... And there somewhere – you see I even remember a map of my village – there was a big fig tree.' She also showed me a picture of her house, asking: 'Do you want to see my house?... It's a nice house. Good memories. Good picture.' While Peter found the photos of his village quite difficult to look at, for Adrienne they seem to provide a safe way to 'return' to the village and allow her to recall happy memories.

Stella's husband made an unplanned visit to their house in Famagusta and his return affected her in a way she was not expecting: 'I thought it was dead and buried. I have a life here, I have a family here. I have a grand-daughter here. So I thought OK, it's gone. It's a closed chapter. It's always going to be in my heart and in my mind but I thought that the pain was over.' Her husband was in Cyprus when the borders unexpectedly opened. 'He phoned me up... and he said: "Guess where I am?... I'm actually looking at our doorstep." ...I became so emotional. I didn't think I would go through that again.' For Stella the impact of proxy return appeared to be almost as strong as if she had made the journey herself, whereas for others, like Adrienne, proxy return provided a safe way of reconnecting with the past without actually witnessing the changes that had taken place.

The right to return

For some Cypriot refugees, plans for actual return have given way to campaigns for the legal right to return. Whether conscious or not, the formulation allows for the possibility of disappointment and is in keeping with Al-Rasheed's explanation of the purpose of the 'myth of return' as a pragmatic solution (Al-Rasheed 1994). If the right to return was gained, political justice would be achieved and the individual would be free to exercise that right or not as they see fit. It allows for recognition of the fact that many refugees in the UK would be unable to leave their lives here and, not least, their children on a permanent basis, but it would signal a resolution of the decades-long impasse and let refugees remain committed to their homes without actually returning to them. In my study, it was the Greek Cypriot men who talked most about the right to return, perhaps because of their active involvement in political campaigns on the Cyprus issue, which meant that they did not want to appear to be abandoning their homeland in spite of their strong personal ties to the UK. Panos summed up the political project saying, 'I don't envisage that I will go and live there but I want the right to be able to go back and for others to go back. Whether they actually go back is not that relevant.' The campaign is about political reparation and justice, rather than physical return, and it is no surprise that Panos, a lawyer, sees return in legal terms. For others the right to return also appears to be about the restoration of the choice that was taken from them when they became refugees. If being a refugee means having 'the narrowest range of choice' about how to live one's life (Marfleet 1998: 71), then winning back that choice is about regaining control. Both Stephen and Peter explained the right of return in these terms. Peter told

me: 'The rights I will never give up... freedom of returning to my own property and the freedom of selling my own property... As long as I've got the right... whether I go back and live there or not, it's my choice.' Meanwhile, Stephen said: 'At least you never lose hope. If they give me the right, if they said to me "here's your house"... and I went back and, for whatever reason, I couldn't settle in the town... I might sell it. But... that'd be my choice.' For the children and grandchildren of refugees, it becomes even more likely that the desire for actual return becomes replaced with demands for the political right of return. Zetter explains this as a 'declining concern with what might be construed as the sentimentalised restoration of the past' among the second generation, which is 'counterbalanced by the politically more robust claim for the restoration of human rights represented by the repossession of legal entitlement to land and property' (Zetter 1998: 316).

Conclusion

The opportunity to make return visits to Cyprus for the first time in 30 years has given many refugees a glimpse of what actual return might look like. Yet the state of their lost home or the realisation of just how much has changed in Cyprus may have caused them to reassess their plans for the future. What all of them will have been made painfully aware of, however, is that there is no chance of real return, as the past is lost forever along with the paths their lives may have taken if had they never been exiled. This is perhaps the greatest loss the refugee faces: the realisation that there is no going back, even if it becomes possible to return physically. Of course, other futures are possible

and the roads travelled in exile may have led to different yet happy destinations.

For some the project of physical return has been replaced by the political campaign for the right to return, while for others the lost home is kept alive through memory and nostalgia. Tölölyan refers to a 'diasporic existence as not necessarily involving a physical return but rather a re-turn, a repeated turning to the concept and/or the reality of the homeland ... through memory' (Tölölyan 1996: 14-15). It is this process that many of those in this study appear to be involved in. In addition, memories of the lost home are not simply a passive reflection on the lost home but are also mobilised, as Hage states, to recreate homely feelings in the new context (Hage 1997: 105). As this chapter has shown, memories are not reflections of the past, but representations of what the past means in the present and, as a result, they tell as much about current attitudes to exile as they do about the lost home.

Hage also believes that another key factor needed in order to feel at home is a sense of possibility, 'so that one can perceive opportunities of a "better life"' (Hage 1997: 103). Those who have adapted well to life in London have been able to perceive this sense of possibility in the new home. On the whole, they are those who came as children or young adults and were more easily able to start afresh. For others, especially older refugees, the sense of possibility in a new context has been harder to find and they are caught, like Sophia's father, 'not grounded in the moment, [but] either back thinking about the traditions of the past or thinking about going back [to the village] in the future'. Loizos has asked at what point do those who have experienced exile 'stop being explainable primarily as refugees' (Loizos 1999: 245). Is it when

they return or when they give up the dream of return? Is it when they adapt

successfully to life in a host country, when they acquire citizenship or when

they start to think of the new place as home? Is it when memories of the lost

home fade into the background of nostalgic reverie, rather than occupying the

foreground as a burning and unresolved issue? Looking at the meaning of the

temporal home for the Cypriot refugees in this study, there is no simple

answer. It seems likely that, for some, home will always exist in an idealised

past or an imagined future even if they have found a way to live in the

present, while others have embraced the opportunities of the here and now.

Chapter 5
Senses of belonging – the material home

'In xenetia – in exile... in a foreign landscape, a man discovers the old songs. He calls out for water from his own well, for apples from his own orchard, for the muscat grapes from his own vine.'
From *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels (1997: 86).

Introduction

A recent mailing from the Medical Foundation[1], a London-based charity

tending to the psychological needs of refugees who have been tortured,

included a dried stem of lavender to demonstrate the importance of the

senses to refugees far from home. The herb growing in the charity's garden

had triggered memories for one refugee of her abducted son and started her

difficult journey towards recovery. As the accompanying leaflet states: 'Some

memories can't be unlocked by words'. Meanwhile, an article in The Observer

told of a Zimbabwean refugee living in Enfield, north London, who 'missed the

flavours of home' (Shaw 2005). As a result he decided on the unusual

strategy of placing a 'wanted' advert for arable land in the capital so that he

could farm white maize, 'the glorious taste of back home'. He now runs a

successful business from this unlikely location, selling the crop to other

refugees and migrants.

As these two very different incidents show, refugees living in London

employ diverse strategies to remember the lost home and to engender the

feeling of being 'at home' in exile. Home, it seems, can often be represented

by the taste of a certain food or the smell of a particular flower. As Ben-Ze'ev

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[1] The Medical Foundation for the Care of the Victims of Torture is a charity based in London, which provides various types of therapy for refugees who have suffered torture. The mailing in July 2007 was an appeal for the charity's Natural Growth project, which aims to use nature through the centre's garden to help those who are not ready for psychotherapy.

states, 'tastes, smells, plants and food are anchors of memory, invoking a much wider context' for the refugee (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 148).

The organic matter that surrounds the built environment can be just as important in the construction of home – whether in the natural configurations of mountains, lakes and forests, or in the ways people have manipulated the land to respond to their economic, nutritional, social and aesthetic needs, through the planting of orchards and crops, gardens and village squares. Trees, flowers, food and soil are all crucial elements of home, creating a context within which to live and providing the raw material for life to continue. In exile, these material aspects of home often become poignant symbols of what has been lost by the refugee. The scent of a flower or herb may elicit an instinctive emotional and physical response, as Sutton found in his study on the Greek island of Kalymnos. Referring to migrants from the island now living in the United States who cried out 'Ach, patridha, patridha [homeland, homeland]' on smelling basil growing in tin cans on a windowsill, Sutton talks of 'the importance of the sensory in reconnecting and remembering experiences and places one has left behind' (Sutton 2001: 74). In addition, the material home can become deeply symbolic of what has been lost. Trees can be mobilised to represent the lost homeland, just as the olive tree is used in Palestinian narrative poetry (Gallie 1997: 24), and soil is often seen as synonymous with the nation in national discourses (Malkki 1992: 26-27). In this way, nature can be manipulated by political meta-narratives, which in turn influence individual narratives of home focusing on the rural and the natural.

The loss of the material home is rarely recognised in the assessment of the financial, cultural and social impoverishment of the refugee. Yet, as the

narratives in this study show, alongside the financial impact of the loss of crops, such apparently trivial elements can cause acute pain and longing for those who dream of the taste of water from the mountain spring, the smell of jasmine from their garden in the evening, olive oil pressed from one's own trees, or the first apricots of the season. However, it is also important to remember that perhaps more than any other element of home under investigation here, the material home can be adapted to the context of exile. While lemon trees will never thrive in England, the Cypriots in this study have shown tremendous persistence and resourcefulness in growing many plants and trees common to Cyprus in their gardens in London, and Cypriot food is now widely available and eaten by families across the city. These acts of resistance to the difficulties of exile have helped to engender a feeling of being at home, while also serving as an enduring reminder of the home that has been lost.

The rural idyll and national discourse

While discourses of the natural and the organic are often assumed to be representative of a direct sensual relationship between people and the land, it is important to note that they are influenced by wider narratives. In her convincing critique of the prevailing rhetoric of the rootedness of peoples[2], Malkki highlights the use of 'botanical metaphors' in naturalising the links between people and places, so that identity is seen as a 'root essence... of the cultural, and of the national, soil from which it is thought to draw its nature and its sustenance' (Malkki 1992: 27; 37). In this way, discourses of the nation

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[2] This is discussed in more detail in chapter three.

are used to construct arguments about the *natural* right of some people to live in certain places, at the same time as excluding those who are not deemed to belong. Such formulations, Malkki argues, often use imagery from nature, such as 'aborescent root metaphors', for example in the depiction of the British people as an oak tree, while words such as 'land', 'soil' and 'country' are often seen as synonymous with the nation (Malkki 1992: 27). When looking at the use of nature in refugee narratives of home, therefore, one needs to be aware of the ways in which the personal relationship with the material home has been mediated by meta-narratives reflecting national and other political discourses.

The logical extension of the notion that people are rooted in the country they belong to leads to the conclusion that the refugee has been uprooted and is therefore pathologised (Malkki 1992: 27; 32). This terminology of uprootedness has been adopted in academic and political discourses about the refugee, as well as by refugees themselves. For example, Chilean exile Agosin refers to herself as 'like a tree without roots' who is 'unsteady, insecure, easily toppled by any strong wind' (Agosin 1994: 142), while Palestinian exile literature uses the uprooted olive tree as a symbol of oppression (Bowman 1994: 158). In this study, Panos told me that London has become a kind of second home to him, but 'it's not where my roots are'. Meanwhile, Sophia, who only lived in Cyprus for one year before becoming a refugee, described a recent trip there as 'going back to her roots'.

Such imagery when used by refugees themselves makes a strong and understandable claim for entitlement to the land, yet it also implies an inability to grow or thrive in another location. However, many refugees – Agosin

included – have prospered in exile. This contradiction is present in many refugee narratives, which employ evocative sensory pictures of the trees, flowers, food and landscape of the lost home as a way of conjuring up the lost home and perhaps accounting for all that was lost. However, these aspects of the lost home are often the very factors that help the refugee settle in the country of exile, as home food is prepared and shared with others, while plants common to the lost home that are grown in exile quite literally demonstrate that roots can be established elsewhere. One needs to be aware, therefore, when reading refugee narratives, that the imagery of individual stories is influenced by wider discourses and that the use of natural imagery is not simply nostalgic but is also a way of laying claim to the lost land.

In the Cypriot context, as Zetter observes, the 'metaphor of roots in the soil' regularly occurs in refugee stories and was a feature of the narratives in this study (Zetter 1998: 309). However, some seem to use it to suggest an awareness of their origins rather than paralysis in exile. Alpay believes that second generation refugees need to have a knowledge of their background in order to develop a sense of wellbeing and, as a result, he set up one of London's Turkish Cypriot community schools. As he explained to me:

> What we have to teach them is: Look you are British, but you have Turkish Cypriot ancestry. So to be successful you have to be proud of what you are, learning your roots. Once they began to learn their roots then they started becoming more successful.

I asked him if knowing about one's culture facilitates success and he agreed, saying: 'If you don't know your roots and your origins, you don't know what you are.' However, while such statements are a positive indication of the

ability of refugees to adapt when armed with a knowledge of their background, they also equate culture with the metaphor of being rooted in the homeland of Cyprus or the village of origin. Therefore, one particular moment in history – the period in Cyprus pre-exile – is being chosen as the time when the culture in question existed in a pure form. This is obviously an arbitrary choice and one might just as easily trace the origins and culture of Cypriot peoples back to Greece, Turkey, North Africa, Italy or numerous other locations. However, it is not so surprising that the refugee sees their 'roots' as those that were planted in the lost village and uprooted at the time of flight. The suddenness of departure and lack of choice involved make the reassertion of an organic connection to the lost land a logical strategy for survival in exile.

'All you could see was green'

Plants are an important contextualising component when considering the lost home. When asked to describe their homes in Cyprus, many of the refugees I interviewed included, alongside the house and other buildings, the orchards, crops and trees that were grown in their garden. These organic elements form just as important a part of the remembered home as bricks and mortar. For some this is for economic reasons – the loss of on olive grove means the loss of livelihood – for others, however, trees and plants seem to take on a meaning beyond the purely functional and rather embody the texture, scents and seasonal variations of the Cypriot home.

Many Cypriot refugees in London talk of their lost villages with a mixture of longing and regret and, for some, the village occupies an almost mythic place in the imagination, as they describe what they perceive as the

unique beauty of their village. When I asked Emine what she remembered about her village, her initial reply was to paint a picture of its natural attributes:

> [It was] the most beautiful village with plenty of oxygen, you know the greenery, the vine fields, almonds, olive trees, everything, everything. It was really fertile soil... the natural spring water... When you come like spring time ... from say a couple of miles away and you are entering the village, all you could see was green.

Decades on, villages are still recalled with great detail and the loss of what was perceived as a 'natural' life – typified by scenic beauty and home grown food – is still mourned, while the abundance of lost villages is a recurring theme. For Maroulla, the natural abundance of her village was a sign of economic prosperity as well as beauty, as she told me: 'It was a rich village... There wasn't any poor families. All the residents, they had their fields, their trees, vegetables growing up in their gardens... They never used to buy potato, they never used to buy fruit.'

The lost land is often represented in idyllic rural terminology, indicating the strength of feeling that many of these refugees still have for their lost homes, which often contrast sharply with the urban setting of exile in London. In the same way that Cypriot refugees keep the deeds or the keys of their lost homes, they hold on to the idealised memories of what was left behind as a way of remembering the past and laying claim to the future, as well as keeping alive a sense of where they came from. However, the terminology they use may also illustrate how the rural has long been associated with the authentic ideal of the nation (Schama 1991: 11), which is reflected in personal as well as public narratives. Such imagery may be mobilised by exiled communities, who feel the need to assert their connection with the nation when at a distance from it. For example, Bisharat notes that the

'hyperemphasis of the pastoral connections of Palestinians to the land is reflective not of genuine rootedness but of an intellectualised, stylised assertion of place under conditions of rupture and threat' (Bisharat 1997: 225). Of course, in the Palestinian case, second, third and fourth generations of refugees do not have any personal memories or direct experience of the land and, therefore, the only way they can assert their connection is through the political discourse of belonging. In contrast, all the Cypriots in this study are first generation refugees (although some were young when they left their homes) and as a result do have a direct relationship with, and memory of, the land. However, it is likely that the rural imagery in the narratives is partly based on personal memory and partly reflects national and political discourses. Similarly, the images of 'paradise lost' that are passed on to subsequent generations can be expected to become mythologised when access to the lost home is denied.

Out of the 22 participants in this study all but five were from villages of varying sizes, the others living in the towns of Famagusta, Nicosia and Morphou. However, there was a fluid relationship between town and village, with those from towns spending time in parents' or grandparents' villages for the farming of family land, and those in villages often going to school or work in towns. All of the refugees in this study, therefore, had a relationship with the rural and with the land itself, so it is reasonable to expect these elements to feature in the narratives. Refugees from rural communities may feel a stronger connection to the land, as working on it on a daily basis creates a more intimate knowledge of the earth than is found in urban settings. As Jones and Cloke state, the land has a very different meaning for those

working it than those simply admiring the view. They go on to talk of a concept

of dwelling, which is based on 'an embodied and an imaginative

embeddedness in landscape' (Jones & Cloke 2002: 140-1). It is this

constructed connection to the land that can be seen in many of the narratives

in this study, through an awareness of the seasons and the food they

produce, as well as different trees, crops and flowers.

'Whoever has a tree, has shade'

While flowers, crops and other plants were often mentioned, trees seem to

play a particular role in the refugee imagination. Trees are often associated

with particular places and, as Jones and Cloke point out, carry a 'significant

cultural baggage' due to their size, longevity and economic value (Jones &

Cloke 2002: 19; 29). They are not simply backdrops to daily life but 'are

readily and vividly drawn into… concepts of place' (Jones & Cloke 2002: 86).

Eleni illustrated the ways in which trees form part of the cultural backdrop of

life when she told me an evocative story about the arrival of blossom in

spring:

> My mum used to tell me a story about the little almond trees that put on
> their beautiful pink outfit one night… [as] they were brides. But they put
> on their bridal outfits a bit too early and larchwood slapped them for
> looking so beautiful so they would lose their little buds… It's something
> my mum always used to recite February to March.

Folk stories such as this illustrate the importance of trees to the cultural

construction of place and the distinctive character of life lived in a particular

environment. According to Jones and Cloke, 'trees are culturally constructed

representing a form of social nature, but they are also living, active, creative

physical presences' (Jones and Cloke 2002: 74). Trees are also seen as

providing both protection and a basic form of home or shelter, as witnessed in the Cypriot proverb: 'Whoever has a tree, has shade' (Loizos 2003: 53). However, as Malkki reminds us, the tree has also been an abiding symbol of the nation and as such carries a political as well as a cultural weight (Malkki 1992: 27), which may be heightened for the refugee. This reflects Gallie's assertion, in his study of Palestinian refugees, that 'trees... take on clear symbolic importance as objects denoting places where the memory becomes fixed... Trees in this sense are immoveable, and therefore symbolise everything that has been lost' (Gallie 1997: 24).

Trees enter the cultural mythology of a place and form an integral part of what it means to live within a home made up of organic matter as well as the built environment. Adrienne, for example, was keen to show me a photograph taken recently in her village of a 400-year-old fig tree in the church grounds. She pointed out that the tree had gnarled bark that resembled a face and was so big that it needed 10 people to surround its trunk. Due to its size, longevity and position, the tree had become an integral part of the life and history of the village. When a friend who had recently visited the village gave her the photos, Adrienne was amazed to see that the tree was still there. She remembered it as a village landmark when she was a child, and the fact that she can see a face in its bark shows to what extent she has imbued this tree with the personality of the village that she lost.

As well as trees that can be found throughout Cyprus, most villages or regions are famous for specific trees, which are often celebrated in village festivals. Such regional associations of plants can be used as strong symbols of place and identity (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 147; Jones & Cloke 2002: 39).

Morphou (Güzelyürt), for example, was famous for its oranges, which made it into one of the most prosperous towns in Cyprus pre-1974. Meanwhile, Agios Amvrosios was well known for its apricot trees and Dimitris told me that the village produced the first apricots of the year, 'the nicest ones that are supposed to have a special sort of flavour'. The village held a large apricot festival each spring, with a dinner dance outside the church in the middle of the village, offering apricots to all the visitors. In exile, the apricot tree has taken on a political role as a symbol of home for refugees from Agios Amvrosios and as a reminder of the village's cultural heritage. An annual dinner dance is still organised by the village committee in London, where second and third generation children perform the traditional apricot dance. In this way the symbol of the apricot tree has become integral to the identity of Agios Amvrosios villagers in exile and remains a persistent symbol of home. Villagers grow apricot trees in their London gardens, and both Dimitris and Maroulla mourned the fact that apricot trees had been felled when they made return journeys to the village, almost as if the very essence of the village had been threatened.

For villagers from Agios Amvrosios, Dimitris tells me, the apricot tree is planted in exile not just as a reminder of home, but also as a political symbol of the right to return: 'Every person from our village, you find an apricot tree in his garden... I think it's a symbol for everybody that we like to go home one day... It's a dream. One day we will be able to go back free.' This is an example of the way in which trees can be used to symbolise the lost home and represent an 'authentic' connection with the land.

