RECONFIGURING PARADISE IN CYPRUS[*]

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Abstract

With the current restructuring of Mediterranean tourism, rural peripheries are being incorporated into a global market as niche products offering local culture and living tradition 'lost' to the rest of the (modern) world. Yet the reproduction and representation of tradition and local identity are themselves embedded in often-contradictory globalised relations of production.

These contradictory trends have been further compounded by the effects of division in Cyprus - one island geographically, but two different political spaces, integrated into the global system in very different ways. The south has been subject to the full force of globalisation, engaging with the major international tour operators and the positive and negative impacts of mass tourism. The image of the north, on the other hand - closed off from the major global tourism players, but with its border wide open to Turkey- is that of bearer of tradition for the island as a whole; whilst 'within' the north, this role has been largely assumed by Turkish settlers, as Turkish Cypriots pursue more urban and 'modern' lifestyles.

Focusing in particular on developments in the north, the paper explores the contradictions inherent in the hierarchy of globalisation and representation in Cyprus, and the ways in which tourism refracts the political spaces of the island and mediates their relationship_ with the world at large.

Introduction

Promises of paradise have become a commonplace of tourism promotion, and it is tempting to dismiss them as mere marketing ploys. Images of 'unspoilt nature' and 'colourful traditions', evoking the sense of a place existing outside time, where innocence can be re-captured, and the authenticity lacking in the modern world rediscovered (MacCannell, 1976; Urry, 1995) – surely these amount to a wilful masking of reality, a make-over that privileges the metropolitan imagination, whilst de-centring local perspectives? The evolution in postcards I have observed in Cyprus over the past ten years appears to support this view. In the 1990s, when I first started fieldwork in Kyrenia, the images of northern Cyprus available on postcard were remarkably similar to the images of modernity and civic pride from 1950s and 1960s Britain depicted in Martin Parr's collections of 'boring postcards:'

traffic roundabouts, high rise buildings and hotel car parks (Parr, 1999). But during the course of the 1990s these images of modernity began to give way to German-manufactured postcards displaying images of 'traditional Cyprus': fields of wild flowers; shepherds on donkeys; old people with lined faces; young people, if depicted at all, in traditional Cypriot folk costume. Depictions of tourists themselves were noticeable by their absence. Postcards I bought in the resort town of Larnaca in 2001 displayed almost identical imagery, but also showed evidence of a subversive trend, in the shape of postcards depicting the traditional 'out of place'; in the image, for example, of a traditionally decked-out male donkey standing over a female tourist sun-bathing topless on the beach.

A reading of the complex messages with which this particular image is replete is beyond the scope of this paper (but see Castelberg-Koulma, 1991; Zinovieff, 1991, on the sexual and political dynamics of 'host/guest' relations). My interest here lies in the ironic use made of tourism's representational practices in order to reassert a local subjectivity in the construction of Cyprus. Central to my argument is the point that the topoi and images constructed for an external tourist market also resonate in other parallel and, in many ways, contradictory local discourses through which 'Cyprus' is constantly being produced and reproduced.

In this paper I explore the representational practices and material processes of tourism on the island of Cyprus, and how these intersect with the reflexive practices of 'local subjects'. The context of both is the cultural reconfiguration of local spaces in order to align them with the product niches of the global tourism system, within which the twin poles of 'the traditional' and 'the modern' are central organising concepts. In the case of Cyprus, the contradictions inherent in these practices are further compounded by the effects of division – one island geographically, but two different political spaces, integrated into the global system in very different ways. I draw attention to the ways in which tourism has contributed to the destabilisation of the categories of 'tradition' and 'modernity' in Cyprus (Welz, 1999, 2000), and their transformation in local discourses to become core, if somewhat slippery and contested, symbolic resources for the representation of power, place and identity.

My focus here is northern Cyprus, from where the examples of 'traditional' and 'modern' spaces, on which the following discussion draws, are taken.[1] I start, however, with a brief review of some recent developments in the global tourism system.

Tourism and the Reconfiguration of Space in the Mediterranean

The rise and fall of postcard celebrations of modernity to which *Boring Postcards* pays tribute reflect a change in consciousness which has had profound implications

for the Mediterranean. The post-war optimism and affluence captured in those postcard images of Britain marked the conditions for the start of package tourism which was to transform the Mediterranean. The high rise hotels, which mushroomed on the beaches of the Costa del Sol and soon spread throughout the region, were symbols of progress not only for the working class northern Europeans who stayed in them, but also for local people who built them and worked in them. This was a quintessentially modern form of tourism – mass market, organised on Fordist principles - and it was pioneered in the Mediterranean. It ushered in a new spatial organisation of the Mediterranean too, as economic activity shifted to the tourist resorts of the coast, leaving many rural interior regions to cope with economic and demographic decline (Selwyn, 2001). Since the late 1980s, however, the Mediterranean resorts have been overtaken by newer destinations. Rising incomes, a fall in the price of air *travel,* and the global flow of images and information, have put long-haul destinations within easy reach of the Mediterranean's traditional market, and the region's tourism industry has been the object of substantial restructuring in order to remain competitive in the global market place (Bianchi, 2001).

