

On Continuity and Change in National Identity Construction: An Initial Note on Greek-Cypriot Education, 1960-2010

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Abstract

In this paper, and in the context of this special issue on fifty years since the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, we present an initial historicisation of Greek-Cypriot education since 1960 using, as a narrative and intellectual device, constructs of national identity. We argue here that four different historical moments in terms of national identity construction may be extracted from the available body of scholarship – the first years of Independence (1960-1974), the early post-74 period (1974-1994), the period between 1994-2003, and, the period between 2004-2010. In these different historical moments, education appears to have been given a major role in either restructuring or reaffirming and maintaining identities, and, as a result, ethnonational identities were in flux, veering between discourses of Hellenocentric, Cypriocentric and Helleno-cypriocentric identity.

Keywords: curriculum, Cyprus, education policy, Greek-Cypriot education, national identity, textbooks

Introduction

In this short article, and in the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the Republic of Cyprus, we present an initial historicisation of Greek-Cypriot education since the establishment of the Republic in 1960. In its current form, this historicisation is the product of both our systematic and critical engagement with the existing academic literature on the history of Greek-Cypriot education and our imaginative attempt to reinterpret and reconstruct this available body of scholarship using, as a narrative and intellectual organising device, different and often competing discourses of national identity. It is our assumption that the analytical powers of this theoretical framework have not been adequately explored as the existing literature more often than not tends to provide rather broad, descriptive and often atheoretical overviews of this period. It is our contention that these theoretical lenses can open up novel ways of understanding the first fifty years of education in the Republic of Cyprus.

In particular, we argue here that four different historical moments in terms of national identity construction can be constituted out of the available body of scholarship. In these moments – i.e. the first years of Independence (1960-1974), the early post-74 period (1974-1994), the period between 1994-2003, and, the period between 2004-2010 – education was given a major role either to restructure or to reaffirm and sustain existing identities. As a result, the overall picture of an

emerging field of academic inquiry suggests that during the past fifty years, national identities articulated for children were characterised by fluidity.

The available literature (see, e.g. POST Research Institute, 2007; Vural and Özuyanik, 2008; Papadakis, 2008; Latif, 2009) also suggests that Turkish-Cypriot education over the past fifty years shared similar features and predicaments to Greek-Cypriot education, oscillating between different discourses of identity. Due to space constraints, however, our focus in this article is only the domain of Greek-Cypriot education.

The article is divided into three sections. In the opening section, we outline, firstly, the main theoretical premises upon which our critical reading and restructuring of the literature is based and, secondly, the colonial educational legacy for the making of postcolonial identities in education. The second section takes on the task of defining the different identity discourses employed in this article to understand and narrate the first fifty years of Greek-Cypriot education, while the third – and the largest – is a sketch of the four different historical narratives of identity-making. In the conclusion, we seek to address several gaps we notice in the existing literature suggesting some areas for further research. In an attempt to construct and solidify a newly emerging field of study – the field of education and identity construction – these gaps and many others are sought to be filled in an ongoing study exploring national identity in Greek-Cypriot education policy, curricula and textbooks during the British and Independence periods.

Education and National Identity Construction

In part the article is grounded on theoretical premises drawn upon from social constructionist approaches to identity and education. It begins with our assumption that ‘national identity’ is not an essentialist and unchanging concept; rather, we construe it as a socially-situated discursive construct, that is, an artefact that is dependent on the socio-political and cultural contexts in which the making of identity takes place (see, e.g. Calhoun, 1997; Wodak *et al.*, 1999; Sutherland, 2005; Klerides, 2009a). Similarly, we define ‘education’ in terms of policy, curriculum and schoolbooks viewing them also as socio-political, ideological and cultural texts which more often than not serve political ends (see Ball, 2001 on policy; Apple, 2004 on curricula; Klerides, 2010 on textbooks).