'A crying land'

If, as Jones and Cloke state, trees contain 'a cartographic record of certain aspects of a place' (Jones & Cloke 2002: 94), then for the refugee the loss of trees may suggest the loss of the past. This was apparent in the Cypriot refugee narratives I recorded, as the discovery on return visits that village trees had been felled seemed to cause great pain. Many of the refugees I spoke to were unaware that the trees had gone until they were able to make return journeys to their villages when the border restrictions were relaxed. These return journeys forced many to recognise the disjuncture between the memories of their lost home and the reality of the place today. On his return journey, Nick was initially disorientated by the absence of a big Cypress tree which marked the road into the village and he also noticed that the huge, ancient olive tree in front of his house had gone: 'When we built the house I said don't touch the tree because it was a really nice one. [But when we went back] that tree was... cut.' Although his almond trees and jasmines remained, his lemon trees had also been cut down. I asked him if lemon trees normally live a long time. 'A long time if they are watered,' he replied sadly. Although Nick is anxious not to blame the Turkish Cypriot refugees who were living in his house, because of his left-wing politics, many others blamed the new residents of their villages for the neglect of trees, such as the 'settlers' from Turkey who were perceived to lack the necessary skills to care for trees because they were livestock farmers. Dimitris was bewildered by what he saw as the waste of the 4,000 apricot trees – once the main crop in Agios Amvrosios – which he believes were cut down for fuel. The knowledge of how to care for trees is prized by many of the refugees, who will have learnt such

skills from their parents. As Dimitris told me, 'the apricot tree is a very delicate tree, it needs pruning... and it needs to be watered once a week during the dry period'.

While persistent neglect is blamed for the death of some of the trees, others are believed to have met a much more sudden end. On Emine's return to her village, her nostalgic reverie about its idyllic nature was shattered when she saw the reality. In place of the greenery she saw 'something brown, some land' as 'all the trees were cut'. She seemed more distressed by the absence of the olive, pine, fig, lemon and plum trees than by the fact that her house had been demolished, and asked a sympathetic Greek Cypriot doctor who lives in the village to explain:

> We said: 'OK you get angry pull the house down. But the trees? You could benefit. I mean the Greeks could benefit. Why? Who did it?' And he said: 'The hooligans, the Greek hooligans'. And I said: 'But why did they do it? You could be a hooligan but a tree, you know.' And he said: 'Because they were Turkish trees.' ...So it was like a crying land. It was really, really, really sad.

For Emine the loss is not only economic, but is also the loss of the dream she has held on to for decades of her beautiful home, as well as sadness at the pointless waste that resulted from the war in Cyprus. The reference to the trees as 'Turkish trees' also points to the way in which the natural environment has been attributed with the qualities of the people who lived in it, as if the trees were not just Turkish Cypriot property, but also somehow representative of the Turkish Cypriot people and therefore deserving of attack. This is a corollary of Malkki's observation that trees are used in political projects to assert the image of the nation. Here the trees have been attributed negatively with the characteristic of the Other. When Salih found that the fruit

trees in his village had been cut down when the village was razed, he believed it was 'a message given to us by the Greek Cypriot authorities not to return to our village… because there was nothing left, no buildings, no houses, no fruit trees'. The attacks on trees were taken personally by several of my Turkish Cypriot interviewees, as if the plants did indeed personify the people who had fled. Kasim described the cutting down of trees from his village to burn or make furniture as 'barbaric', while Ahmet said, 'it hurts people if they chop down your trees'.

The 'Cypriot' garden in London

In exile, many refugees explicitly recreate material aspects of the country, village or garden they have left behind. Cypriot refugees in London are no exception as they plant trees and flowers in their urban gardens, either to remind them of the home they long for, as a symbol of their desire for return, or as a way of helping them to feel 'at home' in exile. At the time of this study, a London-based Turkish Cypriot newspaper included a column on how to create a 'real' Cypriot garden (Toplum Postasi 2005). The essential elements were listed as a fig tree, at least one vine, an olive tree and a lemon tree, as well as pot plants in recycled olive oil and tomato tins. Rather than a practical guide, however, the article appears to serve as a reminder of the ongoing importance for Cypriots in London of plants common to Cyprus. It also suggests that Cypriots define their home and their belonging to it through the plants that they grow. The idea of 'authentic' Cypriot plants appears to be important for Cypriots in London and the same plants can be seen repeatedly in certain boroughs, as Eleni explained:

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'I've got jasmine in my garden, which again is one of the Mediterranean types of plants. So if you drive down north London you would know who was the owner [of the house]. And you know a Greek home because of the... big white tubular lilies.'

In Cyprus this repetition can partly be explained by the climate, but in London the desire to create a 'real' Cypriot garden is a battle against the elements in an attempt to recreate something of home. Eleni talked of her friend's valiant attempts to grow Cypriot fruit trees in London 'which keep dying on her' while she's 'trying to get it just the right way, cover it up but show the sun'.

In her research among Palestinian refugees, Ben-Ze'ev noted that 'plants act as mnemonic devices and memory containers, enabling a temporary (re)creation of the past' (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 141). In the absence of home, then, plants can be a way of recreating something which has been lost as well as bringing about a feeling of homeliness in exile. This appears to be true for Salih who, during our interview in his garden, pointed out the trees he has planted:

If you look on the other side of the garden you can see olive trees. You can see fig trees... Then plum trees, apricot trees, apple trees. And all this reminds me of the village because we used to have all this back in home, in Vroisha.

For many of the refugees such plants provide an opportunity to remember the smells, textures and natural beauty of home. Eleni told me that she wanted a fig tree 'because it reminds me of home', while Emine said her walnut, fig, vine and olive trees served 'to create a Cypriot atmosphere'. Adrienne told me, 'I like my garden to be Greek' and Nick has a 'big vine and a jasmine which reminds me of my village in Cyprus'. Cemal, however, questioned the idea that certain plants 'belong' to a particular country when I asked him if he

grew any Cypriot plants in his garden. 'I didn't know that plants had nationalities,' he replied, laughing at my question, in a useful reminder that not all refugees use plants as a focus for individual longing or national pride.

In her study of Greek Cypriot refugees displaced from the north to the south of Cyprus, Jepson found that even those living in state-provided refugee housing with tiny plots of land were growing the same plants they had grown in their homes in the north (Jepson 2006: 163). She concludes that 'it is the practice of gardening as much as the garden itself' that is of importance, describing such activity as 'low-key memory work' (Jepson 2006: 159). She goes on to say that the creation of replica gardens provides an opportunity for the refugee to 'externalise memory and concretise it', with the inherent cyclical and transient nature of the garden allowing them to invest in something that does not denote acceptance of a permanent new replacement home (Jepson 2006: 166).

Cypriot refugees in London may also find something hopeful, creative and productive in the nurturing of plants – although many of those in London have also bought or built their own homes and have therefore invested in bricks and mortar too. In the London context, rather than the gardens providing a way of investing without accepting a new home, plants appear to keep alive the lost home in a sharply contrasting environment. While very little can be done to bring about a solution to the Cyprus problem by individual refugees, a vine can be grown and used to make *dolmades/dolmas*, jasmine can bring the scent of Cyprus to London and the planting of white lilies makes a statement about the presence of Cypriots in the streets of the capital. The

fact that these plants are often seen in front as well as back gardens in London illustrates that they serve as signal to others that Cypriots live here.

For some refugees it is also important that plants are grown from cuttings that come from Cyprus. As Stella boasts, 'I've got my fig tree that I brought all the way from Cyprus', while Maroulla brings cuttings back every time she goes to the island. Jepson notes that the sharing of plant cuttings among Cypriot refugees allows a sense of continuity with the past and with home (Jepson 2006: 166). She refers to a refugee from Morphou who gave a cutting from their vine to cousins in Larnaca before the war and was, therefore, able to take a cutting in turn after the war so that they could plant their 'original' vine in exile. In this way, she says, 'plants connect people and places, emphasising genealogies and social relations' (Jepson 2006: 167). To own a plant with a genealogy traceable to a known Cypriot garden, is to bring that garden alive in the context of exile.

It is important, however, not to romanticise the connection that Cypriots have to the earth and to nature. While the majority of those I spoke to did grow Cypriot plants in London, a few were indifferent or even hostile to the thought. For some this is due to circumstances – Andreas, for example, is too old to garden and Father Georgiou does not have time. Meanwhile, Cemal told me his wife has a vine so that she can use the leaves for cooking, but otherwise they 'don't have any sentimental things'. Stephen confessed that although he comes from the 'very green town' of Morphou, he doesn't grow any Cypriot plants and his parents 'absolutely hate gardening'. He puts this down to the fact that his family didn't need to grow food like other Cypriots, as they owned a shop. And even though his father inherited some citrus trees in

Cyprus, 'he didn't really care... It wasn't a massive money making scheme as such'. These comments are a reminder that the rural does not have the same meaning for all Cypriots, in either a practical or a sentimental sense.

'A little bit of earth'

Another important aspect of the material home is the use of soil as a symbol of home for the refugee. Ben-Ze'ev refers to a Palestinian living in Jordan who kept two glass jars on the shelf in his fruit shop. The first held earth that he collected from his village of origin, the second contained the sole of a shoe he wore when he walked in his village because 'the precious earth that clung to the sole must not be allowed to fall back to the ground' (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 150). This desire to carry the earth, the very soil that makes up the lost country, is a common theme in refugee narratives. Chilean writer Isabel Allende describes how on fleeing her country she left 'carrying a handful of soil from [her] garden' (Allende 2003: 164), and at the burial of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in 2005, soil from the site of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque was sprinkled over his coffin as a declaration of his belonging to the Palestinian homeland. Both acts were symbolic gestures which demonstrated that these refugees saw themselves as intimately connected to the earth that they had been denied access to. However, Malkki reminds us that these 'demonstrations of emotional ties to the soil act as evidence of loyalty to the nation' in a national discourse where culture is seen as rooted in the soil (Malkki 1992: 27; 29).

   While some of these acts are instinctive and emotional, in other cases they are self-consciously performed as part of a national narrative of

belonging and entitlement. One such instance emerged in this study, which suggested both an immediate emotional response to exile, as well as an awareness of a larger political discourse. On the day her family fled their home, Maroulla's sister was reading a book about the Greek refugees who left Smyrna (Izmir) in 1922, which prompted her to follow their actions. Maroulla told me that her sister 'had it in her mind when all the refugees left Smyrna and they took earth and other sentimental things. So she opened the wardrobe and got the pictures and she put a little bit of earth in a bag'. The gesture shows a personal, instinctive desire by Maroulla's sister to take a piece of Cyprus with her, as a mnemonic device to store up memories of home for the future. However, it also displays a self-conscious recognition that, like the Asia Minor refugees before her, she needs to make her political claim to the land by carrying a handful of soil into exile. This recollection moved Maroulla to tears, as if she too was aware of the symbolism of the act and the fact that the family had still not been able to return. I asked Maroulla what had happened to the handful of soil and she told me that it had since been scattered on the graves of her grandmother and father in exile.

Harris Mettis, a representative of the Greek Orthodox church in London, confirmed to me the importance of soil to the refugee. On his own journey back to his village (which he had left voluntarily but had been unable to visit since the war), he too picked up soil and flowers as symbols of home and brought them back to London to put on his parents' graves. 'All refugees do the same,' he told me. 'You ask what they bring back and they all say soil and flowers.' In her research into the first return journeys of the Greek Cypriots in her own family, Dikomitis likens these acts to religious pilgrimages,

which involve a sacred journey and a retrieval of organic souvenirs to confirm that one has indeed visited the holy place (Dikomitis 2004: 11). Ben-Ze'ev also talks of the 'pilgrim like visits' that Palestinian refugees make to their return villages, which are ceremonial in nature (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 143).

Zetter explores the importance of burial for the refugee in his study of Greek Cypriot refugees internally displaced to the south of the island. For both Cypriot communities it is important to maintain and visit family graves, as Zetter explains: 'homage at the graveside of dead parents is a critical cultural rite. Exiled from access to the ancestral graves intensifies... the significance of this lost rite' (Zetter 1998: 310). Therefore, exile prevents Cypriot refugees from fulfilling their duties and also denies them the right to be buried alongside their ancestors in the village cemetery, thus breaking what is seen as a chain of connection and belonging to the land, linking the individual to the family, the community and, by extension, the nation.

The separation from ancestors buried in the home village is a source of ongoing pain for many refugees, as is the necessity to bury relatives in exile and not in their village cemetery. According to Zetter, a moment of transition in attitudes to the lost home and the home in exile occurred for many Greek Cypriot refugees internally displaced on the island when they were forced to bury their parents in the south (Zetter 1998: 312). The burial rites must now be observed in a new location, and return to old homes would imply leaving the remains of parents behind in exile in the south. Emine told me of her continuing sorrow that her mother was buried in exile and not in her village. Her mother had made a point of travelling to the village when each of her children were born, even though the family was living in Nicosia at the time:

Whenever she was due to have children she used to go to the village so she could say: 'Yes I had my children where I was born.' You know, she was so much in love [with her village]. But she couldn't die in that village.

The fact that the continuity with the village and its soil has been broken, further reduces the possibility of return to the lost home. Emine was similarly distressed on a return journey to her village to find the cemetery was 'just a field', empty of stones marking the resting places of her ancestors. The destruction or neglect of cemeteries erases the memory of the communities buried there and potentially weakens their claim to the land.

There is something tangible about soil or earth which seems to lend itself to representation as the most basic component of the home or homeland. The earth appears to be the very foundation on which a country is built, something organic reaching far back into history. As Jepson points out, 'Soil is the... basis of territory and a potent symbol of the homeland. It appeals to a primordial sense of belonging and attachment, of rootedness' (Jepson 2006: 161). However, she goes on to point out that while 'soil is one of the key symbols of the homeland, the basis of a country, the vessel for its dead, ...in reality, it shifts, it can be moved around, it can be layered up, dug up... and is, in fact, perpetually created anew by the action of weather and erosion' (Jepson 2006: 168). There is no permanence, therefore, only the suggestion of permanence. Yet for the refugee who has been forced to leave their home against their will, it is this very appearance of permanence which may seem to be attractive, alongside national narratives of belonging and entitlement.

Recreating the rural

There are other ways in which Cypriots in London try to recreate the rural aspects of the home they have left behind. Trips out to the country or to the seaside are common and Cypriots often joke about how they were conspicuous on the beaches of Clacton or Brighton because of their large extended family groups, noise and smoking kebabs. As Bülent told me, there would be 'about 10 people in one little car… And then we go somewhere… just like a field or something. It's kind of like going back to Cyprus where you just drive into the forest… just get your food and… go somewhere… Because in Cyprus there is much more of an outdoor life'. Bülent sums up many aspects of the Cypriot home he left behind as a child – the outdoor life, the spontaneity that was possible when living in a warm climate, eating outdoors communally and the accessibility of the countryside. He also recognises that the Cypriots felt the need to replicate these customs once living in exile in the much less amenable climate of London.

Some London Cypriots have gone a step further in their desire to get closer to the nature they left behind and rather than just visiting the countryside, they want to own a piece of it. Harris Mettis, of the Greek Orthodox Church, told me that some Cypriots buy small pieces of land in the UK to remind them of the fact that they were once landowners. One person he knows bought 40 acres of apple trees in Kent and sold small plots to other Cypriots, including Mr Mettis. The land cannot be built on, but 'we go there at the weekend to feel like we're in the countryside and have a picnic,' he told me. For other Cypriots this desire to 'own' a piece of land is expressed through working on allotments. Father Georgiou describes his in-laws'

allotment as 'their only hope'. Meanwhile, Hasan sees his East London allotment as a place where 'I do physical work and get rid of the stress and aggression' as well as a place with 'a lot of trees'. He has enrolled on a horticulture course, which seems to fulfil a long-held desire to get back to the land. 'I always wanted to do something with plants and gardens,' he told me. Hasan's family became refugees three times and each time his family tried to cultivate the land, in their last village drying out and dividing the roots of an artichoke crop in a nearby village in order to plant anew in inhospitable soil.

The taste of Cyprus

Alongside the importance of plants, is the much documented place of food in the refugee and migrant imagination (Fieldhouse 1986, Hage 1997, Hirschon 1998, Mennell et al 1992, Sutton 2001). Food is a marker of cultural boundaries, a component of religious practices, a crucial element in the social economy of exchange and hospitality and a symbol of a family's economic wealth. Food is also one of the primary means of socialising children into a culture (Fieldhouse 1986: 4; Sutton 2001: 99). In addition, few things can evoke the times and places of the past better than the taste of a familiar food. Perhaps for this reason the food habits of migrants or refugees appear to be more resistant to change than other cultural factors such as dress or language (Fieldhouse 1986: 8; Mennell et al 1992: 79). While 'ethnic' restaurants may have more to do with economic good sense, as migrants cater to the 'cosmopolitan' tastes of their hosts (Hage 1997: 112-123; Mennell et al 1992: 80), the abundance of shops and eateries selling food from around the world attest to the enduring role of 'home' food for the migrant and the refugee in

global cities such as London. A walk down the Green Lanes area of Haringey, north London, uncovers a wealth of Cypriot shops and restaurants selling cheese, kebabs, bread and pastries, olives, herbs and vegetables. For Cypriot refugees these establishments offer the possibility of tasting home, as well as the opportunity for second and subsequent generations to be socialised into the culture of Cypriot food. Food is of great importance in Cyprus, as it is in all Mediterranean cultures. Pride is expressed in local dishes, particular fruits and vegetables, wine and sweets. Food is an important part of the Cypriot economy[3] and the Mediterranean diet has long been marketed as a guarantee of good health.

According to Fieldhouse, food plays multiple functions in society. These include the maintenance of relationships, providing a focus for communal activities, expressing love, as a demonstration of group boundaries and belonging, displaying piety and representing security (Fieldhouse 1986: preface). As Fieldhouse states: 'Food habits come into being and are maintained because they are effective, practical and meaningful behaviours in a particular culture' (Fieldhouse 1986: 4). Eating, therefore, is not just about the provision of adequate nourishment, but is also a coded practice which defines cultural and family behaviour. Sutton also makes the important point that 'food does not simply symbolise social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creation and recreation' (Sutton 2001: 102). This explains the persistence of food habits in Cyprus, as well as the expression of regional differences that were so important to individual villages in expressing their localised identity. Food in Cyprus isn't just what you eat, it is also who you are

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[3] Although this is no longer the case for northern Cyprus due to the unrecognised state's inability to trade with anyone except Turkey. .

and where you come from. Before partition, food also suggested the possibility of transcending boundaries between the two communities, as apart from slightly different names for popular foods such as *halloumi* or *hellim* cheese, there are many similarities in Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot cuisine.

As mentioned in chapter three, Hage believes the four elements of familiarity, security, community and a sense of possibility are needed by migrants in order for them to feel at home, (Hage 1997: 102). The first three of these can be found through food, which provides security through the fulfilment of basic needs, familiarity through the homely practices of food preparation and community through the act of communal eating (Hage 1997: 109). As well as creating a sense of being 'at home', Sutton sees the act of eating as loaded with cultural significance. In his study of the Greek island of Kalymnos he found that 'food can hide powerful meanings and structures under the cloak of the mundane and the quotidian' (Sutton 2001: 3). The repetition of food events (either daily meals or special feasts), systems of hospitality and food exchange, the preparation of food, the agricultural calendar and the use of eating to store memory all contribute to the cultural significance of food (Sutton 2001).

For the refugees in this study, food certainly played a part in maintaining their memories of home and in the cultural repetitions which gave them a sense of belonging in exile. When I asked them to describe their villages, many told me in detail about the food that was grown there. Salih still remembers the wide variety of produce from his mountain village, including 'hundreds of acres of vineyards', almonds, hazelnuts, plums and figs, as well

as vegetable plots of cucumbers, tomatoes and green beans. Because of the location of the village in the middle of a forest, villagers were also able to forage for wild mushrooms and herbs. Perhaps because of the abundance of his village, Salih more than any other person in the study equated the food of Cyprus with the ideal of a healthy and 'natural life'. He feels this contact with nature has been lost in exile and it is something he still longs to recreate. In a booklet about the destruction of the village[4] Salih states that: 'Because of the natural lifestyle, the clean air and clean water of the village, the people were very healthy... It was not unusual for villagers to live for over 100 years.'

For Maroulla, crops provided a way of marking the progress of the year, as well as the life of the village and the abundance of their food wealth:

> You know it was everything with the seasons... Olives start in October, November just before Christmas. We had the carobs in August and we had the harvest in May, June, July. We had the apricots. All around the year there was something for the women and the men to do.

Again, this connection with the seasons is in marked contrast with the ever-growing distance from the seasons in food production and retail in Britain and implies a close connection with the land. As well as symbolising the village, food is also emblematic of family and home life. Adrienne remembers her mother growing lots of vegetables in the garden for cooking, as well as keeping chickens and rabbits for food. She also recalls the family making their own butter, cheese, and *trahana* (a soup made out of cornmeal), as well as her initiation into the art of bread making as a girl:

> We used to do our own bread and my mum said to me one day: 'Come on will you do it?' ...I said: 'I think I'm gonna call my auntie Anna to help me'. She said: 'No ...you're gonna do everything in your own way'.