'Modernism has effaced the differences that make places' wrote Tyler (Tyler, 1991, p. 84); and the *reconstruction* of difference has been an important element in efforts to reconfigure the Mediterranean in line with the requirements of a post-Fordist tourism industry. 'Difference' has here often been translated as 'absence of modernity' – an illustration of Fabian's 'denial of coevalness' in action (Fabian, 1983). The highly standardised coastal tourism product is being diversified by the development of previously neglected interior regions for rural and cultural tourism. But this is a process which is steeped in contradiction. As Bianchi (2001) argues, this diversification is being carried out within existing highly oligopolistic industry structures, against a background of increasing concentration of ownership amongst European tour operators. The move towards niche-based specialisation is driven by a handful of transnational tour operators who control booking systems and dominate seat capacity. Under these conditions, mature sun, sea and sand resorts are trapped in a cycle of declining returns and deteriorating environmental conditions, whilst regions previously untouched by tourism find themselves reinvented as 'nature/culture' destinations to satisfy a growing metropolitan demand for 'authentic', 'traditional' Mediterranean culture.

Cyprus as Tourist Locale

Cyprus has certainly not been exempt from the processes outlined above, but this has been within a particular historical and political context. After 1974, the north of Cyprus became relatively isolated from the rest of the world, as a result of comprehensive diplomatic, economic and cultural boycotts, and attempts to

develop its tourism languished (Scott, 2000). Tourist arrivals to the north remain low compared with arrivals to the south, and the north is heavily dependant on the Turkish market, which makes up approximately 80% of total arrivals.[2] Greek Cypriot tourism, in contrast, has been subject to the full force of globalisation, and has seen substantial economic benefits from it. Tourism revenues generated by the stays of 2.1 million tourists in 1995 amounted to Cy £810 million (US$1.62 billion) or 40.1% of total export receipts, with more than 10% of employment provided by the hotel and restaurant sector, making tourism the 'chief earner of foreign exchange and the economy's driving force' (Ioannides and Apostolopoulos, 1999, p. 52; Sonmez and Apostolopoulos, 2000). Recently, however, attention has also been drawn to some of the problems and costs of tourism's rapid growth. If local residents (both north and south of the Green Line dividing the island) seem on the whole prepared to pay a social and environmental price for tourism-led prosperity (Aki . Peristianis and Warner, 1996), uncontrolled coastal strip development, pressure on scarce water resources, congestion and noise pollution have arguably made southern Cyprus less attractive to tourists (Ioannides and Apostolopoulos, 1999; Ioannides and Holcombe, 2001). Twenty to 30% of all tourism in the south is controlled by a single tour operator, Thomson-Preussag (Bianchi, 2001), and the traditional sun, sea and sand product is facing problems of over-capacity and declining per capita spending by tourists.[3] These are problems which are likely to be exacerbated rather than improved by the introduction of 'all-inclusive' resorts, which lock hoteliers ever more firmly into dependent relationships with tour operators and do nothing to encourage tourists to leave the confines of their holiday complex.

If tourism in the north is heavily dependent on the Turkish market, then the situation is paralleled by the dominance of the UK market in the south, which has formed a growing proportion of the total number of tourist arrivals for more than a decade. The popularity of Cyprus as a British holiday destination builds on the long standing relations between the UK and its former colony. Eighty plus years of colonial rule ended formally with Cyprus's independence in 1960, but the remaining British sovereign bases at Akrotiri and Dhekelia, which occupy 2% of Cyprus's territory, not only maintain a British military presence on the island, but also function as a source of employment for both Greek and Turkish Cypriots in a variety of roles, including as officers in the British police force. From driving on the left, to the style of post boxes, colonial buildings, and stone drinking troughs dedicated to Elizabeth II and dating from her coronation year of 1953, there is much about the landscape of Cyprus to render it familiar and 'safe' to the British visitor. Likewise, Cypriot familiarity with English, both language and culture, stems not only from the legacy of the colonial education system, but from the long-standing presence of a large and flourishing Cypriot community in the UK, many of whom, particularly in retirement, maintain a residence in both countries. At 49% of arrivals in 1998, rising to 61% in 2003, UK tourists to southern Cyprus outnumber by several fold the German

tourists who form the next largest category.[4] In the north, the UK forms the second largest tourist market after Turkey, at around 10% of total arrivals, with Germany in third place at 4-5% (Devlet Planlama Orgutu, 2001). The age profile of tourists to the north tends to be higher than the south, and includes a good number of retired British servicemen and their families re-visiting the scene of their military service from the 1950s. The international club scene centred on the resort of Ayia Napa, in contrast, attracts many younger, single tourists to the south.

Fears that the Cypriot tourism product might be entering a period of stagnation and decline have been addressed by attempts to reposition southern Cyprus as an 'upmarket' destination, built on a combination of lavish resort hotel accommodation and 'village tourism' (Ioannides and Holcombe, 2001). This project entails the translation of 'modernity' and 'tradition' into symbolically mediated encounters with different kinds of space, alternating five-star luxury with the 'authentic simplicity' of the rural. Maintaining the distinctiveness and managing the transitions between these different kinds of space is proving problematic, with efforts to develop 'alternative' forms of tourism in the Akamas Peninsula and Troodos Mountains handicapped by the dominance of the mass beach resort model. Ioannides and Holcombe (2001), for example, describe how the use of off-road vehicles as tourist transport in the Akamas Peninsula has become a means of symbolically marking entry into a 'different' kind of space. Conventional tourist buses, they argue, would do less damage to the peninsula than the fleets of small vehicles carrying four tourists at a time, but unlike the off-road vehicles, buses are not considered appropriate signals of the 'authentic wilderness experience'. Furthermore, southern Cyprus's reputation has been established on its coastal tourism product, making tourists reluctant to pay a premium for a village stay, whilst the perception of the high dividends gained in coastal resorts has fuelled demands amongst village residents for the same kind of high density development (Sharpley, 2001).