It is also grounded on the idea that the formation of nation-states has often been based on an ethnocultural model of community formation (Habermas, 1996), a model that sought to draw a direct, causal link between culture and an ethnos (Cederman, 2001). In this project, the nation-state, as political scientists (e.g. Anderson, 1991), historians (e.g. Hobsbawm, 1994) and comparative historians of education (e.g. Green, 1990; Nóvoa, 2000) have argued, mobilised education – along with the media and other state mechanisms – to create, disseminate, sustain and perpetuate shared national myths, heroes, symbols, ideals, values and historical narratives, upon which notions of state authority and legitimacy as well as national belongingness and identification were rested.

The Republic of Cyprus does not fit well into this general view as the 1960 Constitution

allocated educational matters not to the Central Government but instead to the Greek and Turkish chambers, which sought, in turn, to maintain and perpetuate Greek and Turkish national identities, respectively, on the island (Kizilyürek and Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, 1997). According to the literature (see, e.g. Kitromilides, 1994; Charalambous, 1997, 2001; Bryant, 2004; Varnava, 2006; Persianis, 2006, 2010), the construction of a Greek national identity in Cyprus began towards the end of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century. Being perceived as an unredeemed part of the imagined community of Hellenism, Cyprus experienced the penetration of Greek irredentist discourses of identity during this period. Education was a key mechanism through which these discourses were transferred from Greece to Cyprus (Klerides, 2009b) and disseminated to the masses. During the period of the relatively *laissez-faire* education policy of the colonial government (1878 until about the 1920s), Greek-Cypriot education became actually a site of the production and re-production of national subjectivities loyal to Greece, the Greco-Christian culture and the ideal of *Enosis* (union with Greece). From the early 1930s and onwards, as the British authorities of Cyprus sought to increase their control over educational matters on the island, it further became a terrain of conflict: the Greek-Cypriot educational, ecclesiastical and political authorities interpreted and reacted against every colonial decision or initiative for education as an attempt of 'de-Hellenisation' and of imposing a Cypriot identity in order to perpetuate the colonial rule (Gregoriou, 2004a; Persianis, 2006, 2010).

Competing Discourses of Identity

To analyse Greek-Cypriot education in the period of Independence we mobilise as analytical tools three concepts of identity which have dominated Greek-Cypriot politics and society over the last century.

The first is *Hellenocentrism* emphasising the Greekness of Cyprus and its people (Loizos, 1974; Kitromilides, 1994; Bryant, 2004; Loizides, 2007). Having been articulated in Greece during the later parts of the nineteenth century first and then moved to Cyprus, as we noted above, this discourse promotes the membership of the Greeks of Cyprus or the Cypriot Hellenism to the wider imagined community of Hellenism or the Greek nation on the basis of ethnocultural criteria of national belongingness – common descent and culture defined by religion, language, customs and arts – and excludes the 'Turks of Cyprus' (and other Cypriot ethnic communities). This discourse, prevailing in the political, popular and intellectual spheres during the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, serves to legitimise *Enosis*, and has been mainly supported by the teachers and their union (Charalambous, 2001), the political right and the Church of Cyprus.

The second is *Cypriocentrism* which has been mainly supported by the political left in both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities (Spyrou, 2001; Papadakis, 2006; Peristianis, 2006) and non-governmental organisations such as the New Cyprus Association (Peristianis, 1995; Mavratsas, 1998). It speaks of 'an "imagined community" of Cypriots' (Papadakis, 1995, pp. 362-363), thus stressing the Cypriot identity the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot

communities share and setting Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots apart from the Greeks and the Turks as citizens and inhabitants of Greece and Turkey respectively. Although this discourse tends to define identity along political-legal and territorial factors – i.e. a shared *patria* of laws and institutions, a common territory, citizenship, and, a civic religion understood as a body of political objectives, traditions and values common to all nationals – it also makes use of cultural elements, such as common traditions, customs, arts; but not religion, language and descent (Attalides, 1979; Mavratsas, 1998).