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[4] *The Destruction of Vroisha – A former Turkish Cypriot village on the island of Cyprus* (2004).

> And I used to put on this big oven and all this wood and wait, wait, wait. And this oven... is going to start get white so it's ready, so I used to burn my hair [laughs]. It was happy days.

Learning to make bread was obviously an important moment of enculturation and learning for Adrienne as a young girl, which is probably why she still remembers the incident. It displays the acquisition of a skill, which would have been essential for all Cypriot girls, and the preparation for adulthood when she would have been expected to take on the role as primary cook for her own family. For women who would not have been expected to work outside the home, there is a sense of pride in having learned the household skills necessary to care for their family. As Sutton states in his study of the Greek island of Kalymnos, shopping for and preparing food is a way for women to demonstrate intelligence and skill and was traditionally a source of power, while women who produced 'quick food' were looked down on as being of dubious character (Sutton 2001: 21; 132-133).

Hunger pangs

In contrast to the widely praised abundance of food in their villages, the scarcity of food during flight was much lamented by many of the refugees. This hunger was one of the first indications of the difficult times that lay ahead for many of those I spoke to. It is interesting to note that the majority of these stories of hunger came from women, perhaps because they were more closely involved with the food preparation and were, therefore, aware of the extent of their loss. Behiye, for example, remembers having to live for three months in a school after she fled her district of Nicosia in December 1963. Conditions were poor, with 40 people to one room, and she cried as she told

me how 'they used to give us one small piece of bread to eat'. Emine also remembers being enclaved in her village with little access to food:

> I remember starving because they wouldn't let anyone to come into the town with any food or anything... That town had lots of orange fields and we used to go and just steal oranges to eat... Most of the nights we used to go to bed with no bread, nothing to eat.

Adrienne, too, remembers being trapped in her village after the Turkish military arrived in 1974 with little access to food until the Red Cross started to provide it. For a culture in which food plays such an important part in defining family status, security, regional identity and hospitality, the lack of food is a severe blow. It is not only the physical hunger pangs that are felt, but also the initial pangs for the lost home. If home meant having access to an abundance of local produce, then the lack of food and the reliance on charity is a sharp indicator of the loss of that home.

While the traditions of hospitality persisted, with many of the refugees I spoke to being given food by family, neighbours or strangers, the inability to reciprocate such hospitality made these bittersweet memories. Eleni recalled an incident when she and her siblings, who were all young children, were queuing to buy food at the village shop, which couldn't cope with the extra demands of the newly arrived refugees. The lady next door, who knew their wait would be futile, invited them in for food and coffee. 'She made us plain boiled pasta and that was the most fantastic meal we ever had,' Eleni told me. 'She didn't know us from Adam but that was the spirit, I guess, at the time.' More than anything else during the interview, this incident upset Eleni, whether because of the memory of the woman's kindness or the sudden loss of a former stable life. Her gesture may also have had another purpose. As

Sutton explains, acts of food generosity can be used to elaborate notions of group identity, especially when confronted with the challenges of modern identity rather than 'a lost past in which generosity made up the shared substance of everyday life' (Sutton 2001: 16-17). This hospitality towards refugees, therefore, as well as being an act of human kindness, may have been an affirmation of Greek Cypriot or Turkish Cypriot identity by members of the same community, at a time when group identity was seen to be under threat. The 'spirit at the time' that Eleni is referring to is perhaps an exaggerated sense of group solidarity during war, when the divisions between the two communities were exacerbated and some felt the need to publicly express their loyalty to the group.

Many male refugees also expressed distress at having to leave behind the livestock and crops that had provided some food security for the family. Nick told me how he delayed his flight from the village, making his family leave before him while he stayed behind to feed the chickens:

> We hadn't eaten any of our tomatoes which were... ripe. I fed my chickens and watered them. Then I freed the pigeons. I opened the door of the pigeons and I let them go, but the chickens were still there.

His recollection that the tomatoes were ready to pick shows both an intimate relationship to the land, as well as a heightened memory about the moment of flight, which is common among many refugees. Meanwhile, his release of the pigeons is deeply symbolic of the desire for freedom felt by the refugees who were entering a period when their choices had been vastly reduced. Eleni also told me how her grandfather had got off the coach which was transporting the fleeing villagers and walked 10 miles back to the village to feed his chickens. He arrived later at the school-cum-refugee camp, with his chicken shed and

chickens. 'He thought it would be useful… So we had some chicken to eat.'
These men obviously feel some distress at being unable to provide for their
families, as well as pain at leaving behind the food supplies that they thought
would keep them nourished.

Festivals

The importance of food in Cyprus can also be seen through the festivals that
celebrate the produce or flowers of a particular time of year or a particular
village. And while in no way as abundant as they were in Cyprus, such
festivals still occur in London and offer a way for the community to bond
around a shared history and memory of the Cyprus that was left behind.
Village festivals in Cyprus are remembered as a time of celebration and took
on a number of forms, as they do in many cultures. Such festivals contributed
to the 'rites and rituals associated with the village and its setting' according to
Zetter (Zetter 1998: 310), and were, therefore, an integral part of the Cypriot
experience of home. Fieldhouse outlines four main types of festival – ecofests
(celebrating seasonal events); theofests (celebrating religious events); secular
festivals (celebrating national or political events); and personal rituals such as
weddings and funerals (Fieldhouse 1986: 95). All of these were, and are,
present in Cyprus and many of my interviewees recalled ecofests in particular,
with theofests being particularly relevant for the Orthodox Christian Greek
Cypriots. All festivals of whatever kind seem to focus on eating and
showcasing local culinary specialities. As Fieldhouse states: 'Rituals and
celebrations are usually centred around food, and sometimes the type of food
served can define the event' (Fieldhouse 1986: 75). Ahmet recalls the

summer festival in a large nearby village, which attracted both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots who showed off their produce. 'All the villages will make their own... pies or whatever, the Cypriot dishes and kebabs and sell it there,' he told me. Meanwhile, Eleni remembers the festival of Agios Fokas in her village, which would attract people from neighbouring villages, bringing the 'kind of home-made things that you only got in those days if you went to these festivals', such as *lokmades/lokma* (fried dumplings in syrup). The annual repetition of such festivals marked the passing of the year and gave the seasons a local flavour and colour that contributed to the specific qualities of home in a Cypriot village.

Both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots remember religious festivals too, with Christian festivals, including Easter, often recalled and Ramadan mentioned by some of the Turkish Cypriots. In spite of their different religions, however, members of both communities used to attend and celebrate each other's festivals. Although imbued with religious significance for the Greek Cypriots, Easter also held a cultural significance as a seasonal celebration for the Turkish Cypriot community. Hasan recalls that at Easter 'the Greeks used to paint their eggs, boil them with onions and poppies to get different colours'. The Turkish Cypriots joined in the celebrations, he believed, because they coincided with an ancient shamanistic festival on 9 March. In a study of Greek refugees from the Asia Minor population exchange of the 1920s, Hirschon also refers to refugees' memories of food exchange between Turks and Greeks during the festivals of Easter and Ramadan (Hirschon 1998: 29). Such recollections point to the fact that rather than religious festivals necessarily being a marker of difference between communities, they may also bring

people together in regions where co-existence has been possible. When the border restrictions were relaxed in Cyprus at Easter in 2003, one eyewitness told me that Greek Cypriots gathered at the checkpoint to give traditional Easter cheese pastries to the Turkish Cypriots crossing into south Nicosia. You knew who had crossed the border, she said, from the sesame seeds that had fallen onto their clothes from the pastries.

Cypriots making return journeys to their lost homes have once again experienced this reciprocal hospitality. When I was in Cyprus during the week the borders opened, I heard many stories of food and flowers being carried back across the Green Line. A group of young Greek Cypriots were offered a bag of oranges by an old Turkish Cypriot man now living in their parents' town Morphou (Güzelyürt), who insisted that they take them back to their parents as a reminder of home. When my partner Deniz's aunts, Ayten and Shima, returned to see their village in the south, they were greeted by the Greek Cypriot priest who had known them as children who gave them a huge jar of local olives as a reminder of the village. Another young Greek Cypriot couple asked the Turkish Cypriots living in their parents' house for something to prove they had been to the right house. The woman now living there cut a huge bunch of white lilies, which had been planted by the Greek Cypriot owner decades earlier and were in bloom in exactly the same place as they had always been, to take back as a symbol that the house remained. These exchanges were symbols of hope at a time when spirits were high and they illustrate the importance that food and plants have in demonstrations of hospitality and intimations of home and belonging.

In exile in London, while hospitality takes place at an individual level, the celebration of shared festivals appears to have been minimal. Peter talks of how a Turkish Cypriot neighbour has for years shared his homemade wine with him. However, the Cyprus wine festival, which takes place at Alexandra Palace in north London every year, is a solely Greek Cypriot affair. While this is not explicit on the publicity material, no attempt is made to include the Turkish Cypriot community in the event[5], which is sponsored by London Greek Cypriot newspaper *Parikiaki*. Some Cypriots, however, do try to continue festivals in London in the spirit of the past, while adapting them to the circumstances of the present. Eleni, who works at a Cypriot women's centre, told me that the day before our interview was Cleansing Monday, the beginning of Lent in the Orthodox Christian calendar. The women at the centre had followed the traditional culinary preparations, spending the whole weekend making only green food, with no oil or animal produce. Living in London not Cyprus, however, they had to adapt the celebration to their new surroundings, as Eleni explained:

> Back home... people go out into the fields and it's like a spring celebration and you take all your bits of food... out there and fly kites and... sing a lot. But we can't do that here so we just lay tables in the centre and make do... But yes it's holding on to your traditions one way or another.

For the women at the centre, such occasions are obviously an opportunity to re-enact traditions, reaffirm their collective identity and prove their culinary skills. While it could never be like it was 'back home', the women were still 'all excited', Eleni told me, to be continuing the traditional celebration.

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[5] This may be partly due to the fact that northern Cyprus is no longer a wine producer, since it now imports the majority of its wine from Turkey. However, it is probably also because the event is highly politicised and includes stalls for Greek Cypriot political organisations.

Cypriot food in London

The London into which Cypriot refugees arrived 30 or 40 years ago was a very different place from today. Because there has been a Cypriot migrant community in London since the 1950s, most of the refugees were able to find Cypriot food – especially in the Cypriot area of Green Lanes – though some had difficulties at first. For example, Behiye remembers in the early days that her mother used to send her *hellim* cheese in a big jug from Cyprus because she couldn't find it when she arrived.

The majority of the refugees I interviewed have continued to eat Cypriot dishes throughout exile. Research conducted into the persistence of immigrant food consumption has shown that eating habits are one of the slowest factors to change in a new environment, in spite of strong pressures from the host society (Fieldhouse 1986: 8; Mennell et al 1992: 79). This is not surprising given assertions that food can signify group belonging and identity, mark social boundaries and provide a feeling of security (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 149; Fieldhouse 1986: 82; Hage 1997: 100). As Fieldhouse asserts, 'food readily becomes an expression of the search for belongingness' (Fieldhouse 1986: 82). This is likely to be more marked for the refugee, forcibly removed from home and from the cultural habits that defined everyday life. Eating home food in exile can be a crucial reminder of the physical home that has been left behind and traditional dishes can become a site of remembrance, according to Ben-Ze'ev. She refers to Palestinian chef Sufian Al-Ahmadi who described the chicken dish *Msakhan* as 'the atmosphere, the aroma, the taste, the memory of the olive tree and the taboon, the garden and above all, home' (Al-Ahmadi quoted in Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 152). Meanwhile, in her life

history of Susanna Mwana-uta, an Angolan refugee, Powles recounts the importance of the particular food *shima* (porridge) to the woman's understanding of home (Powles 2002). To eat *shima* is to be at home, to be satisfied and rested, displaying 'how important sustenance is to the notion of home, how food is linked to individual and social identity' (Powles 2002: 89).

It is unclear whether refugees eat home food in an attempt to recreate the lost home or simply because they are continuing long-established food habits. Hage argues that the home-building activities of immigrants or exiles – such as the eating of home food – are actually connected to a desire to feel 'at home' rather than to return home (Hage 1997: 102). The nostalgia for home food, therefore, is seen by him as the desire to rebuild the homely feelings that existed back home. For other commentators, however, there is a more explicit relationship between homeland food and the yearning for the lost home. In Sutton's study of food practices on the Greek island of Kalymnos, he found that islanders used food as a way of storing memory for the future, through the repetition of feast days, everyday meals and foods particular to the island (Sutton 2001). For those islanders who moved away, the eating of food from home resurrected these stored memories, so that a pot of basil growing in London smells 'like Greece' (Sutton 2001: 74). For refugees in particular, Sutton believes, food plays a role in reconstructing a sense of wholeness. He speaks out 'against the celebration of fragmentation in postmodern analysis', arguing that 'food is essential to counter tendencies towards fragmentation' for those living away from home (Sutton 2001: 75-77). Food for Cypriot refugees appears to serve both purposes, its preparation in London helping to engender the feeling of being at home, while its use in

festivals and at important meals is a way of recalling the lost home and keeping it alive.

There is also a specific desire among refugees and migrants to eat food that actually comes from home. Sutton refers to the food parcels of herbs, honey and figs sent by mothers on Kalymnos to their migrant children, as well as the suitcases of feta cheese brought by islanders to the UK even though it is readily available here. This practice can be seen among Cypriots too, who pack their bags with Cypriot food on their journeys back from the island, even though these items can all be bought in London. This desire to ingest home food is discussed in detail by Ben-Ze'ev who looks at the almost ritualistic way in which Palestinian refugees pick and eat food from their land back home (Ben-Ze'ev 2004). Return visits include the picking of herbs, wintergreens and especially fruit picked from pre-1948 trees to take back home and share with other family members.

The Cypriot refugees I spoke to had mostly continued to eat Cypriot food in Britain. Those who came as children were enculturated in the food habits of their refugee parents, who carried on cooking as they had back home. 'We had the same kind of food when we were kids that we would have had in Cyprus. My parents didn't change anything,' said Bülent. For many of this generation, however, exposure to 'cosmopolitan' eating practices in London means that as adults they eat a mixture of Cypriot and other food. Stephen eats Greek food at his mother's house, but when he and his wife eat out 'the last thing we want to do is go to a Greek restaurant,' he says.

Many of the younger Cypriot refugees in the study lacked the patience to make time-consuming dishes such as *baklava* and *dolmades/dolmas*. 'I've

never cooked *dolmades* really because it takes too long,' confessed Sophia. 'You know you have to sit there and wrap rice in vine leaves! I haven't got the time for that.' This is in contrast to the pride that some of the older women take in still being able to cook these traditional dishes, which show off their skill. Stella was pleased that she had been able to teach her daughter to bake bread and make Easter and Christmas biscuits, 'so she knows how to cook all the traditional foods', but accepts that her daughter also wants to cook Italian and English food. Some of those I spoke to were concerned that their children did not eat Cypriot food. Bülent told me that his children ate 'chicken nuggets and god knows what, all the junk, all the rubbish you're not supposed to eat'. So he had absorbed the message from his parents that home-cooked, Cypriot food was healthier, even though he 'used to hate the food we used to eat as kids'. As previously stated, food habits do appear to be persistent, but the exposure to new foods and cultures gradually changes these habits.

For some of the refugees, food from home is also equated with quality and good health. Although young when he came to London, Salih told me how he still likes to eat mostly Cypriot food. 'We mainly stick to our own cultural diet which is a very healthy diet,' he explained. 'This is because we are Cypriots and we would like to follow the Cypriot style of diet.' Salih's statement shows that for him, as discussed earlier, Cypriot food – especially the food from his village – is equated with a natural life and with good health. As well as choosing food out of habit and for health reasons, for Salih, to eat Cypriot is to be Cypriot. This may be because food serves as an identity marker, drawing cultural boundaries in order to define what it means to be a Cypriot, which may be especially important for refugees who did not choose to

leave home. If, as Mennell et al state, sharing food among members of the same community 'defines and reaffirms insiders as socially similar' (Mennell et al 1992: 115), it is likely that the need to redefine group boundaries and belonging becomes more important in the unfamiliar context of exile.

The 'ethnic' food industry

Food has also been a way of making a living for many Cypriot migrants and refugees in London. Many Cypriots have been associated with the food industry since they came to London, running delicatessens, fish and chip shops, kebab shops, 'ethnic' grocers, or Cypriot restaurants and meze bars – complete with plate throwing on a Saturday night. Adrienne, for example, runs a Cypriot delicatessen, yet her description of the two best sellers in the shop makes an interesting point about authenticity. One is an invented recipe she calls a 'Cyprus salad' and the other 'is not a Greek salad, it just tastes nice'. Therefore, while the Cypriot shops and eateries in London appear to offer home food to migrants and refugees, it must also be remembered that they are catering for the population of London, which has come to expect a wide choice of 'ethnic' food. As Mennell et al point out 'the commercialisation of ethnic cuisine makes its authenticity problematic' (Mennell et al 1992: 80). And Hage, in his study of the Lebanese in Sydney, talks of a 'cosmo-multiculturalism' present in cities such as London and Sydney, which sees food as a tourist adventure for the middle classes, a 'multiculturalism of availability' which is undertaken under the Anglo gaze (Hage 1997: 123-132). While some of the Cypriot shops and restaurants in London obviously also serve the Cypriot community, it is important to remember that many Cypriot

refugees (especially men) who arrived in London had little choice but to enter employment in the food industry. This is a warning not to romanticise the presence of Cypriot and other 'ethnic' foods as evidence of integration and the success of multiculturalism.

As Adrienne illustrated, the food served in Cypriot restaurants or delicatessens is not necessarily authentic and, as older Cypriot women often assert, 'real' food only comes from the mother's kitchen. Indeed, some older Cypriot women stubbornly refuse to eat in restaurants – either in London or Cyprus – because of what they perceive as the expensive, poor quality and inauthentic food on offer. For the refugee, the special role of home cooking – which takes place within the family – is tied up with the idea of 'authentic' cooking from the lost home. Hage describes the strong association among Lebanese migrants between the longing for the national home and the desire for homemade food. 'The yearning for a "mother's mouthful" is one and the same as the yearning for back home,' he states (Hage 1997: 101). Similarly, Chilean refugee Agosin talks of her persistent dreams of the grandparents' house she loved as a child, with 'steps leading to the closet beneath the kitchen where all good things to eat were kept' (Agosin 1994: 148).

Hospitality

In Cypriot culture, food is also used as a way to display hospitality and therefore to oil the wheels of social exchange. This ranges from the offer of a cup of coffee and a sweetmeat to a house guest, to the extravagant displays of hospitality at Cypriot weddings. Weddings in Cyprus were protracted celebrations, lasting three days in many villages, and involving vast amounts

of food, dancing and music in the open air. While not lasting as long in exile, the importance of offering food to large numbers of wedding guests is a custom that has persisted, as a way of showing wealth and adherence to cultural norms. Similarly, small acts of hospitality were seen as a measure of Cypriotness among those I interviewed and women were especially keen to point out to me the traditions of Cypriot hospitality that they were adhering to. When telling me about the wine she makes from grapes grown in her London garden, Stella told me to 'come and have a drink one day'. Later one of the volunteers at the women's centre where the interview took place brought in a bowl of cherries. 'That's Cypriot hospitality for you,' Stella remarked before going on with her story. Eleni, meanwhile, interrupted her story due to the sudden realisation that she hadn't given me any food:

> You can't go to a Greek house and not be fed. Unlike me. I didn't feed you, did I? [She leaves the room and returns with a plate.] There's some cake. This is tahini pastry, I don't know if you've tried that before. And this is a very aromatic cake.

Rather than simply displaying politeness, both these women seem to be very aware of presenting a good image of Cypriot hospitality. A narrative of communal hospitality requires a demonstration of that hospitality, as if to say: this is how we Cypriots behave and this is what it means to be a Cypriot, even in exile. The insistence on hospitality by Stella and Eleni does appear to be gendered and the preparation of food in Cyprus was tied to definitions of appropriate female behaviour and the keeping of a good home. A good housewife was someone who prepared nourishing food for her family and was able to offer adequate hospitality to guests. While both Stella and Eleni were independent, educated and by no means 'traditional' in their outlook, it is likely

that they are nonetheless influenced by such codes of behaviour. Stella is proud to tell me that she makes her own *dolmades* from vine leaves in her garden and also has a traditional Cypriot oven outdoors. 'I do my own bread, my biscuits and all my traditional food. I'm very much a housewife as well,' she says. The relationship between home, home-cooked food and women obviously persists in exile for these Cypriots. Emine, who doesn't like cooking, acknowledges what she sees as her deviation from 'normal' Cypriot behaviour by saying, 'I'm lazy. I'm not very keen on food. You know I'm not a proper Cypriot I suppose.' In spite of the fact that she runs a busy dressmaking business and is also an actress, she recognises that she has neglected one of the roles that is expected of a Cypriot woman. This reflects Hirschon's study of Asia Minor refugees, where women's virtue before and after exile was measured by their skill in food preparation (Hirschon 1998: 150-151).