In this context, the relatively undeveloped north of the island is starting to emerge as a potential competitor, with the Cyprus Tourist Organisation acknowledging the northwards 'leakage' of a proportion of their dissatisfied tourists (Ioannides and Apostolopoulos, 1999). Yet, as Ioannides and Apostolopoulos go on to point out, tourism in both parts of the island has its problems: if Greek Cypriot tourism suffers from too much development, then Turkish Cypriot tourism suffers from too little, and each, potentially, holds the solution to the other's problem. One such solution may be 'cooperative marketing' - promoting Cyprus as a single destination to enable the island's communities to '... cooperate in tourism for their mutual advantage and gradually move toward conflict resolution' (Sonmez and Apostolopoulos, 2000, p. 41). This is an approach which has in the past been tried with some success in the cases of Israel-Palestinian Authority, Israel-Egypt, and Republic of Ireland-Northern Ireland (ibid.).[5] The potential for tourism to become a

basis for rapprochement was recognised in the 'confidence building measures' put forward in the early 1990s by the then-Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros-Gali. The measures included the reopening of the former International Airport at Nicosia to tourist traffic, and the joint Greek/Turkish Cypriot operation of tourist facilities in the Famagusta suburb of Varosha/Mara . where most of the tourism development of the 1960s and early 1970s had been concentrated, and which has remained closed since 1974. The proposals foundered, along with the substantive negotiations of the time, but, certainly in the north, were much scrutinised and discussed in the media and at public meetings. They have been revived as part of the recent rapprochement and relaxation of internal border controls between the two parts of the island, but with the rejection of the Annan Plan for peace in April 2004, and the south's subsequent entry into the European Union without the north, the future of such developments remains unclear.

The north of Cyprus has attempted to develop its tourism, but under substantially different conditions from the south, closed off from the major global tourism players, but with its border wide open to Turkey (Scott, 2000). Of the 351,000 visitors to northern Cyprus in 1994, 73% were short-stay visitors from Turkey (Sonmez and Apostolopoulos, 2000). The north has not been able to emulate the south's prosperity, and its annual per capita income of $3,538 lags far behind the $10,591 per capita of the south. Yet although northern Cyprus finds itself formally outside the structures dominating Mediterranean tourism, it *has* been incorporated *representationally,* as one of the last surviving undeveloped corners of paradise in the Mediterranean - the bearer of 'tradition' and 'authenticity' for Cyprus as a whole and the Mediterranean generally. In fact, it is the north's very exclusion from mainstream tourism which makes it potentially a particularly attractive 'nature/culture' tourism product for the European market, as coverage in the British travel press makes clear. A feature in the Sunday Express is typical. Headed *'The Cyprus that time forgot'* (22 April 2001, pp. 79-81), the article paints a picture of northern Cyprus as a 'backwater' populated by talkative colourful local characters, where 'a crowded beach is about as likely as a rainy day in July' and 'crystal clear water laps against sand that has never seen a sun lounger' (ibid., p. 80). It is portrayed as a tranquil contrast to the resorts of Ayia Napa and Limassol, which 'bulge and bustle with thousands of tourists' (ibid.); a rare opportunity to encounter a Mediterranean which, in the words of another feature writer in the Observer, is as yet 'untainted by development' (30 August 1998).

The Denial of Coevalness and the Construction of Fantasy Spaces

If northern Cyprus is the object of a persistent 'denial of coevalness' in the travel press, this is in many respects but an extension of the 'othering' of Turkish Cypriots which has been a feature of much of the travel writing about Cyprus. Lawrence

Durrell's *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus,* the famous memoir of his 1950s stay in the village of Bellapais, contains few references to encounters with Turkish Cypriots; the languid Oriental courtesy of his estate agent Sabri, and the lonely, feeble Hodja he befriends, are part of a different world from that of the joyous, exuberant, Mediterranean he considered he had found in Bellapais (Durrell, 1989 [1957]). Similarly, Colin Thubron's *Journey Into Cyprus,* an account of a walking tour of the island he made in 1972, records his night spent in a Turkish enclave, and the atavistic link he makes between the level of car ownership in the enclave and a Turkish ancestral past as horsemen on the plains of Central Asia (Thubron, 1986 **[1975]).**

The division of the island has served to reinforce and maintain this perception of distinctive temporality and 'otherness' by offering a ready contrast between the 'modern, developed' south and the 'traditional, undeveloped' north. Meanwhile, the time inhabited by the Turkish Cypriots has become less remote, rather more cosy and familiar – a time, even, to evoke nostalgia. Consider the insistence of BBC World Service reports throughout the 1990s that road traffic in the north consisted exclusively of the odd Hillman Imp or Ford Popular, reminiscent of 1950s Britain – at a time when congestion caused by large numbers of land cruisers, expensive modern high performance cars, Mercedes taxis, and Turkish manufactured Renaults, was already a well established problem in Nicosia and Kyrenia. Similarly, British travel journalists in pursuit of the *Bitter Lemons* experience resolutely ignore incipient ribbon development on parts of the coast, or the presence of Turkish tourists attracted by a different side of northern Cyprus: beaches, casinos, shopping, and visiting war graves and monuments associated with the events of 1974. The tourism departments of the universities in the north are full of Turkish Cypriot students who want careers as managers of large, modern hotels, not a 'traditional' life of agricultural toil (nor, for that matter, the nomadic life of the steppes, *pace* Thubron).