The third is *Hellenocypriocentrism* which signifies and interprets Cyprus and its past, present and future, from a purely Greek-Cypriot perspective, and which seems to have emerged in a sharp form after 1974. It represents Cyprus as a monocultural state inhabited by citizens of Greek origin and of Orthodox religion; those who identify with this discourse perceive themselves as descendants of the Mycenaeans and, though they have no political agenda for *Enosis* with Greece, their representation of Cyprus tends to exclude Turkish Cypriots as ‘Others-Enemy’ – albeit not always – and more often than not includes only the part of Cyprus that is under the control of the Republic of Cyprus (Pachoulides, 2007; Kazamias, 2010; Psaltis, 2008). In other words, it may be seen as an ‘in-between’ discourse of identity depicting Cyprus as politically, territorially and socio-economically different from Greece but similar in terms of culture, tradition and race.

In this article, we attempt to understand Greek-Cypriot education after independence as a social arena in which these versions of identity struggle for supremacy, arguing that ethnonational identities constructed for children were in constant flux, veering between discourses of Hellenocentric, Cypriocentric and Hellenocypriocentric identity even within the same period. In different historical times different identities tended to prevail in this arena; their hegemony, however, was not unchallenged.

The First Years of Independence (1960-1974)

Hellenocentrism, having been formed and having prevailed in the British period, continued to dominate Greek-Cypriot education in the first years of Independence, although its dominance, as we also suggest here, was contested by forces and voices who favoured Hellenocypriocentrism as a means to modernise Greek-Cypriot society and economy. Continuity in the dominance of Hellenocentrism in education during this period lies to some extent at the foundations of the Republic of Cyprus, since the 1960 Constitution defined each community (Greek and Turkish) clearly in terms of ethnic origin, language, culture, and religion (Appendix D: Part 1 – General Provisions of Constitution, Article 2). The provisions of the Constitution drew quite distinct categories of Cypriot citizenship, projecting a political/state Cypriot identity which was not as emotionally appealing as ethno-cultural identities – Greek and Turkish. The Constitution thus contributed to the persistence of the *Enosis* ideal which meant, especially in the immediate post-1960 years, that the Republic was just an intermediate step toward union with Greece (Xydis, 1973; Patrick, 1976).

Likewise, the educational system remained segregated in structure and was further used as the cornerstone of both national ideologies by Greece and Turkey to increase their influence and widen the gap between the two communities (Kizilyürek and Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, 1997). In Karagiorges' words (1986), 'the Independence times resulted in the educational system, which should have promoted co-operation and trust, remaining outside the sphere and responsibility and control of the Central Government. The two Communal Chambers, the Greek and the Turkish, under which the education system of the newly born republic functioned, looked towards their respective mother countries for educational policies, objectives and orientations' (p. 152). Thus, the cultivation of a common Cypriot identity remained an undesirable aim and policy orientation for Greek-Cypriot education (Persianis, 1996; Koutselini-Ioannidou, 1997) and instead 'the full identification of [Greek] Cypriot education with that in Greece' was espoused by the Greek Communal Chamber (Karagiorges, 1986, p. 37). This orientation, grounded on the underlying assumption of the Greek identity of the Cypriot Hellenism and thus of their membership to the Greek nation, became especially salient in 1965 with the unilateral establishment of a Ministry of Education that catered for the ideological needs of Greek-Cypriots (Makriyianni and Psaltis, 2007).

At the same time, however, underpinning the rhetoric of state officials, especially the Minister of Finance, R. Solomonides, the Minister of Labour, T. Papadopoulos, and the Minister of Trade and Industry, N. Demetriou, who were calling for changes in education to meet the emerging needs of the newly-established and fast developing Republic, was a subtle version of Hellenocypriocentrism. Since the socio-economic needs of Cyprus were different from those of Greece, these officials argued, education should also diverge in content – but not in its broader philosophical orientation which was to remain Hellenocentric (Persianis, 1996; Koutselini-Ioannidou, 1997). This argument gained its legitimacy from the belief that although Cyprus and Greece shared the same culture, they were different societies with different economies. It occurred when support for Independence, perceived by certain political circles as the only 'feasible' situation, started to win ground at the expense of the ideal of *Enosis*, which was now articulated as the 'desirable' situation (Patrick, 1976; Attalides, 1979).