Conclusion

While plants, food and soil may at first glance appear to be superficial, this chapter shows that material aspects are crucial to the cultural and social understanding of home. The smell of jasmine, the taste of the season's first fruits, the ancient tree in the village square, the soil of the cemetery and the acres of olive groves are not simply a backdrop to the village, they are integral to the Cypriot experience of home. Even those refugees in the study who lived in the town still had a relationship with parents' and grandparents' villages and, as a result, there was a close relationship to the rural, which came across strongly in the narratives. In addition, individual narratives reflect the

use of aspects of the material home, such as trees and soil, in meta-narratives, which project images of the nation and national belonging.

The importance of the material home to the refugee can be seen in the pain that those making return journeys felt on seeing that the trees from their village had been felled. Similarly, the use of the apricot tree as a political symbol by the villagers of Agios Amvrosios shows how aspects of nature may become representative of home in exile, as a result of individual memories of the lived experience of home, as well as a reflection of larger political narratives which use nature as metaphor. Meanwhile, the ongoing desire to plant Cypriot plants in London gardens as reminders of home illustrates their role as 'mnemonic devices' (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 141), capable of conjuring up the fragrance of a Cypriot evening or the taste of Cypriot crops.

The persistence of Cypriot food habits in exile can be seen as a way of keeping alive the customs of the past, as a daily reminder of life in the lost home and also as a way for refugees to feel at home in exile. Eating Cypriot food is seen as a way of being Cypriot, and the health-giving properties associated with Cypriot food point to nostalgia for a life pre-exile which was seen as pure and authentic. Similarly, the ways in which foods are brought back from Cyprus implies the added importance of food that comes from home as a way of ingesting the essence of Cyprus. Just as festivals reaffirmed village and religious identity in Cyprus through food, so they continue to do so in exile.

Like the spatial, temporal and relational aspects of home, the material home demonstrates the enormity of what was lost by the refugee, most of which can never be regained. Once again, however, it also displays the

ingenuity and resilience of the refugee in adapting to the challenges of exile. Cypriot refugees have used the material aspects of home to remind them of the lost home, at the same time as making them feel at home in the context of exile. Being able to grow Cypriot plants or eat Cypriot food in London is perhaps one of the purest forms of the refugee's transnational relationship with the two countries.

Chapter 6
Home is other people – the relational home

'When you are lost to ones you love, you will face south-southwest like the caged bird. At certain hours of the day, your body will be flooded with instinct, so much of you having been entered, so much of you having entered them.'
From *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels (1997: 169).

Introduction

We experience home on a daily basis through a series of interactions, negotiations, intimacies and exchanges with close kin, extended family and acquaintances. The relational home consists of social networks, as well as the habitual social practices that make us feel at home and the accumulated resources that arise from social networking. According to Zetter, home is 'not just physically bounded space, but a living organism of relationships and traditions stretching back into the past' (Zetter 1998: 310). The refugee, however, faces the often sudden removal from these relationships and networks, which amounts to one of the greatest losses of exile. It represents the loss of companionship, the support of family members, the ability to act in a socially familiar environment and the social capital necessary for the community to function.

Cernea sees the experience of losing one's social networks as a form of poverty brought about by forced migration, describing it as 'social disarticulation', which amounts to the 'dismantling of communities' social organisation structures, the dispersal of informal and formal networks' which is 'an expensive yet unquantified loss of social capital' (Cernea 1996: 22). It is no wonder then that the experience of forced migration can be so debilitating for the refugee. What is more striking, however, is the level of success

refugees have in rebuilding and adapting social networks, learning how to function – and sometimes feel 'at home' – in a new social environment, while tapping into new and old sources of social capital.

The relational home, I suggest, can be broken down into three key components – people, social practices and the resources arising out of social networking. People provide the character – and the characters – of home, offering family relationships, companionship, friendship, sexual relationships, entertainment, support networks of extended kin, work associates, as well as scapegoats and enemies. Home is often, in many meaningful ways, defined by other people and the quality of these relationships can determine whether or not someone feels 'at home'. As one of my interviewees, Sophia, explained to me: 'If I had to say where my home is, obviously it's where you are and where your family is. For me my home is where… my daughter is.'

A group of people living in a particular location or with something distinctive in common together form what is loosely termed a community, and all but the most marginalised interact in a variety of complex social networks every day. As Geertz states, 'man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' (Geertz 1973: 5). Without even thinking about it, we rely on these networks to function. A relative collects our child from school. We carry our elderly neighbour's rubbish out each week because it is too heavy for him to manage. Our sister-in-law shares the glut of apples from the tree in her garden. We unload the troubles of the day with a friend over a drink. These small exchanges are examples of the systems of communality and reciprocity that characterise society and provide the everyday texture of home.

It is not only the people we are surrounded by that comprise the relational home, but also the daily social practices we collectively engage in that make our surroundings familiar and define the rhythm of our lives. Bourdieu uses the term 'habitus' to refer to the repeated actions, which socialise us into a habitual mode of behaviour within our community (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 126; Bourdieu 1990: 53). As a result, we feel at home because we are living within 'a symbolic system that is apparently self-evident' (Bottomley 1992: 38). Such systems of behaviour become second nature and may refer to everyday activities, as well as more complex moral codes. Compliance with the prevailing symbolic system does not, of course, imply acceptance of it and some may feel forced to conform while others choose (or feel compelled) to reject the accepted systems of behaviour.

The third aspect of the relational home that needs to be considered concerns the resources that are produced by social networking. Social networks represent opportunities for 'interpersonal contact and reciprocal exchanges' (Burrell 2006: 142), determining 'which persons are available for interaction, what resources are available for use, and the extent to which these resources can flow to network members' (Wellman et al 1988: 153). One of my interviewees, Dimitris (an accomplished social networker and chair of his village committee in Britain), described his village as 'a big community [where] everyone was interrelated with one another'. Crucially, as well as offering social support, Dimitris believed this 'mixing blood' facilitated employment, telling me that 'everybody stayed in the village, they had plenty of work, they didn't have to go anywhere'. This accumulation of resources within a social network is described by Bourdieu as 'social capital', which he

defines as 'the actual or potential resources', which arise from a 'network of more or less institutionalised relationships' (Bourdieu 1986: 249). Such resources are built up over time, may be inherited and are characterised by reciprocity rather than purely financial considerations.

Social networks

The picture painted by my interviewees of Cypriot life before violence erupted is one of intimate contact between close kin, extended family and fellow villagers. Maroulla, like many of those I spoke to, described her childhood experience of village life as one of physical and social proximity, with her uncles' and grandparents' houses close by, providing plenty of cousins for her to play with. 'It was really nice, family together,' she told me. The networks of people that make up the relational home range from these intimate relationships within the family to the nodding recognition of distant acquaintances, yet together they form what is often loosely referred to as community and provide home with its own character. Pre-war Cyprus is remembered by many as a place of happy communality, although such memories are, of course, selective and governed by the needs of the present and prevailing political discourses. 'It was like a big family really,' Stella tells me, recalling Famagusta as: 'a very lively place, very cosmopolitan. Very much a small friendly place [where] everyone knew one another'.

As well as providing a sense of belonging, social networks in Cyprus were able to facilitate important outcomes for their members, such as arranging marriages and distributing employment. The codes of behaviour that governed Cypriot society created a framework, which determined, for

example, who was suitable for marriage and who should be prioritised in the search for employment. (It is important to remember, however, that such codes are not accepted by all and do not treat all equally.)

Rather than being one dimensional, social networks in Cyprus often had multiple functions, as Adrienne illustrates with this example:

> I remember when I was playing with my cousins and in the evening we used to sit outside and all the ladies, our mums, they used to make homemade pasta. They were talking and gossiping about the neighbours, who done this and that. And I just sat there and listened.

These women's networks had a practical function in that they facilitated basic chores such as food preparation and caring for children, as well as offering a social function by providing companionship and an opportunity for the exchange of gossip. This, in turn, supported the maintenance of moral codes among women and the socialisation of young girls into what was expected of them in Cypriot society.

Community and belonging

The term 'community', according to Bauman, is often mobilised as a feelgood concept to conjure up the image of a warm, comfortable and safe place, where 'we all understand each other well' and there are no strangers (Bauman 2001: 1-2). When talking about their villages in Cyprus, many refugees projected an image of a tight-knit community, which conforms to this idea of home as a place of safety and comfortable predictability. For example, Emine describes her village as a 'very close community. Everybody knew each other and... when we went out or we used to go to another city to visit someone... the doors were unlocked.' Similar pictures are painted by older people in Britain, referring to a safe and sociable communal past. A sense of

community is, Hage believes, essential if one is to feel 'at home' (Hage 1997: 103). He describes community as living among people one can recognise as 'one's own' and being recognised by them as such. However, 'one's own' people do not have to be like oneself in essentialist ethnic or cultural terms, but rather people with whom one feels at ease.

Rather than necessarily reflecting reality then, the concept of community is constructed, yet its appeal lies in the fact that it suggests the possibility of belonging (Burrell 2006: 142; Delanty 2003: 1; Jenkins 1996: 110). As Burrell states, 'it is human nature to want to belong, to be accepted, to conform and to feel secure' (Burrell 2006: 167). Kasim confirmed this when he told me, 'a sense of belonging gives you confidence'. Burrell agrees that, 'being surrounded by other people who can reciprocate, socially, culturally and emotionally makes community a powerful force' (Burrell 2006: 167), which has the potential to give its members the confidence to act by making them feel part of a larger entity. However, as Yuval-Davis reminds us, belonging is neither fixed nor singular (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199), and may depend on many factors such as race, class, ethnicity, gender, age, political allegiances and life experiences.

According to Yuval-Davis, belonging is both political and emotional, reflecting people's 'desire for attachments', as well as the 'social and economic locations, which at each historical moment, have particular implications *vis-à-vis* the grids of power relations in society' (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199; 202). Belonging, therefore, depends upon the historical, cultural and political context within which it is located, a fact that is all the more evident at times of conflict and displacement. Yuval-Davis has defined what

she calls a 'politics of belonging' which 'comprises specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectivities that are, at the same time, themselves being constructed by these projects' (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199). This means that different aspects of belonging may appear as more important at particular moments, depending on prevailing discourses. In Cyprus, for example, membership of an ethnic group may have been paramount for many during the period of British colonialism or during the conflict post-independence, regardless of whether such an identity was chosen or imposed. However, left-wing Cypriots may have prioritised class belonging, while women may have believed that gender was more important. Cockburn's study of women in Cyprus, for example, refers movingly to the empathy felt by women caught up in the war towards their counterparts on the 'other side' who were also suffering (Cockburn 2004: 87-88).

Whose community or who is community?

Members of a community are understood to have something in common, such as a shared identity or values (Stewart and Strathern 2003: 4); and the 'mask' of community serves to obscure internal differences (Jenkins 1996: 108), so that belief in the integrity of the community can be preserved. However, this necessitates the exclusion of those deemed to be outside the community at any given time. Community, therefore, has its negative side too, as Bauman warns, and freedom often has to be sacrificed for security, while 'safety' and 'mutual understanding' necessitate the exclusion of outsiders, leading to an oppressive exclusivity (Bauman 2001: 4). The refugee could be said to epitomise the outsider, having been excluded from their home, village or

country. Their experience prior to exile may be typified by increased marginalisation from society and the erosion of social networks. After seeking refuge in another society, refugees often find themselves once again labelled as outsiders, either through the legal processes of the state in which they seek asylum or as a result of racism and xenophobia from the indigenous 'community'.

Community, therefore, does not function in the same way for all its members, and different discourses of inclusion and exclusion may be mobilised at different junctures. As a result, the 'politics of belonging' is a politics concerned with 'the boundaries that separate the world population into "us" and "them"' (Yuval-Davis 2006: 204). Such boundaries are only too apparent in Cyprus where divisions between the different ethnic communities, as well as between left and right, men and women and 'indigenous' and 'settler' populations have been exploited through different political agendas. When talking about the concept of community in Cyprus it is impossible to ignore the fact that in politics, the media and in everyday life for much of the last century, reference has been made not to community in general but to the country's *two* communities – the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot[1]. The history of community in Cyprus – and of Cypriot communities in the diaspora – has been a fraught one. Using Hage's reference points for a community as a group with 'shared symbolic forms, shared morality, shared values and most importantly perhaps, shared language' (Hage 1997: 103), it is not always obvious why the polarisation of the two communities in Cyprus became so

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[1] This polarisation does not, of course, take into account the smaller longstanding minorities such as those of Maronite and Armenian origin, nor the more recent Turkish 'settlers' in the north, nor migrants in the south, such as the large numbers of Filipina women often employed in Greek Cypriot homes as 'domestics'. The island has also long been home to British and other migrants, as well as British, US and UN armed forces.

entrenched. Certainly many of the symbolic forms, morality and values that typify the two communities are shared to a large extent, the most obvious differences being language and religion. Of course, Britain's divide and rule policy did much to exacerbate the differences between the two communities, through separate education and divisive employment policies (Camp 1998: 139; Pollis 1998: 86). This included the employment of Greek Cypriots in the lucrative field of bureaucracy and the Turkish Cypriots in the police force (Pollis 1998: 94). Bülent, whose father was a policeman, confirmed that this employment policy 'fuelled communal hatred,' as the 'Turkish minority was used by the British'. Another factor which stressed difference between the two communities was the development of Greek Cypriot ethnicity in opposition to both British and Turkish Cypriot identity, as an articulation of nationalism and the anti-colonialist movement (Anthias 1992: 49-50). Similarly, the expansionist ambitions of both Greece and Turkey at various stages in history have emphasised differences between the two communities for political reasons.

When looking at the meaning of the relational home for Cypriot refugees, therefore, one is faced with a conundrum. The experience of home in Cyprus before the conflict was one in which the two communities lived side by side, often without difficulty. As a result, Cypriot social networks outside the family may very well have included members of both communities[2]. However, the Cypriots in this study became refugees precisely as a result of a protracted and violent disagreement over the nature of community and

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[2] Social networks within the family are unlikely to have contained members of the other community, as marriage between the two communities was rare in Cyprus and remains rare in London.

belonging in Cyprus. Indeed, refugees were created by conflict over the meaning of the relational home.

The image of community portrayed by my interviewees is indeed a contradictory one. Many talked of good relationships before the war. In his mixed village, Cemal told me, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots 'had a great relationship... There wasn't... any trouble at all'. Similarly, Andreas said that in his village the two communities were 'very, very friendly'. There is obviously nostalgia for the time before the island was divided and many Cypriots from both communities try to perpetuate the ideal of a bi-communal Cyprus. However, Kasim urged caution when referring to the past:

> The two communities were living together, they say, but they were not really. Maybe there was a mixed village, maybe there were mixed towns but these mixed villages or mixed towns always had Greek quarters and Turkish quarters. They always lived separately really.

There may be a number of reasons why so many Cypriots stress harmonious relationships between the two communities before the war. It is especially important for Greek Cypriots to promote the narrative of peaceful co-operation as it supports the prevailing campaign for the island to be reunited, by reinforcing the idea that the two communities will be able to live together again. Most of my Greek Cypriot interviewees made reference to good relationships between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Stephen said: 'I've heard a million rumours about [bad relationships between the two communities] but I've never come across anything.' Meanwhile, Stella sadly recalled her Turkish Cypriot friend who was a teacher in Famagusta: 'He was always saying to me: "We will marry our children so our people stop fighting."

...We had meals together, we exchanged presents and we never thought he's Turkish and we're Greek.'

By choosing to stress these stories and direct anger about the war towards the Turkish army (who were responsible for the majority of the violent attacks on Greek Cypriots) rather than the Turkish Cypriots, these Greek Cypriots are able to sustain the narrative of peaceful cohabitation. This echoes the official discourse that can be found in Greek Cypriot government literature, which states that one of the 'results of the Turkish invasion and subsequent occupation' was that 'Greek and Turkish Cypriots, who for 300 years had lived together intermingled throughout the island, were now artificially separated' (Government of Cyprus 2009). Yet Turkish Cypriots' experiences of violence in the decade and a half leading up to the war do not always match this image. Even though my Turkish Cypriot interviewees also told me of happy memories of the two communities living side by side, there were many stories of inter-communal violence, fear and a sense of danger leading up to their decision to leave Cyprus.

Behiye remembers how 'we used to close ourselves in the house because we were scared' of violent attacks. She still has dreams in which she goes back to live in her house but, she tells me, she is 'scared to live there in case something bad happens'. Alpay also told me how he was 'scared to go out as a child to play in the village... They killed so many people, so many people went missing'. Of course, there are also political reasons why the violence between the two communities might be stressed by Turkish Cypriots (without doubting the veracity of these individual narratives). The government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus promoted the establishment of a

permanent Turkish Cypriot state in the north and as such propagated the idea that the two communities are unable to live together, stressing the violence committed by Greek Cypriots against Turkish Cypriots. For example, the government states that: 'The Turkish Cypriot people were… saved from the agony of total extermination only by the timely intervention of Turkey', and that following this, 'Turkish Cypriots preferred to move to the northern part of the island and Greek Cypriots to the south' (TRNC 2008: 6).

While acknowledging patterns emerging in Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot narratives regarding relationships between the two communities, it is also important to recognise that feelings about a pre-division Cyprus are not simply divided along community lines. In fact, many individuals displayed contradictions within their own narratives. Salih believes that the Greek Cypriot authorities burnt down his village, while Greek soldiers killed some of his fellow villagers. However, when recalling relationships between the two communities he talks fondly of Greek Cypriot musicians playing in the village cafés, which 'shows solidarity between the villagers and the Greek Cypriots as well. There was no conflict between our villagers and any of the communities in the area.' He squares this contradiction by separating out the Greek Cypriot authorities and soldiers from the 'ordinary' villagers. These two narratives possibly exist side by side so that he can continue to believe in Greek Cypriots as his 'compatriots', which ties in with his desire to be an open-minded and politically left-leaning individual, while at the same time allowing him to fight for reparations for the fact that he lost his land and became a refugee.

Similarly, belief in the impossibility of the two communities living together in the future is not the sole preserve of Turkish Cypriots. Adrienne told me that, unlike most Greek Cypriots, she would prefer the island to remain divided. 'I'd rather that it stayed like that, that's more secure for everybody. We don't want any more trouble,' she said. She did not express any animosity towards Turkish Cypriots, in fact she empathised with those who also lost their homes: 'I do feel sorry for them... it's not their fault.' However, she simply found the fear of what might happen in the future too much to bear, after having a particularly frightening experience during the war when she and fellow villagers were kept prisoners by Turkish soldiers.

Habitus and feeling 'at home'

The feeling of being 'at home' is in many ways generated by the experience of living within a socially familiar environment (Sørensen 1997: 145), where 'personal and social meaning are grounded' (Papastergiadis 1998: 2). According to Rapport and Dawson:

> One is at home when one inhabits a cognitive environment in which one can undertake the routines of daily life and through which one finds one's identity best mediated – and homeless when such a cognitive environment is eschewed (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 10).

This idea of home as a cognitive environment recalls Bourdieu's concept of habitus, which he describes as a 'socialised subjectivity' resulting from 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions' which act as 'principles which generate and organise practices and representations' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 126; Bourdieu 1990: 53). So, daily interactions and repeated actions socialise us into a habitual mode of behaviour, which is typical among our

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community or group. The process of constructing shared values and of passing them on to subsequent generations is an act of home building, in relational rather than physical terms, which usually takes far greater effort and investment than the construction of a house.

Although Bourdieu developed the concept of habitus to refer to different social and political conditions than those being studied here, it is nonetheless useful in describing the ways in which individuals are shaped by their social milieu, which then influences how they act. Habitus represents the attitudes that we inherit, which can be modified according to new conditions (Robbins 2000: 26-7). As Bottomley explains, 'each of us carries with her the collective history of her group or class, the sense of one's place described by Bourdieu as habitus... The social world therefore appears as a symbolic system that is apparently self evident' (Bottomley 1992: 38). Habitus is 'history turned into nature' in that the day-to-day experiences of an individual – and indeed of other individuals in the same group, community or class – contribute to what appears to be an instinctive way of behaving in a given environment (Bourdieu 1977: 78). This means that when habitus is in contact with the social world which produced it, 'it is like a "fish in water"... it takes the world about itself for granted' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 127). Of course, the durable dispositions of habitus acquired in childhood will be subject to gradual transformation in later life (Bottomley 1992: 122). However, people faced with sudden changes to their environment – in times of revolution or uprooting, for example – lack the time to adapt to the new situation and therefore find that they are 'at cross purposes' or 'think in a void' while their prior habitus has become 'obsolete' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 130). Refugees may be said

to have been subjected to such a sudden change in the social world in which they have been conditioned. Without the time to gradually adapt to a new situation, the refugee finds all at once that their 'instinctive' patterns of behaviour no longer fit. Where does this leave the refugee who becomes dislocated from their social world, their social networks and often their family too? Although initially living among other Turkish Cypriots in neighbouring villages, Salih described how the refugees from his village were unable to progress once they were removed from their social world. Although the villagers had been prosperous, once they became refugees, 'we were always poor and... in some cases we were treated as second class citizens... We did become dependent on other villagers and it wasn't very nice.'