The refusal to acknowledge these signs of modernity – or the modernising effects of tourism itself – suggests that they are irrelevant to an understanding of the place, and this is essentially true when what is being constructed is a tourist fantasy paradise. Without an adequate frame of reference, modernity is experienced as an inauthentic intrusion and dilution of local identity. Yet the reproduction and representation of tradition and local identity involves processes which are themselves embedded in often contradictory globalised relations of production. These usually remain hidden from the tourists themselves, but may be incorporated into local discourses as an additional layer of knowledge and reflexivity, as the following cases of the reproduction and representation of tourist spaces in northern Cyprus illustrate. I start with two examples of 'local tradition' enmeshed in relationships which are entirely modern, and then go on to consider,

by way of contrast, two cases illustrative of the production of modern gambling spaces and their incorporation into a sense of 'the local'.

Local Tradition I: Lefkara Work
The production in Cyprus of local crafts such as embroidery and weaving was rooted in a complex of cultural practices and socio-economic conditions which have been transformed by developments such as the availability of factory-produced consumer items, increased educational opportunities for girls, access to paid employment outside the home and the availability of recreational alternatives for women. In the 'traditional' context of their production, the value of such items was not measured in cash terms, but lay in their use value and in the reproduction of neighbourly and family relations of reciprocity they embodied. Women could offer their time, labour and skill embroidering linen for the bridal trousseau of their neighbours' daughters, in the knowledge that they would be able to call on those neighbours when the time came for their own daughters to marry (Faiz, 1993). Alongside the skills of sewing, lace making and embroidery, social competence in the network of relationships in which the work was enmeshed was also absorbed from childhood, through long hours of practice and observation of women sitting, chatting and working together.

Tourism has stimulated new demand for these traditional handicrafts, but this is in the context of marketised relations where the money seldom reflects the amount of labour and degree of skill involved. This has brought about the emergence of spatially separate spheres of 'lived' and represented tradition, which exist in a hierarchical relationship to each other. In northern Cyprus, where the tourist market for such items remains small, the cost of the materials is high and the rewards are low, many of the handicraft items for sale are actually produced by Turkish settlers in Cyprus, or imported from Turkey. In contrast, Faiz (1993) found that some of the *Lefkara it;i* or *lefkaritika* sold in Lefkara in the south is actually produced by Turkish Cypriot women in the north.6

Lefkara embroidery has a particular place in the politics of cultural identity in Cyprus, and this is enhanced by the special visibility and status it has acquired as a result of tourism. The most obvious aspect of this is the question of origins: who 'owns' the tradition, and what are the implications for where boundaries of identity are drawn? According to one guidebook to northern Cyprus, '... Turkish Cypriots insist that [the self-coloured embroidered linen associated with the eponymous village in southern Cyprus] originated as an art in Gaziantep in southern Turkey' (Goulding and Goulding, 1992, p. 79). This is a claim that can be read both as a statement of cultural difference between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and as a denial of difference between Turkish Cypriot and Anatolian culture (c.f. Navaro- Yashin, forthcoming). Contrary to the guidebook's assertion, however, this is not an

opinion I have ever heard Turkish Cypriots express. Rather, the view I regularly encountered was that this distinctive embroidery work is the local tradition of Cyprus *par excellence,* being closely associated not just with the island, but with one particular town, where the skills for its production remained jealously guarded local knowledge for centuries. Furthermore, Lefkara embroidery is regarded by many - and especially, but not exclusively, by those on the left - as emblematic of a pan-Cyprian cultural tradition, since Lefkara was a mixed town and the knowledge shared amongst the women of all its communities. Whilst conducting interviews with the owners of the numerous small and struggling gift shops in Kyrenia during the early 1990s, I found many cases of shopkeepers who persisted in stocking Lefkara embroidery and displaying it prominently, in the obstinate belief that they ought to be promoting and selling to tourists something that (in their own eyes) so completely represented Cyprus, despite the difficulties they experienced in getting hold of good quality work, and the low sales turnover. This was due in part to competition from the south for the skills of the best Turkish Cypriot craftswomen, and the high cost of producing Lefkara work because of the duty charged in the north on the import of linen and thread, which is imported duty-free into the south. One shopkeeper had bought his stock from the handicraft cooperative in Nicosia, and complained: 'People always come in asking for it, but then they step back when I tell them the price' - thus day-trippers from the south would not buy it because they could obtain it more cheaply in the south, and very few of the tourists staying in northern Cyprus bought it because the ceramics, onyx ware and textiles imported from Turkey were much cheaper. Turkish Cypriots thus find themselves rendered invisible in one of the chief iconic representations of cultural identity on the island.

A combination of the political upheavals and dislocations of the sixties and seventies, the commodification of Lefkara embroidery production for the tourist market, and the development of a symbolic economy around the staging and representation of locality and tradition (with all its political implications), have transformed the context and meaning of Lefkara embroidery. The Turkish Cypriot population fled Lefkara in 1964, moving on again with the renewed displacements of 1974, and taking their knowledge and skill with them. The villages in which the embroidery was taken up trace the widening diaspora of the Turkish Cypriots of Lefkara. Lefkara itself remains the 'brand' for the embroidery, but has become largely a centre for sales and marketing: the hub of marketised relations of production, and the centre for the staging of locality and tradition. Its productive hinterland extends across the Green Line to villages in the north, where the work is produced to commission on a piece rate basis. Turkish Cypriot women who cannot compete in the production of handicrafts for the northern tourist market, find that they have a competitive price advantage vis-a-vis the large and profitable market in the south, which they can access by means of a network of middlemen carrying commissions, materials, and finished work through the British bases. Emphasis on

the emblematic significance of Lefkara embroidery, reflected in discourses of origin and ownership of the cultural tradition, masks the contemporary production of locality in which local actors involved in the making and selling of Lefkara work are engaged.