Perhaps the most noticeable exponent of a Hellenocypriocentrist identity in education during this period was F. Petrides. As a headmaster of the Pancyprrian Gymnasium, Petrides criticised Greek curricula and textbooks as failing to follow acceptable pedagogical principles and as focusing on teaching the glory of the past and the achievements of ancestors, whilst neglecting the social and economic needs of everyday modern life (Karagiorges, 1986). During his short term in office as Minister of Education (1972-1974), he initiated the collection of '[Greek] Cypriot material that will be incorporated in Greek text-books at both primary and secondary levels' (cited in Karagiorges, 1986, p. 56); this also evokes the Hellenocypriocentric discourse of identity as 'everyday life' as another domain that differentiates the Greek-Cypriots from the mainland Greeks (Mavratsas, 1999).

The Early Post-74 Period (1974-1994)

We suggest here that during the period between 1974-1994, especially the years 1976-1980, the hegemony of Hellenocentrism in education was challenged by an emergent Cypriocentrism. This was a period when Greek nationalism and *Enosis* were discredited amongst Greek-Cypriots and a Cypriot ideology projecting a multiethnic Cypriot people and stressing loyalty along state lines dominated Greek-Cypriot politics (Peristianis, 1995; Mavratsas, 1998). The focus of such political discourse stemmed from the need to form dialogue with the international community and the Turkish Cypriots on the basis of reunifying Cyprus. To this end, the terminology of collective identification began to change: 'Greek-Cypriots' and 'Turkish-Cypriots' started to be used as identity labels (Gregoriou, 2004b) rather than the 'Greeks' and 'Turks' (of Cyprus) used in the Constitution and during British rule. This hyphenated terminology acknowledged both ethnic background and the common Cypriotness necessary to back up the legitimacy of the Republic of Cyprus.

A key voice challenging the dominance of Greekness and its Hellenocentric educational form was Ch. Sofianos, Minister of Education from 1976 until 1980, who advocated changes in education along Cypriocentric – as well as Hellenocypriocentric – lines (Kazamias, 2010). During his term in office he introduced radical changes, such as the institutionalisation of the teaching of the 'History of Cyprus' and civics in secondary education and the production of curricula and textbooks in Cyprus (see Sofianos, 1986), which can be interpreted as modes of setting the Greek-Cypriots apart from the Greek nation but not necessarily closer to the Turkish Cypriots. For example, although the textbooks of History of Cyprus produced during the periods 1976-1980 and 1990-1993 contain explicit traces of Cypriotness depicting, for instance, the two Cypriot groups as 'compatriots' (Koullapis, 1998-1999) and as living peacefully and brotherly together in mixed villages (Klerides, 2008), they are not written on the whole from an inclusive Cypriot perspective but from an exclusive Greek-Cypriot angle (Papadakis, 2008).

In addition, the aim of education during the period between 1974-1994, as stated in official policy documents and in the new primary curricula (1981), no longer had as a prerequisite to reproduce and cultivate Helleno-Christian ideals and values, which placed Cyprus within the symbolic boundaries of the Greek nation; on the contrary, it stressed the preparation of democratic citizens, the preparation for occupations and life, the enhancement of Cyprus as an independent state, the promotion of tolerance and respect for Cypriot cultural diversity and the cultivation of friendship among the various communities on the island, especially Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots (Sofianos, 1986; Koutselini-Ioannidou, 1997; Kazamias, 2010).

However, despite the rise of Cypriocentrism in Greek-Cypriot politics and society after 1974 and attempts to modernise and democratise education by Sofianos and others, substantial changes in the content of education did not take place and Hellenocentrism continued to prevail in policy, curricula and textbooks in varying degrees. As Koutselini-Ioannidou (1997) notes 'the curriculum continues to preserve its national humanistic character and supports the pervasiveness of a

supremacist national ideology' (p. 407). Continuity can be partly explained by the strong reactions against the 1976-1980 reforms by 'conservative forces', to use Sofianos' terminology (1986), such as the Right Party of Cyprus, the right-wing government of Greece and conservative circles within the Church of Cyprus and the Ministry of Education, arguing that educational differentiation between Greece and Cyprus would lead to cultural differentiation, would undermine the Greek identity of Cyprus and would create Cypriot consciousness, leading eventually to the annihilation of Cypriot Hellenism (pp. 144-146).