In a study of Afghan women refugees, Khattak explains that home is 'a way of life, a way of being, a culture, and a way of thinking' and therefore leaving home is more than a change of place, it is 'a parting of ways with a life that one is familiar and comfortable with' (Khattak 2002: 106). So it was for Cypriot refugees, especially those whose social world had revolved around the village. Migrants and refugees find themselves living in political and economic systems constructed around a habitus entirely different from the one they knew (Bottomley 1992: 39). Eleni, who first came to the UK as a child after 1974, experienced this mismatch between life in Cyprus and England, when going to her cousins' school was a complete mystery. 'We didn't understand much of what was going on... they were doing totally different things to what we could, so we just watched... [We were] totally out of place.' Without any knowledge of the British education system she was unable to participate in any meaningful way in the school community. Her

prior experiences had not prepared her for this and the sudden move from Cyprus to England did not give her time to modify her attitudes or expectations. Becoming a fish *out* of water in this way leads to a lack of confidence, which was mentioned by a number of my interviewees. Ömer told me how the experience of the war and the preceding marginalisation of Turkish Cypriots had changed him: 'It made you lose confidence. You want to do something, you can't because you haven't got the power.' It is the loss of the power to act that signals the removal of the refugee from an environment which is familiar to them and within which they have the necessary information to operate successfully. As discussed earlier, a sense of belonging instils confidence and these refugees, in the initial stages of exile at least, have lost both their confidence and a sense of belonging.

Cypriot refugees, removed suddenly from the context which produced their habitus, had to engage in a complex and multi-layered strategy of renewed socialised subjectivity. While they remained a product of the habitus of their former life in Cyprus, they had to adapt swiftly to the rules of British society. Some never managed this and, as a result, remained largely marginalised. Stephen's parents, for example, found it difficult to adjust to a new social setting. 'They haven't moved on,' he told me. The older generation in particular may find it difficult to acquire the skills (especially language skills) and knowledge needed for them to prosper in a new context and often find themselves left behind as their children more easily develop hybrid identities, which may cause them to feel more distant and unfamiliar to their parents.

As well as learning the rules of British society, Cypriot refugees had to adapt to the familiar yet subtly different attitudes of the Cypriot community in

London. Cypriot refugees left behind the inter-communal violence of the 1960s, or experienced the war and the partition of the island in 1974, and landed in the midst of Cypriot migrants from the two communities living cheek by jowl in London. Unlike the refugees, most Cypriot migrants had not directly experienced violence and war, many worked together and younger or second-generation migrants had been to school with each other. So while refugees and migrants had much in common as co-ethnics, their experiences were often worlds apart. The sense of loss that many migrants couldn't understand was crucial to the refugees' sense of injustice and lack of resolution.

Cypriot refugees also had to learn how to maintain social networks across the diaspora, with family members who had been internally displaced in Cyprus, as well as those who travelled to countries such as Australia. In addition, these refugees have increasingly found themselves out of step with the prevailing culture in Cyprus, as language, fashion and morals have all developed differently among the Cypriot communities in London. Cemal described the experience of a return trip to Cyprus as: 'totally alien... I never had any sense of belonging to it. I never felt that I've come home'. Similarly, Bülent said it was difficult for Turkish Cypriots in London to feel at home in Cyprus as 'the Turkish Cypriots... just see us as being tourists or Londoners, London Turks... [And] the Greeks don't want us there'. The habitus that governed their actions in Cyprus previously is no longer relevant to their changed homeland. Those refugees that can negotiate the multiple requirements of these different social situations are often dynamic high achievers who have made the best out of their exile. But some are unable to

adapt to one or more of these testing situations and have trouble dealing with

life in exile.

Social capital

One of the key functions of networks is the accumulation and distribution of

resources to the family or community. Bourdieu refers to such resources as

capital and identifies three forms – economic, cultural and social – all of which

can be used as currency in daily life. Social capital is of most interest in the

discussion of the relational home because it provides an insight into an often

unquantifiable loss felt by refugees removed from their own social milieux.

Bourdieu's idea of social capital is useful in explaining the importance of

community interaction at all levels:

> Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which
> are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less
> institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition...
> The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus
> depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively
> mobilise... [And] the network of relationships is the product of
> investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or
> unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships
> that are directly usable in the short or long term. (Bourdieu 1986: 249).

While Bourdieu sees social capital resulting from the use of institutionalised

rather than informal social networks, others have developed the concept

slightly differently. Coleman refers to social capital as 'embodied in the

relations among persons' such that 'social organisation constitutes social

capital' (Coleman 1990: 304). Similarly, Putnam uses the term to refer to

'features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks, that can

improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions' (Putnam

1992: 167). While adhering to the spirit of Bourdieu's definition, I would

include the broader definitions here as useful in explaining the extent of the loss the refugee initially faces in no longer having access to both the social capital acquired through everyday relations, as well as the social capital arising out of investment in formal institutions, which enable social progress.

The 'social disarticulation' experienced by the refugee as a result of the loss of social capital can be catastrophic in the initial stages of exile (Cernea 1996: 22) and the accumulated social capital which has been built up over generations is often lost to the refugee when the social network is dispersed. The individual and collective investment strategies, referred to by Bourdieu, which were expected to produce actual or potential resources in the future are now compromised and in some cases redundant. For many refugees, the gradual process of marginalisation, of being marked as an 'out group', signals the beginning of the disintegration of their social worlds and the devaluing of their social capital and makes functioning within society more difficult (as illustrated in chapter three by the problems Turkish Cypriots faced when trying to build their own homes).

Cypriots in the UK found themselves in a different country often with little in the way of language and transferable employment skills, sometimes with little education and often lacking in self-confidence (Anthias 1983: 73). The social capital which had fuelled their economic and social activity in Cyprus was now of little value. An orange grower with no trees can do little with his accumulated skills in inner-city London and even a university-educated refugee may find his 'foreign-ness' and limited English vastly reduces the opportunities he had invested in through education, as Ömer found when he had to work in the catering industry in London in spite of

having a degree in economics. The social capital Ömer acquired through his education and status in Cyprus, as well as his family and village networks, was of no use to him once he came to the UK. Although he is educated, his lack of formal English made him appear otherwise to British employers and he lost the valuable social capital he had in Cyprus. Stephen, too, saw his parents unable to capitalise on the family's accumulated social and material wealth once they became refugees. 'They've lost so much... because [the wealth] was like a family thing,' he told me. 'It was from the great great great grandfather... It was passed on and when you think about it, whether you work seven days a week, 24 hours a day, you can't make that much wealth.'

The loss of social capital can have repercussions down the generations and just as social capital is inherited, the effects of war and displacement can also be inherited in the form of ongoing poverty or insecurity, as Bülent explained:

> It's a legacy almost. Because my parents felt insecure and their insecurity is almost passed on... as an immigrant to a country anyway you haven't got the family bond here as you might have as an English person when you have generations, centuries or whatever. It's always going to be more difficult.

Removed from a socially familiar environment, without the social capital that has been accumulated by the family over generations, it appears that the refugee can be at a considerable disadvantage in a new society.

The inability to speak the language of the host society is one of the key factors which identifies many refugees as being out of step[3]. To a large extent this restricts their employment and social options to within their own

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[3] Of course, when possible, many refugees seek asylum in countries with a shared language – either in a neighbouring country or a country with which there is a previous colonial relationship.

community and implies a narrowing of opportunity. Alpay related the disorienting experience of hearing English spoken on a bus in Birmingham shortly after he arrived in England.

> It was a couple of Brummies and I didn't understand a word they were talking about. And I said: 'Shit, you know, I thought I knew English.' ...I was able to get by, but it took a couple of months to adapt myself and it was torture... you go through hell. It's not easy.

Language skills proved crucial when it came to Cypriot refugees being able to adapt to Britain and begin to rebuild social capital. Those who had good levels of English were able to integrate more quickly and access better jobs, whereas those who didn't struggled. Many women found themselves isolated because of their lack of English and women are disproportionately affected by an inability to access the host language because they are less likely to be exposed to it through work, as discussed in chapter two. This often becomes a vicious cycle, with their lack of English meaning women can only find work with an 'ethnic' employer or in the home, which in turn limits their exposure to the language and restricts their ability to learn. Cemal explained to me how his mother got by: 'There was not ever any need for her to speak English. She went to a Turkish *bakkal* [grocer] to do her weekly shopping, she went to a butcher who had a Turkish butcher helping him out, so they spoke Turkish.'

Language acquisition also has a generational dimension, with the age at which refugees arrive affecting their chances of learning a new language. A number of my interviewees told me that their parents still spoke very little English, after 30 or 40 years living in Britain, and two of my older interviewees spoke to me through a translator. Children become enculturated more quickly in the school environment and learn English from their classmates and

teachers, although many have initial difficulties. Bülent explained how distressing it was for him to go to school in London at the age of five, fluent in Turkish but not speaking a word of English. 'It was like I didn't know anything,' he said, but he soon adjusted. 'When you're young... you do tend to pick it up quickly.' Class and education also played a part in determining whether a refugee had the tools to adapt to the new situation. Bülent went on to explain how much harder it was for his uneducated parents to learn English:

> My father I think went to school for two days. My mother went to school for two years max, so neither of them received much of an education. So they were kind of illiterate not just in English but in Turkish as well, which made it doubly hard... So although it was one island, it was never one island in that respect. It was two complete extremes of wealth.

While minimal education was not uncommon for Cypriots of that generation, it still limited opportunities for these refugees both in Cyprus and in Britain. They were able to get by using 'ethnic employment' networks, but were still largely marginalised. Even for those refugees who manage to learn English, a level of familiarity with the language may never be achieved. Something as simple as not finding a joke amusing marks someone out as different from the indigenous population, as Adrienne, who speaks English and Greek on a daily basis, explained to me: 'I never laugh with English jokes... Honestly. People tell me a joke, I don't even find it funny.'

The loss of social networks

The loss of social networks can have a devastating effect on the refugee, certainly in the initial stages of exile. Without the web of contacts that made daily life possible it can be difficult to achieve anything. Some refugees find the people from their village or town dispersed, while others are also

separated from their family, without whom it can be difficult to function. In his study of Greek Cypriot refugees soon after the war, Loizos reported how reunited villagers would weep in each other's arms 'because meeting reminded them forcefully of a rich social life now in tatters' (Loizos 1981:131). Similarly, Arendt observed that the loss of home for Jewish refugees meant nothing short of 'the loss of the entire social texture into which they were born and in which they established for themselves a distinct place in the world' (Arendt [1951] 2004: 372). 'The calamity of the rightless,' she adds, 'is ... that they no longer belong to any community whatsoever' (Arendt [1951] 2004: 375). This takes us back to Bourdieu's concept of habitus and the social world as a self-evident symbolic system. The sudden expulsion from that symbolic system not only removes the refugee from their physical home but also from the structures of meaning in everyday life that constitute home as it is embodied in other people.

For Turkish Cypriots who experienced the build up of inter-communal violence and the enclaving of their villages, there was a gradual narrowing of social networks before exile began. Travel to other towns and villages became difficult, so trade as well as personal relationships suffered. The social world that many Turkish Cypriots moved in became smaller as Cyprus had ceased to operate as a unified national community and they could no longer function within it. For example, Emine recalled being rushed to hospital as a child with tonsillitis only for the Greek Cypriot doctor to refuse to treat her. The experience has stayed with her as an example of how Cypriot society didn't necessarily function in the same way for all its members.

Unlike Turkish Cypriots, most of whom were gradually forced to leave their villages in the 1960s, Greek Cypriot refugees (and Turkish Cypriots from the south who were forced north when the island was divided) faced a sudden disruption of their social networks as they fled their villages when the Turkish army arrived and the island was divided. Within a matter of hours, friends and families were separated and carefully constructed social networks were shattered. Stella, who had worked as a travel agent in Cyprus, initially found it impossible to carry on her life when she arrived in Britain. She was offered a job in a travel agency but realised she had no child minding arrangements. 'I said: "What do people do here? They don't have families to look after their child".' Without the social networks she had relied on in Cyprus she was forced to buy a sewing machine and work at home like many other Cypriot women. She very astutely described to me the effects of war on individuals who lose their social networks and resources and, therefore, lose their agency – in the short term at least:

> People should avoid war at any costs, forget pride – it's rubbish when you lose your own people... You've got no control over your children, over your wives or husbands... over your resources, nothing. It's all under somebody else's control. You just become a little dot in a vast field and you cannot function the way you want, you just have to go with whatever's decided and that's awful.

Women without social networks

Research into the experiences of refugees has highlighted the particular impact of the loss of social networks on women. In her study of Chilean refugees in the USA, Eastmond found that while men focused on the political defeat that led to their exile, women grieved for the loss of their social world and networks (Eastmond 1993: 46). Similarly Kay's study of Chileans in the

UK showed that 'women's sense of deprivation centred around their removal from an extended family group' (Kay 1987: 63). For Cypriot women it seems to have been the same story. As Loizos explains, Greek culture and the provision of the dowry house placed women inside the home in Cyprus (Loizos 1981: 177). This was a domain they controlled and shared with other women from their family and the neighbourhood so they were never alone. Once Cypriot women became refugees, however, not only did they lose the house that represented their security, but also 'the compact community of kin, friends, and neighbours that had sustained their lives' (Loizos 1981: 176). Still expected to stay 'indoors', they often found themselves isolated without relatives or neighbours with whom to share daily tasks.

Refugee women often find moral codes tightening during exile, with additional emphasis placed on women's virtue and standards of housekeeping as other social norms are under threat (Hirschon 2000: 407). While the neighbourhood streets were an acceptable domain for women to meet, chat and share tasks in their home countries, exile often restricts their movement, especially if they move to a colder climate. This can cause kinship to become domesticated, losing the wider public element of social networks pre-exile (Abdulrahim 1993: 67). Cypriot women experienced this loss of the intimate social networks that had existed prior to exile, which saw them spending time together in each other's houses and in the streets. The size and structure of London, as well as the climate, made earlier patterns of interaction difficult. In addition, Cypriot women in Britain, who had rarely worked back home, often had to find work to boost the family economy, which posed fears about their exposure to local men. As a result many engaged in

piecework for the clothing industry, working long, poorly paid and unregulated hours at home; or worked in Cypriot-owned textile factories, again with little status (Anthias 1983: 79-87; Constantinides 1977: 279-280). Cypriot women in the UK, according to Anthias in her study of first generation migrants, faced a triple burden – as women, as migrants and as cheap labour for migrant men (Anthias 1983: 73). For those who came as refugees, there was the additional burden of having lost their home, their social networks and their social capital.

Rebuilding social networks

While the loss of social networks impacts greatly upon refugees in the initial stages of exile, it is important to bear in mind the resilience of refugee communities. In an article asking whether refugees are 'social capitalists' (producing social capital out of the condition of exile), Loizos states that compared to labour migrants, refugees appear to face massive problems (Loizos 2000). However, although a few 'who experience the pains of involuntary dislocation may be permanently incapacitated', he found that 'many observers have been impressed by the general resilience of refugees, as if the central disruption had been redefined as a challenge' (Loizos 2000: 125-6). Time and again it has been shown that refugees find ways to rebuild social networks and take advantage of their new situation. 'Migrants never lose their agency entirely', agrees Hammond in her study of Eritrean refugees, 'but must learn to adapt it to their rapidly changing circumstances' and 'while admittedly having experienced a potentially traumatic and life-altering event, do their best to maintain their culture and identity' (Hammond 2004: 211). Similarly, in her study of Greek refugees from the 1923 population exchange

between Greece and Turkey, Hirschon found that, although the refugees had little access to economic capital and were living in areas which lacked basic social infrastructure, they were nonetheless able to build strong social networks and maintain family life (Hirschon 2000). The upholding of core values and the adaptation of traditions bridged 'the loss of homeland and the unfamiliar situation into which they had been unwittingly thrust' and led to the reconstitution of 'a coherent community and lifestyle' (Hirschon 2000: 405).

This ties in with Hage's assertion that the 'yearning for homely communality translates into an attempt to build the past conditions of its production', such as surrounding oneself with others speaking the same language, reconstructing neighbourhoods and opening community shops, in order to seek shelter from a 'social and cultural crisis' (Hage 1997: 105; 108). So, while habitus becomes obsolete when thrust suddenly into a new context, it can be adapted over time in order to better respond to the new milieu. Similarly, social capital can be reaccumulated, with refugees and migrants often calling upon each other to make the best of a new social situation. In her study of Greek Cypriot migrants in the UK, Anthias found a process of adaptation 'whereby ethnicity [was] used as a resource for achieving the economistic aims of migration' through the establishment of Cypriot businesses which employed fellow migrants (Anthias 1983: 92). While refugees often lack the resources possessed by voluntary migrants, they can still be found exploiting the situation they find themselves in. However, Loizos does caution us not to get carried away and assume 'that most refugees become entrepreneurial and prosperous' (Loizos 2000: 126).

In exile, after a period of 'social disarticulation' many refugees are able to rebuild or extend old networks and establish new ones. Hammond's study of Eritrean refugees 'returning' to unfamiliar regions of their country found that people 'thrown together by their circumstances but sharing no other common personal history, developed the bonds that tied them together' (Hammond 2004: 11). These new networks may be enduring, or they may be pragmatic and short-lived – so-called 'weak ties', which are 'flexible, practical, tactical and adaptive' (Williams 2006: 876). Indeed, informal networks are often more important in exile than they were prior to migration, due to the dispersal of close networks of friends and family who can no longer be relied upon (Khattak 2002: 107). It is also important to note, however, that the building of new social networks in exile and the reaccumulation of social capital cannot take place in conditions of exclusion and marginality. A study of the effects of dispersal on refugee communities in the UK showed a resulting lack of connection between individual refugees and the frameworks of community support (Zetter et al 2005). In order for refugees to re-establish social networks, therefore, conditions that facilitate interaction (between refugees, migrants and 'indigenous' communities), rather than mitigate against it, must be present.

Cypriot refugees coming to London were in what was perhaps an unusual situation for newly arrived refugees. Firstly, Cyprus had a colonial relationship with Britain and all but the youngest remembered living under the former power, which gave up control of the island after independence in 1960. As a result there was some familiarity with British culture, legal systems and the English language. In addition, some of those who became refugees had

previously lived in Britain as labour migrants and, therefore, had more intimate knowledge of the society they now came to involuntarily and many had relatives already living here. Whether as a result of pragmatism or an emerging sense of belonging to Britain, many of those I spoke to were keen to stress examples of their commitment to British society. For Dimitris this was as simple as the village committee donating to British as well as Cypriot charities 'so we are not seen just to care for our own people'. He went on to tell me that he feels part of British society because, 'I live here. If you live in a community you have to contribute.' A number of those I spoke to said that the unique character of London made it possible for them to adjust to life here. Stella felt that the 'diversity of culture' in the capital made 'you see how much people have in common'. Likewise, Cemal told me that he 'found the English people exceptionally welcoming, exceptionally tolerant and understanding. I've been made to feel at home.' But not everyone felt equally integrated. Ömer told me: 'I don't feel like [this is] home to be honest... Not 100 per cent... You feel like you are foreign.' While Emine admitted that 'we were treated like everybody else here so it's, it's very good country to live in that sense', but 'it's not home'.

Adapting existing social networks

Refugees and other migrants may respond to the challenges of a new situation by adapting and rebuilding social networks in a number of ways. Some are able to draw on pre-migration networks by seeking out members of the extended family or calling in old favours, others re-emphasise aspects of their culture (such as religion) as a way of meeting other members of the

community and gaining confidence. Prior to exile, many refugees would have relied on concentric circles of contacts who were approached for appropriate support. Close family, for example, might be trusted to lend money, while family or near neighbours were asked to look after children, and acquaintances were made use of in business. After exile, however, networks had to adapt to new circumstances. Loizos observed that Greek Cypriot refugees who were internally displaced in Cyprus set about building a new regional identity, which didn't exist before exile when village networks were paramount (Loizos 1981: 183). With former rivalry between villages now irrelevant, the common experience of exile and shared regional understanding became a better way of dealing with new challenges. This can be seen, too, in the interactions between Cypriot refugees in London who would previously have called on close family and fellow villagers, but now turned to the wider community of Cypriots (although rarely to those of the 'other' ethnic community).