Local Tradition II: A Story of Ice-cream

In the summer seasons of 1992 and 1993, the appearance in Kyrenia harbour of a Kahraman-Mara ice-cream seller created a stir.

Kahraman-Mara ice-cream is a variety of ice-cream with a thick, stringy consistency, which is made by beating the mixture in tubs, using a long paddle. A speciality of Mara in central Turkey, the ice-cream is characterised not just by its taste and texture, but by the manner in which it is sold. The seller, dressed in traditional regional costume, periodically beats the mixture with the paddle in order to stop it from melting, ringing a string of bells above his head to advertise his presence to potential customers. The seller deposits a scoop of ice-cream on the end of the paddle, places a cornet wafer on top, and proffers it to the customer – but the customer has to work for their ice-cream as, with a series of twists and twirls of the paddle, and banging the bells above his head, the seller leaves the customer empty-handed or clutching an empty wafer. This is often an amusing performance, and very popular with tourists in Turkish resort towns.

The ice-cream seller had been employed by the Turkish Cypriot owner of a café-bar on the harbour, and his pitch was under the awning just outside the bar. Many visitors to the harbour, both tourists and local, thought that his colourful presence enlivened the harbour, and offered something different from the restaurants and snack bars which sell mostly international cuisine, pizzas, toasted snacks etc. Others, however, voiced strong objections, along the lines: 'But Kahraman-Mara ice-cream is Turkish, not Cypriot'.

At first this seems a bizarre objection, not only because Turkish folkdance troupes are regularly invited to perform in northern Cyprus alongside Turkish Cypriot dance teams, but also because the food and entertainment offered at most of the other establishments around the harbour is also 'not Cypriot'. When I pointed this out to one objector, who himself had had plans to open a pizza restaurant on the harbour, his answer was that 'Pizza is international – it's as much a part of Turkish Cypriot culture as it is of any other western culture.' A comment from another objector – that Turkish culture is 'too close' to Turkish Cypriot – clarified the issues further. International popular culture can never be *mistaken* for Turkish Cypriot, and so it can be incorporated without threat. Representations of Turkish culture, on the other hand, have to be clearly labelled as such – as they are when Turkish folk dances are performed alongside Turkish Cypriot ones – in order to preserve a distinctive sense of Turkish Cypriot cultural identity.

Ultimately, it was the ice-cream seller's *prominence* in the place which represents northern Cyprus's tourism on so many postcards, travel brochures, guides, and tourists' photographs, to which people objected: an 'authentic' representation of Turkey in what has become an icon of Turkish Cypriot tourism. Coincidentally, in the summer of 1993 several manufacturers of local ice-cream announced that they were closing their businesses because they could no longer compete with big Turkish companies selling ice-cream in Cyprus. Although the Kahraman-Maraey ice-cream seller had no connection with these companies (who were offering local shops free refrigerated cabinets in return for stocking their brand), people made a symbolic connection between the two. Reminiscing about the flavour, the texture, the pleasures of eating Turkish Cypriot ice-cream, brought back memories of other times and places, of the old shops and the shop-keepers who had sold it, of a Cyprus of the past. 'You can't get Turkish Cypriot ice-cream anymore, all we've got [is] this stuff!' was the common complaint. In effect, the ice- cream seller became the symbolic focus for fears concerning mainland cultural and economic dominance.

The discussions in the harbour demonstrate the degree of creative reflexivity that people bring to the reading of symbols which purport to represent their lives. In conversation, people readily identified the slippage between image and the reality of daily social and economic relations, and interpreted it in terms of on-going debates about Turkish Cypriot identity, which revolve around the twin poles of exclusive Anatolian Turkish 'roots' at one extreme, and at the other a construct of 'Cypriot' identity which prioritises the cultural contacts formed over centuries in Cyprus, of which Anatolian elements form but one of many influences. This latter model of identity is dynamic and complex, embedded in multi-layered social relationships, and does not lend itself easily to iconic expression of the type favoured in self-conscious touristic representations; rather, it emerges from reflexive critiques of the essentialist imagery employed in tourism, as I have described above, or, as in the case of Lefkara embroidery discussed earlier, from the material practices and relationships surrounding production and consumption. When this local identity is framed in terms of a modern global consciousness, the dynamics of representation become even more problematic.

Casino Tourism and the Production of 'modern spaces'
In February 1997, at the height of the public debate in Turkey over the future of the country's casinos, a cartoon appeared in the English language newspaper *Turkish Daily News.* The cartoon shows two men in suit and tie throwing dice, enthusiastically watched by a group of beaming tourists dressed in sun-hats, shorts and tee-shirts, who have just emerged from a bus marked 'Casino Tour'. Cameras and videos at the ready, the tourists are listening to the commentary of the tour guide, who stands with a bored expression, one hand on his hip, the other flung out

towards the spectacle he is explaining to them. As with the postcard of the amorous donkey discussed earlier, the humour lies in the transgression of categories derived from the conventions of tourist representation; in this case, it is 'the modern' that is out of place, the object of a gaze normally directed at a local, traditional 'other'. Modernity, so the logic of the joke suggests, is an enabling condition of tourism, not its object. Spatially and conceptually the casino belongs to the world of the tourist *subject,* not the representational spaces of objectified touristic spectacle.