In a context of state formation and the legitimacy of independence (Persianis, 2004), post-1974 education seems to have become a key ideological mechanism of the state to educate the younger generations of Greek-Cypriots into Hellenocypriocentricism. Two examples can be extracted from the existing literature to back this claim. The first is socialising with the official Greek-Cypriot historical narrative that suggests a particular version of the Cypriot past and functions implicitly to justify a particular vision for the future – of a reunited Cyprus. Papadakis (1995) points out that according to this narrative, which was articulated in the early post-1974 years, the beginning of the past is the peaceful symbiosis of Greek and Turkish Cypriots in Ottoman and British Cyprus. The natural and definitive end of this symbiosis should be the creation of a shared state. In 1955, always according to the official narrative, a struggle started for independence and, following a four-year struggle against the British, the island became autonomous in 1960. From then on it was independent until 1974, when the coup gave Turkey the excuse it always wanted to capture Cyprus. A few days after the coup, the Turks invaded the island, destroying independence and interrupting the coexistence of its people. This account of the past is present, for instance, in various forms in the history textbooks that were written in the early 1990s and are still in use in secondary education today (Klerides, 2008); clearly it is constituted from the Greek-Cypriot point of view, as Turkish-Cypriot readings of the past often emphasise conflict instead, in order to justify the current division and the creation of two separate states (Kizilyürek, 1999); and more importantly, it does not contradict the thesis of the cultural Greekness of Cyprus.

The second example of Hellenocypriocentrism in education is the cross-curricular theme entitled 'I know, I don't forget, and I struggle' (see Christou and Philippou, 2010). Being also projected from a Greek-Cypriot perspective, this theme was mobilised to instil the desire for the reunification of the island by constructing memories of the occupied areas so that the 'fighting spirit' of the pupils was kept alive (Christou, 2006). The same spirit was also found to be an emphasis of civic curricula (Koutselini and Papanastasiou, 1997). However, Christou (2006) concludes that 'the national goal of the post-1974 curriculum is discursively empty; it falls short of constructing an imagination of what the future will look like in a reunified Cyprus' (p. 3). This discursively empty curriculum goal ultimately leaves identity void of any Cypriocentric content that would relate with a reunified Cyprus. Indeed a recent study of Greek-Cypriot primary and secondary curricula and textbooks for history, geography, and civic education indicated that these

texts did not address the political foundations upon which a solution to the problem had been at the political level in 1977 (which is a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality for the two communities). Instead, the solution was portrayed, again, from a Hellenocypriocentric angle, as a simple matter of 'return' of the Greek-Cypriots ('victims') to the occupied north, depending on Turkey's ('victimizer') political will to resolve the problem (Philippou and Varnava, 2009).