Many of the refugees I spoke to stayed with family when they first arrived in Britain. For some this was close family such as brothers and sisters, but others drew on the goodwill of the extended family, staying with uncles or cousins that they may not have had much contact with previously. Stephen's family stayed with a great uncle for a few months, while Andreas lived with a fellow villager who had come to England a few years previously. Similarly, Alpay told me how a group of Turkish Cypriot friends helped him to settle in London, giving him a room in their flat. He describes it as a reciprocal relationship: 'It was very close-knit community, trying to help each other obviously, because we were all in the same shoes.' Many of those refugees

who didn't have family to stay with in London shared houses with other Cypriots in the first months and years of exile, choosing the irritations of semi-communal living over renting rooms from non-Cypriots. Bülent describes living in a house in Stoke Newington with seven other families, where 'there'd be one Turkish family and they'd rent out a room in their house and everyone would come and live in that room until you found your own place'.

Just as old networks helped Cypriot refugees find somewhere to live, they also facilitated employment. Andreas's friend, for example, helped him get work at the McVities biscuit factory in Harlesden. Meanwhile, Eleni managed to get a job on a Cypriot newspaper even though she had no experience: 'I said to them, "I've just finished my course, you know, but I want to work." And they said, "Yes, right, come in". And this is the attitude, this is what you know with your own. You'll have more of a chance and more understanding.' Many of those I spoke to turned to so-called 'ethnic employment' networks in order to find work in industries where Cypriots were already established. Many of the men I spoke to worked as waiters and saw this as a necessary step on the ladder in a new society, while women often worked in clothing factories or doing piecework at home. The extended social networks that were drawn on by newly arrived refugees were invaluable in providing employment at a crucial time in places where English language skills were not essential. However, they also created 'ethnic employment' ghettoes, which some refugees were not able to escape.

Cypriot refugees who came to London or other big cities found themselves living amongst already established Cypriot migrant communities. One of the strangest experiences for the refugees must have been to arrive

into what were mixed Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot areas at precisely the time when the two communities were being divided on the island. The assumption, however, that refugees were seamlessly absorbed into the Cypriot migrant communities belies the difficulties they faced after arriving from a situation of violence, war and separation, without their property, wealth, social networks and social capital.

After becoming a refugee, Adrienne came to London when her father arranged her marriage to a British-born Greek Cypriot. In spite of arriving into a ready-made extended family she felt isolated and completely out of step with the London Cypriots she was living with. 'The house was full of people,' she told me. 'You go to the bathroom and people are knocking at the door.' She was frightened to go out onto the streets of Tottenham after dark and was even terrified when the family watched the football FA Cup final and someone scored. Her brother-in-law (who was present during the interview) laughed as he told me: 'We were all jumping up and she started crying because she'd never seen people behave like that before.' The noisy inner-city life of her new home was diametrically opposed to life in her lost village 'where you sleep with your doors open'. Her experience disproves the assumption of homogeneity among Cypriot migrants and refugees. Adrienne had been raised in a relatively quiet rural setting, her husband in the vast urban expanse of London. While they shared an understanding of language and culture, they had been socialised into entirely different realities. Such differences may be less obvious in these times of satellite television and internet access, but at the time Adrienne must have felt she had little in common with her new family who had not experienced war and exile, while

she had no knowledge of football and inner-city behaviour. The fact that she did learn to adapt is a testimony to her resilience.

Another way in which Cypriot refugees have adapted their previous social networks is to transform them into transnational networks. With travel and communication becoming easier, it is now possible for networks to exist across national boundaries – even for those without vast resources. So, while old intimate networks that relied upon everyday exchanges may have ceased to exist or have changed in exile, long-distance ties of communication and reciprocity may have arisen in order to adapt to a new social reality. This new reality is a complicated one for refugees who live in 'a heterogeneous social universe... alongside compatriots and co-ethnics who are part of a broader diaspora or transnational community, but who are not necessarily refugees' (Crisp 1999a: 4). This is the case for Cypriot refugees who came to London to live alongside Cypriot migrants and refugees from both Cypriot communities, whilst also living amongst other refugee, migrant and 'indigenous' populations, at the same time as maintaining links with family and friends in Cyprus and in other destination countries such as Australia. As Williams states, the shared meaning derived from transnational linkages with other members of the former community offers a sense of familiarity that 'contrasts markedly with the fluidity and changeability of the new social worlds through which refugees thread their way in exile' (Williams 2006: 869). For refugees who have lost the social networks that constituted their day-to-day experience of home, the choice is not an either/or between local or transnational networks. Rather the experience of exile means that networks of different kinds are needed in order to reflect the complexity of their lives.

The reality of the relational home for Cypriot refugees in London is one in which they interact with Cypriots, sometimes from their own village but often from the wider community, whilst also networking with the indigenous population and other migrants and refugees in the 'diaspora space' of London (Brah 1996). In addition, they make regular trips to Cyprus (even if they don't travel to their former homes), as well as keeping up telephone and internet contact with other Cypriots in the diaspora. These transnational links do not necessarily imply an inability to settle in the host country. Mehmet-Ali's study of Turkish speaking communities in London, for example, points out that access to the 'homeland' via newspapers, media, food and other cultural aspects, as well as the ease of visits 'back home' actually 'contributes to a sense of settlement' in London (Mehmet-Ali 2001: 10).

Many refugees and migrants respond to the challenges of life in a new context with a renewed emphasis on the cultural aspects that bind them together, in order to provide a sense of belonging. In her study of Greeks in Australia, for example, Bottomley found that 'community-type social networks' were established to maintain and enable a 'commitment to Greekness' where coping strategies were based on interaction with those 'who confirmed a particular definition of reality, and constituted a kind of moral community' (Bottomley 1992: 131). This can be seen among London Cypriots who have emphasised a number of aspects of their culture in order to re-establish a sense of community in a new context. Religion, maintenance of the community language, political activity, eating Cypriot food, cultural activities, such as dance and music, and marriage within the community are all seen as important.

Religion

The church is often seen as the lynchpin of community cohesion and a symbolic home for diasporic Greek Cypriots – providing a physical location for interaction as well as being a moral guide. However, it does not automatically follow that all Greek Cypriots are devout Orthodox Christians. As Burrell found in her study of migrants in the UK, for many Greek Cypriots 'church appeared to have greater social significance than religious meaning' (Burrell 2006: 155). She found that the church was most crucial as a host to life-cycle events such as weddings, christenings and funerals and, as such, was an important social glue. Anthias supports this, stating that for Greek Cypriots in Britain adherence to the Orthodox religion could be characterised as 'passive religiosity', which has more to do with ethnicity than faith (Anthias 1992: 124). This was confirmed by my interviews with Greek Cypriots, which revealed that, while the church was almost universally seen as central to the community, actual attendance at church was erratic.

Eleni, for example, believes that, 'you lose your identity if you lose your beliefs... I think bad things happen from running away from the church and your faith'. Yet this contradicts her view of herself as 'an independent type of person' who doesn't want to be restricted by her 'belief or church'. Both of her grandfathers were priests, so the church is obviously a large part of her identity, yet she confesses that she rarely attends services. Stella agrees that the church is 'deep rooted' in the Greek Cypriot psyche. 'It's our upbringing. I think whether you accept it or refuse it, I think what your parents give you at the early stage of your life stays with you.' But she also sees it more as a question of morals and principles than religious faith and doesn't go to church

often. Dimitris identifies himself as Greek Orthodox and goes to church 'like most people' for weddings and funerals, but he admits that religion is not central to his life. 'It's not that I don't like the church, it's just that I believe that you can be a good Christian without actually going.' Only one of my Greek Cypriot respondents, Nick, a former seaman who stressed his left-wing politics, denied any affiliation to the church. 'Being a sailor and a religious man is impossible,' he told me with a smile.

The general picture appears to be one of an acceptance of the role of the church as an identity marker, which is important in the reconstruction of the relational home for those for have been forcibly displaced, yet commitment to the religion itself seems marginal. Of course there are exceptions, most notably and unsurprisingly the priest, Father Georgiou, and Andreas, the president of the church committee, both of whom I interviewed at church. However, it is interesting that even Father Georgiou referred to the church as a community centre: 'We live very long distances here and the only time that families gather together is for a church event like a wedding, a baptism, a memorial for the dead.' An opportunistic adherence to religion is not uncommon in many societies, but it is worthy of note here because religion is often given as a reason for irreconcilable differences between the two communities. Yet even among the more observant Greek Cypriots, it appears to be less important than might have at first been envisaged, playing a greater role in the settlement of migrants in their new home than in their spiritual development.

It is also important to remember the role of the church in Greek Cypriot politics, which has brought about a conflation of Greek Cypriot ethnicity and

the Orthodox religion. Greek Cypriot nationalism is religious rather than secular and was founded in opposition to both the British and the Turkish Cypriots during the independence struggle (Anthias 1992: 49; 124). This integration of the Orthodox church and Greek Cypriot politics was personified post-independence in the figure of President Archbishop Makarios. However, the connection between politics and religion is often denied. Father Georgiou is one of the few Orthodox priests in London from Cyprus rather than Greece, even though the capital's congregation is mainly Cypriot, which illustrates the influence the church in Greece has on diasporic Cypriot communities (Anthias 1992: 124). When I asked him about the role of the church in political issues, however, Father Georgiou was adamant that the two didn't mix: 'No, no, no church and politics do not match... Religion... is based on moral law and politics is not based on moral law.' He said he would never be involved in any political organisation, yet expressed strong views about Cyprus and displayed political posters in his office. Obviously, his personal views do not have to impinge upon his public role as a priest, but he does illustrate the tension between the church's alleged pastoral role in the community and the long-standing political role of the church in Cyprus. It is important, therefore, to bear in mind the role the Greek Orthodox church continues to play in London in projecting an image of a national home.

Turkish Cypriots are nominally Muslim yet very few practise their religion and it is not seen as a focus for the community. Even weddings are not normally carried out with religious ceremony and alcohol is consumed without disapproval (although pork is generally avoided by the older generation at least). The role of religion has for most been reduced to the

carrying out of funeral rites and a half-hearted observance of Bayram (Ramadan). In her study of Turkish Cypriots in the UK three decades ago, Ladbury found, even then, that 'only a tiny minority' made 'any formal concession to religion' (Ladbury 1977: 307). Mosques that have been built in Cyprus since the war have largely been attributed to the Anatolian 'settlers' from Turkey, who are perceived to be more 'religious', and there is certainly no unifying community function carried out by religion for Turkish Cypriots in London. My questions on this topic to Turkish Cypriots were generally dismissed. 'Turkish Cypriots aren't very religious,' Alpay told me, 'although we are Muslim we don't really practise'. He added with a laugh that praying was generally a pastime for old people 'just to be on the safe side'. Salih agreed that Turkish Cypriots 'don't like to waste our time practising our religion. We'd rather be productive and do other things.' There appeared to be a sense of pride among many of my respondents that Turkish Cypriots were above organised religion.

Turkish Cypriots have long been labelled as Muslim, in opposition to the majority Christian Greek Cypriot community in Cyprus, especially by the British during the period of colonial rule. Yet while this label has been largely accepted, its meaning appears to have been diluted over time. However, both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot interviewees made reference to the fact that religion (as well as language) was a mark of difference between the two communities, often when the similarities between the communities were being stressed. Peter told me: 'I've nothing against [Turkish Cypriots] because at the end of the day [they're] ordinary people... The only difference is the language and religion.' Bülent also said that 'culturally we're very similar', although 'the

religion is totally different'. It is possible that religion and language have been seized upon in order to explain the reasoning behind what could otherwise appear to be a senseless conflict, stirred up by Britain's divide-and-rule policy, by the expansionist policies of Greece and Turkey and by nationalists in both communities. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are constantly being told they are different, when the daily evidence is often to the contrary, and religion has long been the most obvious hook on which to hang their incompatibility. Decades of life in a culturally diverse London, however, have made it clear to some of my interviewees that such differences are not so marked. As Stella explained: 'You have this diversity of culture and you see how much people have in common. What you learn at an early age is, this is my culture, it's the best. This is my religion, it's the best. And then you realise that yours is just as bad, or just as good.'

Religion appears to have served a purpose for Greek Cypriot refugees in London, as a way in which to rebuild and maintain social networks and recreate an element of the lost home. For Turkish Cypriots, however, who do not have such a strong adherence to their faith, religion has not offered a way of reconstructing the relational home.

Politics

While I was conducting this research, a number of politically significant events took place: the opening of the border in Cyprus in April 2003 and, in 2004, the referendum on the Annan Plan, the entry of southern Cyprus into the European Union and the thirtieth anniversary of the Greek coup and Turkish military intervention. These events heightened the political temperature in

Cyprus and among Cypriot communities elsewhere in the world. As a result, the political activity I observed during this study was a good illustration of the ways in which Cypriot refugees network in the city. It was also an indication of how the political meta-narratives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot states influence these refugees' understanding of home.

It is common among refugees still seeking reparation for their loss, for political activity to be a focus of community identity and a way of keeping hold of the lost home in exile. This is true for Cypriots in London, especially Greek Cypriots. As well as British branches of Cypriot political parties, village committees are a focus of political activity for many Greek Cypriot refugees. While some of these committees existed among migrant communities previously, most village organisations were formed in Britain after 1974 (Anthias 1992: 129). As well as having a social function, such as organising annual dinner dances, which bring together dispersed villagers, refugee village committees provide a focus for the community's campaigning activity, such as providing banners for villagers to march behind on demonstrations. In addition, there are a number of Greek Cypriot political lobby groups such as the Committee for the Relatives of the Missing and the Lobby for Cyprus. The fact that there are far more Greek Cypriot than Turkish Cypriot political organisations in London probably reflects the political narratives of the respective states, as discussed in chapter four. It is easier for Greek Cypriot refugees to campaign for return and reunification, because it is in line with the policy of the Greek Cypriot government and enables them to keep up a connection with their lost homes. In contrast, the prevailing Turkish Cypriot state line was, until recently, supportive of a permanent division of the island

in keeping with the status quo, which has made political lobbying less urgent for those Turkish Cypriots in London who support the government in Cyprus. Whereas those Turkish Cypriots refugees who do want to return to their homes will find it much harder to campaign against the dominant state narrative.

As part of my research I attended a number of Greek Cypriot village meetings, including the well-organised Agios Amvrosios committee. They told me that their role was 'keeping traditions going and keeping the community together', as well as organising political campaigns for the return of their land and commemorating the village's missing people. They stressed that they were a non-political, charitable organisation, which wanted to 'look after youngsters and old people', but the meeting was understandably dominated by political discussion because of the events taking place in Cyprus at the time. There is a much less organised structure of Turkish Cypriot village committees, although there are men's cafés and sports and social clubs named after villages. The only active Turkish Cypriot village committee I found was that of the recently established Vroisha (Yagmuralan) Association, which was almost single-handedly run by my interviewee Salih. The VYA was established in order to 'regain' the lost village and seek apology from the Greek Cypriot government for its destruction. As well as promoting 'friendship, trust, confidence, peace and stability' between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, the organisation wants to 'demonstrate to the international community that it was not only the Greek Cypriots who suffered losses as a result of the 1974 war in Cyprus, but that Turkish Cypriot refugees also

suffered heavy losses, especially between 1963 and 1974'[4]. However, the political commitment and energy spent on this committee is largely the work of one person and is not in any way replicated by a network of Turkish Cypriot village committees. Indeed, Salih remarked that the Greek Cypriots had mounted 'a very successful campaign in order to promote their losses in 1974'. Without the other side of the story, he fears that the 'Turkish Cypriots will always be looked at as on the wrong side of the conflict'. Once again the political structures of the community have been more successful in providing social networking opportunities for Greek Cypriot refugees, than they have in rebuilding a relational home for Turkish Cypriots.

Community language

A shared language is one of the most important elements in suggesting a sense of community (Anderson 1991: 145; Hage 1997: 103). The maintenance of the community language, through the establishment of community schools to teach second and third generation Cypriots, was taken seriously by many of those I interviewed and was seen as a way of signalling belonging to the community and of keeping links with the lost home. Anthias agrees that for Greek Cypriots in Britain, ethnic mobilisation has largely focused on 'language maintenance, which is regarded as central to preserving ethnic identity' (Anthias 1992: 125). A number of those I spoke to have been instrumental in the establishment, running of, or teaching at these community language schools. 'It's very important, holding on to your language,' Eleni told me. This was echoed by Kasim who felt that learning Turkish 'helped [his

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[4] Quotes from *The Destruction of Vroisha – A former Turkish Cypriot village on the island of Cyprus*, a booklet produced by the Vroisha Yagmuralan Association in 2004, in their attempt to seek recompense for the destruction of the village in 1964.

children] tremendously getting their identity and feeling confident'. Salih agreed, adding that learning one's mother tongue was important for a community's identity as well as for building individual confidence. For others, learning the community language was important in order to keep up communication between the generations. 'I've always wanted my children to be able to speak their grandparents' language,' Stella told me.

Language is without doubt a highly charged issue when considering belonging to the relational home. It was used in Cyprus as a marker of difference between the two communities, with the British administration educating the two communities separately, even though those in mixed villages often spoke each other's language. As a child Eleni thought her grandfather used 'strange words', only to find out later that he was speaking Turkish, which he picked up through his work in different villages. She remembers as a child seeing these 'foreign' words as 'rude or a kind of peasant language' even though they were spoken every day by those around her.

Language continues to be politicised in London, as the Orthodox church plays a part in the teaching of Greek to Cypriots in the city. Harris Mettis, responsible for education and social issues for the Greek Archdiocese of Great Britain, explained to me that the church had three aspects to its teachings — Orthodox belief, language and traditions. As a result, a large number of Greek schools in the UK have been organised and funded by the church and have a nationalist agenda (the remaining schools being organised by the left-wing Cypriot political party AKEL). The aim of Greek schools has been 'to keep alive a consciousness of belonging to a Greek-speaking ethnic

group', in the face of fear that the British education system would lead to the loss of Greek identity (Constantinides 1977: 284). Several of those I spoke to were reluctant to send their children to community schools because of their political or religious bias – with the nationalism of the Turkish schools and the religion of the Greek schools being seen as off-putting by those on the political left. 'I wouldn't send [my children] to Turkish schools here,' Hasan confessed. 'All that flag waving is not my style.'

Policing the community

While a sense of community is crucial in helping refugees and migrants feel 'at home', the expectations of community weigh heavily on those who can't or don't want to conform. Political outsiders and women in particular can be subject to the policing of strict moral and sexual codes by the community (Burrell 2006: 169-179; Eastmond 1993: 48). Cypriot community networks in London provided an essential support system for newly arrived refugees and were instrumental in the re-accumulation of social capital. However, it is important to note the oppressive effect that the watchful eye of community can have on those who don't conform to social expectations. I was, of course, unable to make contact with those who feel themselves completely ostracised from the Cypriot community. However, a number of those I did interview had expressed a desire at some point in their lives to escape the community.

Hasan made his left-wing political sentiments clear throughout our interview and is also married to an English woman. He finds the moral codes of his community stifling and bemoans its 'political polarisation' and 'infertile environment', saying he 'cut away' when he was about 21 and 'started feeling

my own feelings'. Having tried unsuccessfully to resettle in northern Cyprus –
an experience he described as 'frustrating' and 'difficult' because he 'didn't
share the same interests as [his] compatriots' – he tried to integrate with the
Cypriot community in London on his return, but decided, he has 'nothing in
common with these people'. Similarly, Bülent felt that he had to escape the
restrictions of the Turkish Cypriot community for a time, leaving home at 18
and avoiding Turkish Cypriots until he was in his mid 20s, although as he
explains this was more of a rebellion against his family than his culture:

> I had no involvement with the community. I didn't speak Turkish. I hated
> the culture. I hated the way of life in our family. Then I went to Cyprus in
> '82 and I thought, this is beautiful – the family life and the culture. And I
> started getting back into the community. The things which I hated were
> about our family life, not about Turkish Cypriot life.

Having initially decided not to marry within the community, he went on to
marry a British-born Turkish Cypriot and now sends his children to Turkish
lessons.

Women, in particular, often find themselves on the wrong side of a
community's expectations. As Burrell states, 'the closeness of community
clearly has a greater negative impact on women than men', with women more
exposed to gossip and governed by stricter moral and sexual codes (Burrell
2006: 173). In addition, with women generally ascribed the role of reproducing
the community – not just literally but also through the transmission of
language, food tastes and collective myths – their 'proper' behaviour is seen
as paramount (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1993: 28).

Sophia only spent a year living in Cyprus before her family became
refugees, but she felt the full weight of the community's moral codes in
England. Her oldest sister had an arranged marriage and the middle sister

also married a Greek Cypriot, but Sophia was 'a bit of a rebel, a bit of a black sheep'. She went to university, in spite of being told that women weren't meant to study, and shunned the family tradition of working in a factory. 'It wasn't about furthering my education, it was my ticket to leave home. I did, as a woman, find it really oppressive.' She found herself further 'disappointing' her family when she got pregnant outside marriage to a non-Cypriot. 'Even at 30 they treated me like I was 16 and, you know, basically told me to get out... It's this idea that you have rights over your children... and also this idea of bringing shame.' However, her parents did go on to support her and help look after her child. Sophia believes that the Greek Cypriot community in London is more traditional than it is in Cyprus, probably as a reaction to the pressures of migration. 'Coming in this alien culture... you're so scared that you're going to lose it that you hold onto it... The way we were brought up was a very, very strict, traditional way.'