In southern Cyprus the issue of casinos has long been a matter of debate. Despite a vociferous lobby in favour, pressures to allow casinos to operate have so far been opposed and resisted, both out of traditional moral concerns, and also on cultural and political grounds (*Sunday Mail 17 September 2000).*[7] The development of a casino sector in northern Cyprus, in contrast, started as early as 1975. At that time casino gambling was illegal in Turkey, and the business generated by a steady stream of Turkish casino gamblers was enough to sustain four or five small, fairly low-key establishments around Kyrenia. In the mid 1990s, the demand for the Turkish Cypriot casinos fell away as Turkish citizens were allowed access to live gaming tables in Turkey for the first time. This liberal gambling regime was short-lived, and ended in 1997, with the electoral success of the Islamic Welfare Party and a series of highly publicised casino-related scandals. It lasted long enough, however, to establish gaming as an essential leisure activity in Turkey. With the closure of casinos in Turkey, many companies switched their operations to northern Cyprus, and by 1999 more than twenty casinos were catering to the increased demand, with twenty more lobbying for licences (Scott and Aşıkoğlu, 2001a).

The pattern of casino tourism development in northern Cyprus has been extremely dependent on developments in Turkey, and in many ways is highly expressive of that particular relationship of dependency which already exists (Scott, 2001b). At another level, casino tourism development places northern Cyprus right in the thick of global trends. The world-wide expansion of the industry since the mid 1980s, driven by US based corporations, has reconfigured the world in line with its own spatial logic, according to which gaming activities are typically located in peripheral and liminal spaces, symbolically and/or geographically distant from the mainstream[8] Incorporation into this global spatial hierarchy has thus enabled northern Cyprus to convert its isolation into a comparative advantage; not as a 'traditional periphery', as with the European tourism market, but as a modern global leisure product.

But this global realignment has been paralleled by the reorganisation of *local* gambling spaces, and the marginalisation of forms of gambling which were previously at the centre of village life and gendered practice. This is particularly marked in the case of cock-fighting. Illegal since the days of British rule, cock-

fighting has nevertheless been tolerated until recently, and many informants in their forties and upwards recalled the cock-fight as a central feature of local festivals in which both Greek and Turkish Cypriots would participate. Increasing pressure from the authorities, in the form of police raids, arrests, fines, and the confiscation of valuable birds, has driven the practice underground. Although they are still a focal point for the gathering of males of all ages and social classes, cock-fights are now clandestine affairs, requiring sentries to be posted with their mobile phones at village exits and entrances to warn of the approach of the police.

Some aficionados of cock-fighting blame the intervention of animal welfare activists for the clamp-down; others suspect pressure from the licensed casinos, whom they accuse of wanting to eradicate all non-licensed forms of gambling so that the casinos become literally 'the only game in town'. Some card players tell a similar story in relation to village coffee shop gambling. The truth behind the perceived change in policy towards illegal but previously tolerated forms of gambling is hard to establish, especially since students and Turkish Cypriot nationals are legally barred from gambling in casinos. What is clear, however, is that the policy of 'turning a blind eye' seems now to have shifted from the coffee shops and the cock pits to the casinos, which have become a new form of leisure space for local people.

Long associated with glamour, sleaze, danger and criminality, casinos have now repackaged and reinvented themselves as global entertainment and leisure products. The traditional European regulatory approach treated gaming as a vice and gamblers as needing protection from themselves. But it is the US model which is taking the world by storm: the core activity of gambling is surrounded by minimal restrictions and constraints, and maximum fun, with the stimulus of alcohol, food, and big-name entertainment (MacMillan, 1996). Most of the casinos of northern Cyprus are small, especially by north American standards:[9] but the relative opulence of the decor, as well as the food and alcohol, supplied free of charge, provide local people with relief from the current grim economic conditions which make most other forms of entertainment prohibitively expensive. A barber in Kyrenia, himself an habitue of the casinos, estimated in conversation that:

> at least 80% of the local youth who have a nightlife go to the casinos for eating, drinking and playing. They go first of all for free food and drink. Then they bring their girlfriends. If they want to get drunk, they go [to] the casinos first to drink whisky and beer... The young generation don't eat at home any more.

He himself, he maintained, had not eaten at home in two years.

An evening spent observing the comings and goings in a casino in Kyrenia suggested that for many local couples the casino had taken over from the harbour

as the place for strolling, meeting friends, chatting and taking a drink and a bite to eat. The fact that the casinos bring Turkey's best known stars and fashion models to the island as part of their programme of entertainment has also done much to enhance their status as fashionable, modern leisure spaces, which enable people to get out for a while from the 'backwater' beloved of British travel writers, and escape into the mainstream of metropolitan popular culture. Nevertheless, ambivalence remains towards the casinos and the image of 'modernity' they represent, and this conservatism emerges most strongly in attitudes to female employment in the sector.

Gender at the Boundary

Twenty-five years ago, very few Turkish Cypriot women worked outside the home. Those who did were generally the educated daughters of affluent families working in urban professional occupations (Ladbury, 1979). Not only were there few educational and economic opportunities to enable the majority of women to take up paid employment, but they were also constrained by notions of 'respectability' embodied in the concept of *namus* (reputation or sexual shame). Both a woman's marriage prospects and the reputation of her menfolk depended on avoiding situations which might give rise to gossip, and this entailed restrictions on women's business activities, employment and social contacts outside the home.