The Period between 1994-2003

Hellenocentrism and Hellenocypriocentrism in education continued to prevail after the rise of the Right in power in 1993 and its re-election in 1998. Many of the textbooks which have been cited in the previous period as enhancing Hellenocypriocentrism continued to be used, even though new curricula were introduced in 1994 for primary education and slightly revised in 1996 (Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus (MoEC) 1996). The aim of developing a Greek national identity featured quite prominently in this and other documents, reflecting the broader political climate of the 1990s marked by the return of Greek national ideology in Greek-Cypriot politics, albeit in a form which excluded *Enosis* (Peristianis, 1995; Mavratsas, 1998). The curriculum also included the need to prepare children for the 'European orientations' of Cyprus in its main aims; however this was not conducted in ways which challenged or revisited Hellenocentric or Hellenocypriocentric discourses of national identity but rather re-inforced them, since 'Greekness' was perceived as a medium for 'Europeanness' (Philippou, 2004). The educational policy of 'Greece-Cyprus Unified Education' which was put forward (see Koutselini and Michaelidou, 2004) is another example of the strong attention to the national role of education during this period and 'hellenocentric education' was in fact the term used to characterise its philosophy and priorities. At the same time, shortly before EU accession and due to increasing immigration in the 1990s, the MoEC introduced the rhetoric of multicultural education (Memorandum for the Beginning of the 2001-2002 school year to acknowledge that Cypriot society was 'becoming multicultural' due to the influx of numerous economic immigrants (MoEC, 2002; Angelides *et al.*, 2004; Zembylas, 2010). However, this formal recognition of multiculturalism as a new (rather than old) phenomenon avoided framing the Cyprus problem from the Turkish-Cypriot perspective as a problem of ethnic violence and national anxiety that has historically marked difference in Cyprus (Gregoriou, 2004a). It reiterated a representation of Cyprus as 'recently multicultural' rather than 'historically multicultural' and a perseverance of a representation of Cyprus as 'historically Greek'. These points signify a failure to acknowledge 'old' and 'recent' diversity in Cyprus, veering between Hellenocypriocentrism and Hellenocentrism, as, for example, Philippou (2009) and Philippou *et al.*, (2008) have shown occurs in civics and geography curricula and textbooks of this period (and still in use today): Cypriot citizenship as a legal-political identity is emphasised as a means to legitimise the Greek-Cypriot perspective on the Cyprus problem as a violation of an internationally recognised state by a Turkish invasion and occupation. During this period, therefore Greek-Cypriot education seemed to be both 'attached' to

the one of 'motherland' Greece and 'appropriated' in monological ways which negated or silenced Cyprus' historical diversity.

The Period between 2004-2010

Let us begin our analysis of this period by noting that this is quite provisional as it is a very complex period where there is an educational reform in progress; it is not clear at the moment where it will lead in terms of national identity discourses – depending on the outcome, perhaps in the future, this period will be examined as part of the previous one, for example. This is a period during which the co-existence of all Hellenocentric, Cypriocentric and Hellenocypriocentric discourses is a key feature, against a background of a highly contested and ongoing Educational Reform initiated in 2003. One of the key documents which have been produced for this reform by the Ministry of Education and Culture is a Report produced by the Educational Reform Committee, a document which castigated both Helleno- and Hellenocypriocentrism and called for an ideological turn away from them and towards Cypriot and European citizenship and identity to address the challenges of the twenty first century (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2004; Kazamias, 2010). It has caused heated public debates and has been heavily criticised on a number of points (e.g. Open University Group of Academics, 2004), but mainly for its ideological positions with regards to national identity, favouring Cypriotness at the expense of Greekness. It remained at the margins of the education reform process until the summer of 2008, following the rise of the Left to government in March 2008, who saw education as a crucial site of mobilising support for the reunification of the island and legitimising and circulating to society their historically-marginalised perspectives on past, culture and identity (Klerides, in press). At the moment this reform process involves the development of new curricula for all subject-areas in both primary and secondary education, which are expected to be gradually implemented to all schools beginning in 2010.

The ideological shift is evident also in other documents where Cyprus is constructed to some extent as historically multicultural and deviates from the construction of Cyprus as recently multicultural and historically Greek (encountered in the Memorandum for 2001-2002 of the previous period). For example, Stylianou (2008), the General Director of the MoEC notes in her greeting for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue:

'It is the wish of us all to elevate [anadeiksume] the Republic of Cyprus to a model of harmonious symbiosis of the cultural elements of the local communities as well as those of the immigrants, but also as a bridge of communication of the cultures of Europe, the region and the world To this we expect that a just and viable solution of the political problem of our island will contribute, so that the vision of *together in diversity* becomes a tangible reality in our place [topo mas]' (emphasis in original).