She feels that, especially in areas that were strongly Cypriot such as Haringey, the community 'policed itself'. Whilst rejecting the restrictions of Cypriot moral codes, Sophia still finds expressions of Cypriot culture meaningful in her own life and thinks it important that they be passed on to her daughter. In her subsequent marriage to an English man she chose to have Greek dancing and the traditional pinning of money to the bride and groom at her 'very English wedding'. 'As a bride it's traditional to dance with all the women in the "circle dance" ...so important for me to do that with [my daughter],' she told me. It is important to remember, therefore, that the community can provide both reassurance and restriction for those refugees who are trying to redefine the relational home in exile.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the complexity of the multi-layered relational home. Our day-to-day experience of home is one of interaction with other people, which generates the resources that make society function, based on a habitus that makes one feel at home. Refugees face the loss of these three aspects of the relational home when they experience 'social disarticulation' as a result of forced migration (Cernea 1996: 22). Most refugees in the initial stages of exile have trouble functioning without their social networks, dislocated from the context of their habitual daily practices and robbed of their social capital. These substantial losses must be weighed alongside the loss of land and property when we try to understand what it is that the refugee has been deprived of. However, what is striking is that so many refugees have been able to rebuild, adapt and invent new social networks when faced with the challenge of exile.

Some of the refugees I spoke to have been able to adapt well to British society and, therefore, accumulate social capital through social networks, which include both Cypriots and others in London. For others it has been more difficult and they have made use primarily of the extensive Cypriot networks in the capital in order to function in their daily life. For some, however, regardless of how settled they feel, there is a fear that integration implies the abandonment of their 'home'. Stephen explained to me how he felt 'really guilty' for getting a British passport and stressed he was still 'a Cypriot 100 per cent'. The dilemma faced by these refugees (and potentially by all refugees living in protracted exile) is what to do if the opportunity to return arises. Their social networks are now based in Britain (be they Cypriot, British

or transnational networks). Similarly, they are now enculturated in London life – albeit a culturally diverse London with strong Cypriot networks – and Cyprus would seem largely alien to them now. Their children and grandchildren are based here and have 'hybrid' identities – as do the refugees themselves who have become a product of London. To return would imply another loss of their current social networks, habitus and social capital and would be a heavy price to pay. This does not mean that what was lost has been forgotten, but rather that undergoing yet more upheaval and loss cannot repair the losses of the past but might exacerbate them. While it is painful for them to admit it, for most of the refugees in this study, London has now become the location of their relational home, even if they still dream of the social networks left behind in Cyprus.

Chapter 7
Concluding remarks

'The memories we elude catch up to us, overtake us like a shadow. A truth appears suddenly in the middle of a thought, a hair on a lens.'
From *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels (1997: 213).

Introduction

In many ways the conflict in Cyprus has been a conflict over the meaning of home. Domestic political players and external powers – in particular, Greece, Turkey, Britain and the USA – have variously battled for control of the territory, using different readings of history to justify their claims. In the process, strategies of inclusion and exclusion have led at different times to the promotion or marginalisation of individuals or communities, based especially on their ethnicity, nationality and politics. As a result of these conflicts and campaigns, many Cypriots became refugees, either being internally displaced in Cyprus or exiled to Britain, Australia and elsewhere. This forced migration brought to the foreground deliberations on the meaning of home and it is the experiences of some of these individuals, who emerged from a context of political turmoil into an unexpectedly prolonged exile in Britain, that have so generously provided this study with its substance.

This thesis has looked beyond the more literal and obvious readings of home, using the four lenses of the spatial, temporal, material and relational home to reveal that the meaning of home for the refugee is dynamic, multiple and contradictory. As a result, the study has thrown up as many questions as it has answered, offering no universal conclusions for all Cypriot refugees in London, all Greek Cypriots or all Turkish Cypriots. Indeed, the fact that there can be no assumption of homogeneity between refugees from the same

country (Al-Ali 2002: 102), points to the importance of looking at individual refugee narratives in depth to learn what we can from personal experiences, so we can go on to identify convergences and divergences within the collective picture (Schrager 1998: 293). What does emerge from the study is that to lose one's home is a life-changing event, which has repercussions for many years and even for subsequent generations. Indeed, the very process of becoming a refugee sets the individual on a course of ongoing negotiation about the meaning of home.

Losing home...

In spite of the complex nature of the material under consideration, two clear stories have emerged from this study. Firstly, by examining the meaning of home in detail – in the four component parts of the spatial, temporal, material and relational home – it has been possible to arrive at a more nuanced view of what it is that the refugee loses when they are forced to leave their home and why that loss remains a preoccupation even when life in exile is successful. Previously, there has been a tendency to either focus on the physical property that has been lost as a way of assessing the refugee's legal claim to compensation, or a preoccupation with the United Nations' preferred durable solution of repatriation as an end to the refugee cycle and a return to the status quo ante. The logic has been that if the refugee has either received financial compensation or has been able to go back to their lost home then the hurt has been healed. However, what this study has shown is that there is no going back. The refugee is not just mourning the loss of his or her physical property, but the house combined with the neighbourhood, its social networks,

accumulated social capital, the landscape and crops and flowers, all of which were specific to a certain moment in time. It is only when looking at the different aspects of home together that we can begin to appreciate what losing home, in all its component parts, entails.

Home is not just a singular physical building, but is the network of streets, buildings and communal spaces that make up a neighbourhood. It is the complex web of social relations, which includes family, friends, acquaintances, business associates and enemies. It is the water from the spring, the blossom on the trees, the crops in the field and the food on the table. It is the conjunction of all these things at a particular moment in time, which can never be repeated. These same elements will never again come together and the specificity of home at any given moment is a once-only event. Of course, the gradual mutations of space, human relations and landscape over time continually and subtly change home for all of us, even those of us who don't move physically. The difference for refugees is that the dislocation from the meaning-making structures of home happened against their will and, in many cases, suddenly. In addition, for those in this study, the conflict that catapulted them into exile remains unresolved and return remains impossible.

A number of the refugees in this study have been able to visit their homes since border restrictions were relaxed in Cyprus in 2003 and many of them have been confronted by the reality that they can never recover what they had in the past. The refugee has not just lost a house but also the potential that existed at the moment of exile: the paths not taken, the lives not lived, the careers not pursued. Of course, this does not mean that exile

necessarily results in a worse outcome for the refugee and new horizons may be opened up by the change of context. However, what is crucial is the refugee's lack of choice when faced with life-changing circumstances. Unlike those who choose to migrate for employment or adventure and can take advantage of the benefits of a globalised world, the refugee is a casualty of the conflicts that arise in such a world and as a result must migrate in order to survive. This is bound to impact upon their assessment of the meaning of home, as has been seen in this study.

... and finding strength

The second key story to emerge from this research is that of the resilience of many refugees. Breaking down the meaning of home into its spatial, temporal, material and relational aspects has shown just how great a loss is potentially faced by the refugee. However, what this study has also made clear is that, although initially incapacitated, many refugees deal with the challenges of exile not only by making do, but also in many cases by prospering. Confirming Loizos's assertion that many refugees are adept 'social capitalists', turning the disruption of exile into a challenge, Cypriot refugees in London have displayed great resourcefulness over the last few decades (Loizos 2000). This is not to suggest that all Cypriot refugees have had an easy time of starting again in a new country and for some, especially the older refugees, exile has been very difficult. However, the overall picture is one of hope as well as loss, which confirms statements made at the start of this thesis that refugees should be seen as actors in their own lives rather than as passive victims. As Essed et al. state: 'Individual decisions, experiences and life courses have to be seen

as part of a larger cultural, sociopolitical and environmental framework that holds advantages as well as constraints' (Essed et al. 2004: 2).

The resilience of Cypriot refugees can be seen in the ways in which they have dealt with the destabilisation of the relational home by establishing new social networks and adapting old ones to deal with the context of exile. As chapter six illustrated, the loss of social networks, social capital and familiarity with the systems of behaviour or 'habitus' of one's community is perhaps one of the greatest and least acknowledged losses of exile, which can make functioning difficult for the refugee initially. Many of the refugees in this study reported this sense of 'social disarticulation' when they first arrived in Britain (Cernea 1996: 22). What is surprising, however, is just how successful most have been at rebuilding their social networks and reaccumulating social capital. The previous tight-knit village networks of Cyprus have either been resurrected in village committees or expanded to include wider networks of Cypriots in general. Employment, housing, shops, marriage partners and community language education have all been based on these social networks.

The need to belong *somewhere*

While the reducibility of the lost home to the house or buildings that comprised the refugee's property has been questioned by this study, the spatial home still emerged as crucial to the meaning of home for the refugee. As discussed in chapter three, theory about the spatial home has turned away from the notion of a unitary, fixed physical home, to which people naturally belong, and has instead focused on home characterised by change and mobility, to which

no group of people can make a claim of authentic connection. Malkki and others are right to assert that the notion of the world divided into discrete spatial segments, with culture rooted in these separate locations, cannot be sustained (Malkki 1992: 34). However, what this research has shown is that embracing universal rootlessness denies the experience of the refugee by discounting the constructed relationship to place that is established over time. The physical home still matters to Cypriot refugees perhaps precisely because they were made to leave it against their will. The very act of being forcibly removed from the spaces with which one has built up a relationship over generations can be expected to solidify belief in an immutable and historic assertion of rightful belonging. While any claims for natural and inherent rights to the land use history selectively, the way that meaning has been attributed to the spaces of home over generations, prior to exile, illustrates how difficult it is for the home to be forgotten or exchanged as if all spaces had equal value or meaning for the individual.

Accepting that the spatial home is not fixed and that no group of people naturally belongs to it, might be seen to undermine the argument that the refugee has lost something profound by losing their physical home. However, on the contrary the fact that the meaning of the spatial home arises out of a relationship with place that has been constructed over time, in collaboration with others belonging to the same social networks, points to a greater loss. A house could be given back or a village repatriated if a solution to the Cyprus problem were to arise, but the relationship with the spatial home cannot start up where it left off. The spaces of the lost home have been emptied of their

former meaning, indeed have been overwritten with new meanings by new inhabitants, as many of those returning to visit their villages discovered.

Spaces matter to refugees precisely because they were divested of the choice about where their homes should be. However successfully the refugees in this study have resettled in London, they are reminded that they did not choose the location themselves. For many, the lost home has been protected by the rose-tinted glow of nostalgia because, like a prematurely dead relative, it is no longer around to disappoint them. London, on the other hand, is forever guilty of not being the lost village, of being in many cases the antithesis of Cypriot rural life, and as a result is rarely described with the same levels of emotion. In spite of this, the refugees in this study have become deeply emplaced in London, which has been their home by default for decades. They now possess the 'maximal spatial knowledge', which comes with acquired familiarity with a new location (Hage 1997: 103). Their presence in London has changed them, through their interaction with other migrants, refugees and 'indigenous' populations in the 'diaspora space' (Brah 1996: 209), just as they have changed London, through the establishment of Cypriot shops, restaurants and churches and the cultural exchange that occurs over time in world cities.

Another finding of this study is that while Cypriot refugees often project an image of a unitary and fixed home prior to exile, the reality is that many of them were already living pluri-local and even transnational lives. There appears to have been constant movement between family villages and towns, where some of the younger refugees went to school and some of the older refugees worked. In addition, some of those I spoke to had already spent time

in England as labour migrants or had worked in other countries before exile. Once again, this shows that the refugees themselves have not been bound by a limited and narrow definition of the spatial home, but have rather seen the spaces they inhabit as flexible and complementary. However, the study also shows that while theories of transnationalism may usefully apply to some migrants and refugees, in many cases the idea that refugees easily conduct relationships with both the host and home countries implies a degree of choice which is often not present. Cypriots refugees arriving in Britain did not choose the nature of their convoluted relationship with the two countries. While they have been able to keep up contact with Cyprus through phone calls, satellite TV, the internet, holidays and visits to relatives, the relationship has been with only half of the island and not the home that they lost. This troubled relationship confirms Al-Ali's suspicion that forced migration often leads to 'forced transnationalism' (Al-Ali 2002: 115), rather than the free and easy movement of people that some theorists of globalisation would have us believe.

Feeling, tasting, smelling home

Aspects of the material home revealed in the refugee narratives point to the importance of the embodied experience of home, as discussed in chapter five. We subconsciously experience our home through our senses on a daily basis, yet the power of the smell or taste of home may become apparent only at a physical or temporal distance. Many Cypriot refugees have grown plants common to Cyprus in their London gardens to remind them of home, while home food is still prepared in exile, at least by first generation refugees. Such

activities seem to serve the dual purpose of keeping alive memories of the lost home, as well as aiding the refugees' settlement in London. The senses can provide one of the most direct routes into the memory, offering an embodied and instinctive response to a stimulus reminiscent of home. At the same time, the taste of a familiar and favourite food can bring about a feeling of well-being, which is then transferred on to the new surroundings in which it has been experienced. These two factors illustrate just how important the material home has been in reconnecting the past with the present for Cypriot refugees in London, as well as offering them a way to be both Cypriots and Londoners in the future.

A further important and potentially contentious aspect of the material home revealed by this study is found in the earth itself. Soil has long been seized upon as a symbol of the lost land by refugees, and the carrying of a handful of soil into exile, as well as the scattering of soil onto the graves of those buried outside their home countries, has been a recurring motif in many refugee stories, from Palestine to Chile. Cypriots are no exception and a number of refugees shared similar stories with me. Such stories are invariably poignant and moving as they suggest an almost desperate attempt to hold on to a piece of the lost home that is quite literally slipping through the refugee's fingers. Similarly, accounts of the scattering of earth on graves of refugees, who did not live long enough to return to their homes to be buried with their ancestors, are deeply affecting. However, while accepting such stories as moving accounts of loss and longing, it is also important to read them alongside meta-narratives of home and nation, which use the soil as a metaphor of national belonging (Malkki 1992: 27; 29).

In a similar way, 'the metaphor of roots in the soil', which Zetter has observed in Cypriot refugee narratives and which occurs in other refugee stories, has been seen to be problematic (Zetter 1998: 309). Firstly, the suggestion that people are rooted leads us back to the notion that certain people naturally belonging to the land, which has rightly been questioned (Malkki 1992: 27; 37). Secondly, the image of refugees as uprooted implies that they are pathologically unable to function in exile (Malkki 1992: 27; 32). Even though refugees themselves often use such imagery, the resilience displayed by the refugees in this study has shown that they often adapt well to the context of exile and in many cases do better than could be expected. To describe them as uprooted and therefore unable to thrive does not adequately reflect their experience. However, in questioning the use of such imagery, which has an implied meaning beyond that within the individual narrative, it is important to recognise the fact that many refugees do feel a connection to the land that they have grown food and flowers in, worked on and buried ancestors in. It is also necessary to acknowledge the many difficulties faced by refugees, particularly in the first stages of exile, when they may indeed feel themselves to be 'uprooted', as they lack an anchor to any recognisable places, people and culture.

The legacy of the past and hopes for the future

Another finding from this study is that the experience of home prior to exile influences how that home is viewed from a distance. Previous studies have shown that the reasons for flight influence attitudes to return (Al-Rasheed 1994; Kunz 1981), but it appears that there is a wider impact wrought by

accumulated life experiences in the home country, which affect not just commitment to repatriation but also the meaning of home in exile. While there are many similarities in the experiences of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugees, one marked difference is that many Turkish Cypriots experienced ongoing marginalisation from the state, as well as violence from Greek Cypriot extremists during the late 1950s and mid 1960s. As a result, many of them had to flee more than one home and witnessed repeated attacks. Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, were subjected to violence at the hands of the Turkish army in 1974 and lost their homes almost overnight as a result.

There are, of course, variations to this story. Some Greek Cypriots also suffered violence during the 1960s at the hands of Turkish Cypriot extremists, while some Turkish Cypriots lived peacefully in mixed villages until they had to flee their homes in 1974. However, the general pattern that emerges does appear to have affected the meaning of home for Cypriot refugees in London. Greek Cypriots are more likely to hold on to an idyllic view of the lost home (where the two communities lived happily together), which was taken from them brutally and overnight by the Turkish forces. As a result, there is general support for the project of return and a desire for the country to be reunified, so that refugees can go back to their homes and the two communities can live side by side again. Turkish Cypriots, by contrast, tend to have a less sentimental view of the lost home and remember the prolonged violence and repeated upheaval as much as they yearn for their lost homes. This is partly because the violence they experienced, although the work of extremists, came from within their own country. As a result, fear is a constant partner to nostalgia and return is not an overriding project. However, as has been

observed in the thesis, both of these emerging dominant communal narratives are supported and influenced by state narratives from the two Cypriot governments, who use them to justify their own political projects.

While drawing such conclusions from the study, however, it is necessary to remember that many of the refugees also have contradictory attitudes to home. Not only is it the case that some Greek Cypriots, like Adrienne, do not want to return because of their fear of violence, while some Turkish Cypriots, such as Salih, have a vision of an idyllic lost home and dream of return, but it is also true that individual refugees express conflicting attitudes to their lost home. On the one hand, Ömer says, 'I love my village, I like to go and live there,' whilst also telling me that 'first comes security... no one wants to go back'. Meanwhile, Peter displays intense and painful nostalgia for his lost home and campaigns vigorously for the right to return, yet accepts that he will be unable to leave his (now adult) sons in England.

Complexity and contradiction

Attitudes to return are a good example of the complexity and contradiction found in Cypriot refugees' understanding of the meaning of home. Many still long for their lost homes and wish that the events that forced them into exile had never happened. However, the war, violence and marginalisation that occurred in Cyprus means that some see the lost home as an unsafe place. For others, in spite of their desire to go back, life is too deeply entrenched in London for another upheaval to be possible. For those who have already had to face starting again in the context of exile, another new start (albeit in what was once a familiar place) may be too difficult to contemplate. A few remain

resolutely committed to return as and when it becomes possible, but these are often older people for whom a solution in Cyprus may come too late.

It is only to be expected that attitudes to return will be troubled when homes were left out of necessity not choice, and conflict marks memories of the past. However, even in the most extreme refugee situations when return is beyond contemplation, such as the aftermath of the Holocaust which saw the movement of vast numbers of Jewish people, it is still possible for refugees to miss aspects of their life before the terrible events which tore their home apart (Spitzer 1994: 167-9). As a result of experiences prior to exile, the protracted nature of exile and the ties that have been made with England, it is not surprising that attitudes to return among Cypriot refugees are on the whole pragmatic. The strong political or emotional desire to return is often coupled with the practical recognition that life in London would be hard to leave. Even those who are most passionate about their lost homes, when pressed, talk in terms of partial return, retirement to Cyprus or prolonged visits.

It is often assumed that refugees who still long for the lost home are unable to settle in the context of exile. Yet those in this study show that it is possible to be successful in business, see one's children through education, own a house in London and yet still dream of the almost certainly mythical qualities of rural life in Cyprus several decades ago. A fervent commitment to the lost home and the ability to prosper in exile are not mutually exclusive. The narratives in this study have shown that multiple allegiances are possible, as are conflicting and problematic attitudes to home from those that have had to leave their homes against their will.

Paradoxically, it appears that refugees who display the most resourcefulness in exile and are, therefore, the most successful in the new home, find that the reward for their resilience is that it becomes almost impossible for them to go back to Cyprus due to the enormity of what they would have to leave behind. As Kasim said, 'everything we own, that we worked for, my wife and I, it's here in London now'. Nick sums this up nicely when he refers to exile as a 'train of no return', once children have been educated in the host country and many years have passed.

Living in the present

The dilemma faced by Nick and Kasim shows that decisions about the future and reflections on the past are very much influenced by the circumstances of the present, as shown in chapter four. Both the past and the future are viewed from the perspective of the present and, therefore, attitudes to both tell us about the refugee's current circumstances and preoccupations. Some studies of forced migration have focussed on life prior to exile or the longed for return in the future, seeing the present life in exile as a liminal state. However, this implies that the refugee is unable to function in the context of exile, whereas the refugees in this study have proved otherwise.

There is also a tendency to equate the transition from past to present to future with the move from home country to host country and back to home country again. However, for refugees living in protracted exile, like those in this study, life in the host country accounts for many years of past experiences. Those Cypriot refugees who came to England as children have lived out far more of their lives in London than they did in Cyprus. Once again,

what is interesting is the emphasis placed on the lost home by individual refugees when, in reality, in some cases it made up a small portion of their life. As a result, memories appear to be mobilised in exile as a way of keeping a connection with the lost home. This can be through the sharing of stories with other villagers; the memorialisation of the village and remembrance of the pain of exile at social events, religious services and political meetings; and nostalgia, which seeks to keep alive awareness of the lost home and pass it on to subsequent generations. Such memories are not necessarily backward looking, however, but may be a way of preserving a notion of Cypriot identity, while living at a spatial and temporal distance from the lost home.