Women's employment has increased dramatically since the 1970s, as a result of the expansion in their educational and employment opportunities, and a relaxation in the code of reputation, permitting greater freedom to women outside the home. Tourism has become one area in which women can readily find employment, and the resistance to work in tourism which some women experienced from their families in the early days has been largely overcome, as tourism, designated northern Cyprus's leading economic sector during the early 1990s, gained in status and symbolic importance. White collar work in hotel reception or airline offices has become a career goal for many young Turkish Cypriot women studying tourism at university. Yet a number of jobs in the hospitality and entertainment field continued to be regarded as socially and culturally unacceptable for Turkish Cypriot women to do: amongst them, waitressing in tavernas, working as singers, dancers or night-club hostesses, or as casino croupiers. The demand for female labour to perform this work was met largely by migrant workers.

Foreign women have been part of the casino scene in northern Cyprus from the 1980s, when licensed British croupiers were recruited to work the tables and train local croupiers on the job. The British women were succeeded by Turkish croupiers – men and women from the mainland – and subsequently, with the opening up of the former Soviet Union and eastern bloc countries, by the recruitment of young Rumanian women. As a cheap source of labour, the Rumanian women undoubtedly

undercut their Turkish counterparts; they also added glamour to the casino floor, enhanced both by their exotic 'foreign looks', and by the spice of dangerous sexuality attached to them through the association of eastern European women with prostitution, which had spread to northern Cyprus from Turkey, where they were known as 'Natashas' (Hann and Hann, 1992). The common use of this name for all Russian and eastern European women tended to reinforce local people's belief that 'these women are all the same'. The highly sexualised stereotype of the 'Natasha', embodying the exotic, attractive but dangerous outsider, and the absence of family pressure on these women working away from home, freed them from the constraints of reputation to perform those jobs which were not considered 'respectable' for Turkish Cypriot women. At the same time, individual women found themselves obliged to conform to local norms of behaviour in order to try to mitigate the effect of the stereotype. One young Rumanian croupier, whom I interviewed in the summer of 1993, complained:

> … sometimes it's difficult living in such a small place. My boss hears even when I have just been to the supermarket. You have to watch your friends - men and women - in case they have a bad reputation. Being Rumanian, people judge you all the time ... men always make assumptions about you. At work I have to be very serious, so as not to give people the wrong idea, and it's hard, because we always used to laugh and joke with the boys at work in Rumania. I don't smoke or drink, I haven't had a boyfriend since I have been here, and I don't go to discos.
> (Scott, 1997, p. 72)

Significantly, the situation in which this young woman found herself, and her response to it, echoed the experience of a Turkish Cypriot friend who had found herself the object of similar stereotyping whilst a student in Turkey, years before. She recounted how local residents had campaigned to have the Cypriot women's hostel closed down:

> At the time [in the 1970s] we wore mini-skirts, we laughed and talked in the street. We were away from home, and some girls had boyfriends. We didn't behave like the Turkish women, they were much more traditional then ... some of the Cypriot boys warned us that Turkish students in the hostels gossiped about us, and that we should be careful how we behaved with them.
> (Scott, 1995, p.393)

The women had responded to their situation through self-imposed restrictions on their behaviour, which were collectively enforced on all the women living in the hostel. Women who did not conform were asked to leave. She commented: 'I don't know now if we were right to do that. These things are very complex, they turn women against each other ... ' (ibid.).

As this last comment illustrates, women find themselves positioned both at the conservative core of the community, the bearers of 'traditional' standards of acceptable behaviour, and also challenging and pushing out the limits of acceptability at the boundary. The changing division of female labour within tourism and, specifically, the casino sector, is therefore revealing, as Turkish Cypriot women move into areas of work which were previously acceptable only for marginalised female outsiders. With the recent explosion in the northern Cyprus casino sector, the first Turkish Cypriot female croupiers have started to make their appearance. What has changed in the past five or so years to make that possible?

The transformation of casino gambling into an acceptable modern leisure activity, described above, has introduced Turkish Cypriot women to the casino floor as leisure consumers, but in a context which reinforces existing gender norms and sanitises women's gambling by constituting it as an activity for couples.[10] This is a very different situation from that of the casino as place of employment, characterised by night-time work away from the authority or protection of a husband or male kin, in an environment which is still associated, anecdotally at least, with criminality and deviant behaviour.[11] However, following the closure of the casinos in Turkey and subsequent explosion of gambling in northern Cyprus from 1997 onwards, a significant shift has occurred in official attitudes, in favour of the development of the sector. This followed a long period of uncertainty in which partisans of casino expansion argued that the casinos would boost tourism and provide a source of local employment, whilst critics argued that the benefits of casino tourism were exaggerated and unevenly distributed (Scott, 2001b). With the commitment, for the time being at least, to casino tourism as the best available solution to northern Cyprus's political and economic isolation, legislation was passed requiring that the proportion of foreign nationals employed in any casino should not exceed 30%.