Along similar lines, the Circular introducing the three key aims for 2007-2008, the first of which is intercultural dialogue, states: 'Cyprus, even though it has always been at the crossroads of

diverse civilizations and despite the fact that it had always had *elements of a multicultural society*, it experiences today *an unprecedented presence* of foreigners, workers, visitors, even permanent residents' (MoEC, 2007, p. 1; emphases added). However, though these narratives acknowledge diversity in Cyprus as a matter of local (and therefore historical) diversity and not only as that 'imported' by immigrants (as the 2001-2002 Memorandum does), they make no reference to the past failure of these diverse communities to peacefully live together, a vision anticipated to unproblematically occur in Ministry rhetoric once a 'just' solution is found.

This changes in the school years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, when one of the official aims for Greek-Cypriot public education became 'the cultivation of a culture of peaceful co-existence, mutual respect and cooperation between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots aiming at ending the occupation and reuniting our homeland and our people' (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009). Again, this aim produced various reactions from numerous sources, including educators, parents, academics and others, with some arguing that this aim should follow a solution to the Cyprus Problem, whilst others supporting this aim as a means towards a solution; in a number of cases, this aim was viewed as a 'threat' to national Greek identity and as incompatible with the cross-curricular theme of '*Den Ksehno*' which is still expected to be implemented in various ways in Greek-Cypriot education (e.g. Aggelidou, 2008).

Conclusion

In this article we argue that three discourses of national identity in Greek-Cypriot education have been developing in parallel, in complex, shifting and conflictual ways. More particularly, between 1960-1974 Hellenocentrism continued to prevail, as during the British period, but its hegemony was contested by socio-economic voices. After 1974 it was challenged for a very brief period by an emergent Cypriocentrism and was coupled with Hellenocypriocentric discourses which sought to support the representation of Cyprus as an independent republic invaded by another country. The 1994-2003 period enhanced both Hellenocypriocentrism and Hellenocentrism with new curricula and policies, despite emerging discourses of 'multiculturalism' and a 'European dimension'. Debates and discussions around identity have been a continuous key feature over the last fifty years; however, multiple or conflicting discourses have been especially salient since 2004, when an Educational Reform process was initiated. Though a turn to Cypriocentrism appears in the latest Educational Reform process (e.g. through a direct recognition of Cyprus as historically multicultural; a direct aim for reconciliation anticipated to feed into a reunified, independent Cyprus; and a castigation of ethnonational approaches to policy, curricula and textbooks), it remains to be seen whether or how this will be educationally endorsed, as it is not unaccompanied by discourses of both Helleno- and Hellenocypriocentrism.

From an epistemic perspective, we seek in this short article to map out and contribute to the making of an emerging academic field of study that engages with the construction of identity in and through Greek-Cypriot education over the first fifty years of the Republic of Cyprus. In

revisiting existing primary and secondary sources we provide an overview of the existing lines of scholarship on education organised in a particular historical order, using different discourses of identity as a narrative and intellectual device. Yet, this initial historicisation of education needs to be tested more rigorously by additional empirical research and, if necessary, to be reconstructed along new evidence. For example, and in addressing some of the gaps identified in the literature, we suggest that there is an urgent need to examine how the Hellenocentric policy discourse of the period 1960-1974 was implemented in actual praxis; how the 1976-1980 reforms are related to an emergent Cypriocentrism in society; and how Cypriocentrism influenced the curricula and textbooks that were produced in the first post-1974 years. We also need some detailed work on teachers' and students' discourses of identity, on state officials' rhetoric challenging the dominance of Hellenocentrism in the 1960s, as well as on the biographies of key actors in policy-making such as Spyridakis, Sofianos, Aggelidou and many others, if we are to understand the complex relation between education and identity construction over the last fifty years. It is also necessary to expand and broaden our research on curricula and textbooks to include studies on their usage in classrooms and on such neglected subjects as religion, geography, civics, literature and language. Indeed the scope of our broader ongoing study from which this article draws upon is an in-depth exploration of national identity in Greek-Cypriot education policy, curricula and schoolbooks during the British and Independence periods. Still, the intellectual challenges emerging out of these periods can only be dealt with collectively and in a series of studies, including comparative studies with Turkish-Cypriot education, if we are to gain a better understanding of Greek-Cypriot education in the first fifty years of the Republic of Cyprus.

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