A possible fruitful area of research following on from this study may be the investigation of the meaning of home for second and subsequent generations of refugees. There is often an expectation that the children of refugees will continue to feel their parents' nostalgia for a lost home they do not know, as well as keeping alive political campaigns for return or restitution in unresolved situations (Loizos 1999). This can be seen in chapter four, when Stephen talks of the transmission of his memories and of refugee consciousness to his four-year-old daughter. However, only time will tell whether she will feel a more profound connection to Cyprus because her father was a refugee, or whether her identity will be primarily like that of the children of many migrants in world cities like London, who may look for home instead in the diversity of cultural hybridity.

Future directions

While this study has focused on the specific experience of Cypriot refugees, it may also contribute to other research into forced migration. Refugee studies is a broad discipline which produces, for example, policy-based work, legal theory, psycho-social research, sociological investigations and geographical studies. It also exists in a highly-charged political atmosphere where academic research can be used to support exclusionary policies or defend action beneficial to refugees. As a result, there is a tendency to grapple with big issues such as immigration policy, humanitarian responses to refugee crises and refugee law in order to intervene in some of these debates. Until fairly recently, the inclusion of refugee voices has been seen, to a large extent, as additional to 'serious' research, a personal take on a global issue. However, by placing refugee narratives at its heart, this study contributes to an emerging trend in the field that sees the refugee story as central rather than peripheral to research on forced migration. This can be taken in part as a response to the hostile discourses that seek to dehumanise refugees, but it also makes for better research. We are likely to arrive at more reliable conclusions if we see the refugees themselves as subjects rather than objects in the studies we undertake. This necessitates a closer attention to refugee narratives, not as indicative case studies but as the substance of research, precisely because they tell us more clearly than government monitoring or policy forums about the effects of forced migration.

In addition, a refugee-centred approach challenges an 'us' and 'them' rhetoric by showing that the preoccupations of refugees are very similar to the preoccupations that we all have. By focusing on the meaning of home in this

study, an issue of universal interest, it becomes apparent that refugees are not essentially different or Other, but have rather been marginalised by their circumstances. This takes us back to the question asked in chapter one as to whether refugees should be seen as victims or agents. The findings here have made it clear that refugees are ordinary people who are compelled to deal with extraordinary situations. We all reflect upon the meaning of home, but for the refugee such deliberations are heightened and approached with a sense of urgency, because of the forced nature of their migration. Therefore, it is important that work in refugee studies maintains a delicate balance, by rejecting assertions that all forms of migration involve the same challenges, while at the same time avoiding the pathologisation of refugees. The experience of forced migration is qualitatively different to that of other forms of migration because of the absence of choice involved, which has been reflected in these findings on the meaning of home for Cypriot refugees. However, refugees need to be seen as victims of circumstances, rather than victims per se, and as actors in their own lives. As Essed et al. state, focusing on agency 'centralises people, conceptualised as social actors who process their own experiences and those of others while acting upon these experiences' (Essed et al. 2004: 2). This could affect how we approach all deliberations in the field of refugee studies. Avoiding the Othering of refugees, we might instead pause to think how we would be affected by the loss of home and what kind of assistance we might require. If refugee policy and law was made on the basis that we all have the potential to become refugees, should our circumstances change drastically, then the outcomes might be very different.

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Appendix 1
Participants in the study (in alphabetical order)

Biographical details, such as ages and professions, relate to the time of the interview.

Adrienne

Adrienne is a 47-year-old from the Greek Cypriot village of Mandres near Famagusta. She was a teenager when she became a refugee in 1974, shortly after the second wave of Turkish military action. After waiting a few weeks the villagers fled to the nearby village of Gypsou, but were apprehended and held there by Turkish troops for three months, until they were taken south by the Red Cross. A number of men from the village, including her uncle, were taken hostage and went missing. The family stayed in Limassol for 5 years and in 1979 she came to England when her father arranged her marriage to a British-born Greek Cypriot. Her husband died of cancer a year before our interview and she has taken over the running of his delicatessen in Harpenden since his death. She has two sons, aged 24 and 19, and lives with them in Oakwood where I interviewed her. Her brother-in-law (an ex-colleague of mine) and her cousin were present at the interview.

Ahmet

Ahmet is a 57-year-old Turkish Cypriot from Nicosia. His family were among the first refugees from the inter-communal violence, having to leave their home suddenly in 1958 and move to the north of the town when he was 10 years old. They stayed with relatives for six months before renting a house in

north Nicosia. He came to England in 1968 because it wasn't possible for Turkish Cypriots to continue their higher education in Cyprus at the time. He studied in Portsmouth for four years before moving to London to work as an engineer. He is married to a Turkish Cypriot, they have two daughters and live in Southgate, north London. He runs a computer repair business in Bounds Green, north London, which is where I interviewed him.

Alpay

Alpay is a 54-year-old Turkish Cypriot man from the mixed village of Strongylos, near Nicosia. He left the village when he was 11 to go to an English secondary school in Nicosia. However, Turkish Cypriots had to leave to school in 1963 when violence escalated and a separate school was established for them in the north of the town. Alpay's family also had to leave the village and move to Nicosia as a result of the violence, although they were able to return after 1974 because the village was north of the border. Alpay came to England when he got a scholarship to go to Bourneville College in Birmingham and went on to study engineering in London. He has worked as an engineer in Lybia, Kenya and Saudi Arabia and now lives with his Turkish Cypriot wife and their daughter in Southgate. He is also the principal of a Turkish language Saturday school in north London.

Andreas

Andreas is a 75-year-old Greek Cypriot from the small mixed village of Lapathos, in the Famagusta district. The villagers left the village for a meeting on 14 August 1974 so that they could decide what to do about the Turkish

military presence, but were unable to return as the forces arrived. As a result they took nothing with them when they fled. He had worked as a civilian driver for the British forces for 15 years, which meant that he had a British passport and was allowed to come to England with his wife and his youngest son. Two of his sons are now accountants and the third is a doctor. He worked for three years at the McVities Biscuit factory in Harlesden, before getting a job as a mini-cab driver. He owns a house in Haringey, near the church where he is president of the committee and where I interviewed him. Andreas speaks little English and the interview was conducted with the help of Father Georgiou's translation.

Behiye

Behiye is a 72-year-old Turkish Cypriot woman who moved to Nicosia after marrying. She had to escape to the north of the city during inter-communal violence in 1963 and spent three months living in a school. Her husband was in Britain at the time and was able to send her an invitation to come to the country. She spent 14 months in Turkey before finally joining him. She worked for 25 years as a machinist in London and is now retired and living in rented accommodation in Haringey. She is divorced and has no children. She spends her time visiting community centres such as the Turkish Cypriot Women's Project in Turnpike Lane, where I interviewed her. She speaks limited English and the interview was conducted with the help of a worker at the project, who translated for me.

Bülent

Bülent is a 45-year-old Turkish Cypriot man who left Cyprus in 1963 when he was two. He was born in Famagusta, but he and his brother were brought up by their grandmother in north Nicosia, while his parents were in England working to raise money to build their house in Cyprus. The children were sent for by their parents when the violence escalated and came to live in Stoke Newington, north London. He went to university in Leeds and spent seven years having little contact with the Cypriot community, but later married a British-born Turkish Cypriot. After not having spoken much Turkish since the age of 12, he decided to go to Turkish lessons as an adult. He trained as an engineer, worked designing weapons for 10 years and is now a teacher. I interviewed Bülent at his home in Whetstone where he lives with his wife and three children.

Cemal

Cemal is a 49-year-old Turkish Cypriot man from the suburb of Kücük Kaymakli in Nicosia. The area was attacked in 1963 (by Nikos Sampson the architect of the 1974 Greek coup, he believes) and the Turkish Cypriot residents fled to the north of the town. Cemal and his family initially lived in a large rented house, which was also shared by Turkish Cypriot militia. His father came to London in 1967 and worked until he had enough money to bring the rest of the family over the following year, when they were given a council house in Stamford Hill. He lives in Winchmore Hill with his British-born Turkish Cypriot wife and they have two children. He works for Haringey Social Services and I interviewed him at the Turkish Cypriot Community Centre in

Turnpike Lane, which is one of the places where he works. He hadn't been to Cyprus for 27 years but was hoping to visit the summer we met.

Dimitris

Dimitris is a 50-year-old man from the Greek Cypriot village of Agios Amvrosios, on the north coast of Cyprus near Kyrenia. He became a refugee in 1974 during the Turkish military intervention. His fiancée and her parents were in Cyprus at the time but were able to leave, as they were British citizens. Dimitris fled first to their apartment in Famagusta, and then to Limassol after a bomb struck the building and caused him to lose his memory for three weeks. He arrived in Britain on Christmas Day 1974. He is the muhtar (mayor) of his village in exile, tracing the office back through his family to his great-grandfather, and is also chair of the village committee. He has worked in the restaurant business and has been financially successful. His wife is a Greek Cypriot brought up in north London and they have two children aged 23 and 26. He lives in Cockfosters, where I interviewed him.

Eleni

Eleni is a 38-year-old Greek Cypriot from Athienou, which is now a border village near Larnaca. When she was a child the family split their time between the village and Nicosia, where her father worked and the children went to school. Eleni's family were in the village for the summer holidays when the Turkish military attacked in 1974. They eventually escaped to a village near Limassol and stayed in a school for several months. Her uncle in Nottingham sent for the family but after five months their Leave to Remain was denied and

they were returned to Cyprus. The family moved to Nicosia and Eleni returned

to the UK to study fashion and business when she was 18 and lived apart

from the Cypriot community in Wansted, East London. She later 'found' the

community and, after working for a Cypriot newspaper, now works as a

community worker for a Greek Cypriot women's centre in Camden, where I

interviewed her. She lives in Palmer's Green, north London, is not married

and doesn't have children.

Emine

Emine is a 51-year-old Turkish Cypriot woman from the village of Androlikou.

She remembers the trouble starting in 1958, when her uncle was among

those who were shot. The family were staying in the town of Lefke in the

1960s where her father worked and she went to school, and she then moved

to Nicosia and lived with her uncle to continue studying. She was in Britain on

tour with a Turkish Cypriot theatre company in 1974 when war broke out and

was unable to return to Cyprus, as her family had fled to the north. The first

job she got was as a machinist in a Greek Cypriot factory where she learnt

Greek and made friends. She has run her own dressmaking shop for 22

years, which is where I interviewed her. Along with her Turkish Cypriot

husband, she also acts and produces plays for the Turkish Cypriot community

in London. She lives in Edmonton and has one son.

Father Georgiou

Father Georgiou is a 45-year-old from the Greek Cypriot village of Fylia, which

lies between Nicosia and Morphou. He was 15 in 1974 when the family

became refugees during the Turkish bombing raids. About 50 villagers fled to a village in the Troodos mountains where they stayed for a few weeks. After doing his military service in Cyprus, he joined the merchant navy and finally came to Britain in 1985. He became a Greek Orthodox priest in 2000 and is one of the few Cypriots to do so in London, the majority of priests coming from Greece. He also works as a postman and lives in Tottenham. He is married to a Greek Cypriot and they have two children. I interviewed him at the church where he works in Haringey.

Hasan

Hasan is a 44-year-old Turkish Cypriot man originally from the village of Softades. His family fled the village in 1963, when he was just 3 years old, ending up in Kivisili. They moved to Larnaca a year later but had to leave again after the war in 1974, ending up in Agios Sergios/Yeniboagazci in the north. Hasan came to England when he was 18 because his father didn't want him to join the Turkish army. He is married to an English woman and has a son and a daughter. He returned to Cyprus in 1991 for 7 years but couldn't settle there, partly because of his left-wing politics. He works as a part-time lecturer and is currently studying horticulture and garden design. I interviewed him in a café in Walthamstow, east London, near where he lives. I also interviewed Hasan two years earlier for my Masters thesis.

Kasim

Kasim is a 52-year-old Turkish Cypriot man from the village of Vroisha. He was 12 when they his family fled the village and moved to Suleymaniye where

his grandparents lived. They had to move again several months later to the village of Güneybakan because of ongoing fighting, until a refugee village called Yürükköy was built. The family remained there until they had to move again in 1974. Kasim came to London in 1971. He worked for many years as a catering manager and set up his own business. He now works for a north London business association, at whose offices I interviewed him. He has been involved in local politics with the Labour Party and is also a member of the local Rotary Club. His wife is from the village his family moved to when they became refugees for the first time. They live in Southgate and have a son and a daughter.

Maroulla

Maroulla is a 49-year-old Greek Cypriot from the village of Agios Amvrosios. She is active on the village committee and with the campaigning organisation Lobby for Cyprus. She fled her village after the second arrival of Turkish troops on the island in August 1974 and her brother has been missing ever since. The family stayed in a school in a nearby village before going to the village of Pano Lefkara near Larnaca for three months. Maroulla then came to Britain where her sister and aunt were living. She studied part-time and worked in a clothing factory until she had her two sons, who are now teenagers. She now teaches at a Greek community school part time as well as doing voluntary work for the community. She is married to a Cypriot and lives in Redbridge where I interviewed her.

Nick

Nick is a 67-year-old Greek Cypriot from Kyrenia. After his father died young, his mother worked to look after the six children, renting a house in the town. Nick first came to Britain to study in 1959 and acquired British citizenship, then became a radio operator for the merchant navy. He returned to Cyprus and met his wife from the nearby village of Agios Epiktitos. He built their house in the village when they married at the end of 1973, shortly before becoming refugees in 1974. After coming to England, he worked for 25 years as an engineer for a company that made parking ticket machines. He and his wife live in a council house near Euston. Nick is politically left wing and isn't religious, making a point of giving his two sons (who are 27 and 30) classical Greek rather than Christian names. He volunteers at the community advice centre based at Theatro Technis in Camden, which is where I interviewed him.

Ömer

Ömer is a 57-year-old Turkish Cypriot man from the village of Tera in the Paphos district. He moved to the nearby small town of Polis for his secondary education, before moving to Paphos to go to college. However the violence of 1963 meant he had to return to the village, which was enclaved for a number of years. He did three years national service in his village and then went to university in Turkey to study economics. However he couldn't find work when he returned to Cyprus and ran a coffee shop in the village, before joining the Turkish Cypriot army again. He was doing officer training in Turkey when the military intervention of 1974 took place and was on one of the boats sent to

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Cyprus. His family became refugees after the war and had to move north. He came to London in 1979 with his Turkish Cypriot wife and their eldest daughter. They had another daughter and a son in England. Since coming to England he has worked in the fish and chip shop business. I interviewed him at home in Croydon.

Panos

Panos is a 46-year-old Greek Cypriot from the Famagusta region. His father was from Evrychou and his mother from a neighbouring village and they moved to the town when Panos was two. He was studying at private school in London at the time of the war and was unable to return. His mother was on holiday visiting him and they did not know his father's whereabouts for two months. Although Panos and his mother were granted Leave to Remain for five years initially, his father was not and had to work in the Middle East and send money to them, only moving to England when he retired. Panos is a lawyer and I interviewed him at his office in Chancery Lane. He is politically active in campaigns for the right of return and attends church regularly. He is married to a British-born Cypriot and has no children.

Peter

Peter is a 47-year-old Greek Cypriot from the village of Agios Amvrosios. The family left the village during the second phase of Turkish military action on 14 August 1974, thinking that they would return a few days later. They went to Limassol and a few months later Peter joined the National Guard to do his military service. He came to England in 1978, on the pretext of studying, and

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trained as a car mechanic. He worked in his father-in-law's fish and chip shop, before working in the motor industry and has been a prison officer for 14 years. He is married to a British-born Cypriot and has three sons. He is active in the village committee and has lived in the same house in Ilford for 24 years.

Salih

Salih is a 51-year-old man from the Turkish Cypriot village of Vroisha (also known as Yagmuralan) high in the Troodos mountains. All villagers fled the village under threat of violence in 1964 and the village was burned down soon afterwards. Salih was 11 years old at the time. His family moved to a neighbouring village where they lived for 10 years, before having to move again in 1974 after the island was divided, as the village was in the border zone. Salih came to London in 1972 and I interviewed him at his home in Oakwood, north London where he lives with his British-born Cypriot wife, who has multiple sclerosis, and his two sons. In 2003 he set up a village association to campaign for an apology from the Greek Cypriot government and the rebuilding of his village.

Sophia

Sophia is a 38-year-old Greek Cypriot who was born in Britain and moved to Cyprus with her family in 1973, to her father's village Lysi, near Famagusta. The family became refugees a year later and Sophia and her sisters were allowed to return to Britain because they were born in the country, while her parents had to stay in a refugee camp for several months. As a young child, she had the experience of arriving in Cyprus speaking no Greek, only to

return to England a year later having forgotten all her English. She describes herself as a 'black sheep' for going to university rather than working in a factory, refusing an arranged marriage and having a daughter outside marriage when she was 30, with a New Zealand man. She is now married to an English man and works as a social worker. I interviewed Sophia on the phone.

Stella

Stella is a 56-year-old Greek Cypriot from Famagusta who was qualified as a teacher and worked as a travel agent before she fled Cyprus. Her parents were from a village nine miles away, but Stella moved to the town to go to school when she was 12 and stayed with a friend's cousin who was a teacher. She was pregnant with her son when the war broke out in 1974 and her husband had to leave her to join the army. She left Cyprus on a boat to Greece and then flew to Britain, where her brother and sister lived. Her husband joined her seven months later. She tried to get work in a travel agents in London but had no childcare, so worked at home sewing for 10 years, as well as teaching at a Greek school and studying. She now works as an advice worker and broadcasts on benefits on London Greek radio, as well as working at the Cypriot women's centre in Turnpike Lane, where I interviewed her. She has a son and a daughter and lives in Palmer's Green.

Stephen

Stephen is a 39-year-old Greek Cypriot from the town of Morphou, where his parents owned a number of shops. He became a refugee aged nine during

the Turkish military intervention of 1974 and the family stayed with friends and relatives for a few months in Cyprus before coming to Britain. After two years his family returned to Cyprus briefly, before going to Australia for three years and finally coming back to Britain in 1979. He studied maths at Middlesex University and worked as an accountant for eight years and a computer programmer for 10 years, before retraining as a teacher. He now works at a Catholic school in north London. He lives in Palmers Green with his British born Greek Cypriot wife and their four-year-old daughter.

Appendix 2: Map of Cyprus

Source: Dubin (2002) *The Rough Guide to Cyprus*.

As discussed in the thesis, there is no such thing as a neutral map, or a map of Cyprus that will not cause offence to someone. This map is reproduced for information only, to illustrate some of the main towns and villages and demonstrate the location of the Green Line.

Appendix 3

Interview schedule

Interviews were not based on a strict interview schedule but rather each conversation followed its own direction. However, the following is a list of questions that were used as a prompt and appeared in some form in most interviews. Many supplementary questions were also asked as the co-constructed narrative developed.

1. Can you tell me where your village/town is (using the map of Cyprus as a prompt)?

2. What are your memories of the village/town?

3. Was it near the sea/in the mountains?

4. What crops were grown there?

5. What sort of buildings were there?

6. Were there any village festivals?

7. Was it a Greek Cypriot/Turkish Cypriot/mixed village?

8. Did all your family live there?

9. What were your parents' professions?

10. Did you mix with the other community?

11. How old were you when you left the village/town?

12. What are the circumstances that led to you having to leave the village/town?

13. Did you have time to take anything with you?

14. Did you think it was a temporary or permanent move?

15. Where did you go?

16. When did you come to England?

17. Under what circumstances?

18. How old were you?

19. Describe your experiences/feelings when you first arrived?

20. Which part of London did you live in then?

21. ...and now?

22. Why did you choose that area?

23. How long have you lived in your house here?

24. Do you grow any 'Cypriot' plants in your garden?

25. Have you been involved with the Cypriot community in London?

26. ...in Cypriot community groups, village committees, politics?

27. Do you go to church/mosque?

28. Is religion important to you?

29. Do you still eat Cypriot food?

30. Are you married?

31. Did you marry a Cypriot?

32. Do you have children?

33. Do you speak to them about Cyprus?

34. What is your profession?

35. Would you like to return to Cyprus to live in your village/town?

36. Have you been back to visit your village/town in Cyprus since the border restrictions were relaxed?

37. Under what circumstances?

38. Can you describe the trip?

39. Was the village/town as you remembered it?

40. Were buildings/trees still there?

41. How did you feel about seeing it again?

42. Has the visit changed your attitude to return?

43. If you haven't gone to visit since the borders opened, what are your reasons?

44. What are your hopes for Cyprus now?