When Turkey's casino owners moved their operations to Cyprus after 1997, a cadre of existing croupiers came with them, who were not only skilled and experienced in their profession, but had also developed contacts which enabled them to play an important role in marketing northern Cyprus as a tourism gambling destination to networks of gamblers in Turkey (Aşıkoğlu, personal communication). Research carried out by the Ministry of Tourism in 1998 found that thirteen out of eighteen casinos surveyed employed fewer than 50% local staff, and four employed fewer than 20%. Only two either met or exceeded the 70% target (Ministry of Tourism, 1998).[12] However, amongst the minority of local staff employed in the sector are a small number of Turkish Cypriot women who had learnt their trade as croupiers at casinos in Turkey. Having served their apprenticeship as female 'outsiders' in Turkey, it seems possible that the boundaries of community standards of behaviour, assisted by transformations in the public sphere associated with the

social and economic dynamics of the tourism and casino industries, may have shifted sufficiently to enable these female croupiers to come home.

Conclusion

The business of tourism is largely the business of place-making, and this is an activity in which all 'local subjects' are also continuously engaged (Appadurai, 1995). An important difference, however, is that the commodified localities of global tourism do not reflect a primarily local consciousness, but rather the logic of globalisation, in which partial and selective representations of 'the local' serve merely to differentiate an increasingly global product. In this paper I have also indicated how local subjects resist this 'de-centring' and use tourist symbols to reflect critically on identity and representation.

In Cyprus, where the contours and meaning of place are contested within and between the two parts of the divided island, the production of locality is both highly contentious and over-determined. Nationalist discourses, which mobilise grand narratives of the past reflected in monumentalised landscapes and contests over the origin and ownership of 'traditional' cultural forms, sit very easily with the iconic representational practices of tourism (Evans-Pritchard, 1993; Herzfeld, 1991). Public policies on the housing of refugees, distribution of land, availability of credits and building of infrastructure, create the conditions of everyday life, and in so doing convey messages about the nature and permanence or impermanence of the island's division (Ladbury and King, 1982; Loizos, 1981; Scott, 1998). Meanwhile, in villages and urban neighbourhoods, local actors are engaged in other spatial practices – conducting environmental campaigns, walking around Nicosia, conversing with neighbours, gardening (Welz, forthcoming; Papadakis, 1998, 1999; Jepson, forthcoming) – all activities which play a key role in sustaining social memory and forgetting, and mediating the relationship with place.

The idea of a 'motherland' – as both Greece and Turkey are often referred to by Greek and Turkish Cypriots respectively – is viewed as problematic by many Cypriots, who prefer to engage with the commonalities of Cypriot culture, rather than remain trapped in the quest for distinctive national origins and ownership of 'authentic' cultural traditions. The ignorance of many Cypriots, particularly the post-1974 generation, about 'the other' behind the Green Line, has arguably been fostered by promotional strategies which brand the two parts of the island as competing tourism destinations. Bi-communal activities on the island have attempted to address this ignorance by bringing Greek and Turkish Cypriots together to learn about (and practise) their shared traditions of dance, music and food culture.[13]

But as Loizos has argued, it is in acquiring joint approaches to engaging with the material practices of *modernity* that Turkish and Greek Cypriots can best learn how to see each other more clearly (Loizos, 1998). Bi-communal meetings of Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the fields of education, medicine, psychology and business, to name a few, have shifted the emphasis away from self-conscious preoccupation with issues of national identity towards collaboration on common professional concerns, and created awareness amongst women of shared gender issues in Greek and Turkish Cypriot society (c.f. Cockburn, 2004). When viewed as sources and transmitters of metropolitan leisure culture, rather than as avatars of national identity, attitudes to the 'motherlands' of Greece and Turkey – a mixture of admiration, aspiration, resentment and amusement – are remarkably similar on both sides of the Green Line (c.f. Papadakis, 1993).

Tourism has been identified as a critical element in promoting possible solutions for Cyprus, but it is already part of the local landscape, introducing a new dimension into multi-layered local constructions of place and identity, as a rich, and often contradictory, source of practices, associations and symbols. It provides the stimulus for creating new representations (and new configurations) of place, and in so doing it intersects with multiple existing discourses and practices of locality production. These interstitial spaces, where local modes of representation and reflexive discourse engage with the material processes and representational practices of tourist space, merit further exploration. By attending to such spaces, we may glimpse the emerging contours of Cyprus from a different angle, and gain fresh insights into the reproduction and creative agency of its local subjects.

Notes

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1. I carried out research in northern Cyprus from 1992-1994 and 1996-1998, returning for further short periods of fieldwork during 1999, 2000 and 2001. My recent research has been concerned with two themes in particular: the development of casino tourism, and the cultural politics of heritage.
2. In 1999 and 2000, northern Cyprus received 414,000 and 433,000 tourists respectively, of which 334,400 and 347,700 were from Turkey. In the same years, arrivals to the south numbered 2.4 million and 2.6 million respectively.

3. In the north, in contrast, the embargo on foreign investment has left the way clear for the development of a tourism sector characterised by small, family-run businesses (1997), although more recently the entry of large Turkish chains such as Dedeman and Merit into northern Cyprus has concentrated control of the Turkish Cypriot tourism industry in Turkish ownership (Scott, 2000).

4. German tourists made up 10% of total arrivals in 1998, declining to 6% in 2003 (Statistical Service of the Government of Cyprus).

5. Although there has at times been some slippage between destination marketing image and reality, the commitment to co-operate in the field of tourism was renewed by Israeli and Palestinian Tourism Ministers in a joint statement made in November 2004 (Alcantara, 2004).

6. I acknowledge with thanks my debt to Muharrem Faiz's study of Lefkara işi, published as *Kultür ve Yabancılaşma,* for the information about Lefkara embroidery on which this discussion draws.

7. However, this policy is being reconsidered, in view of the steady stream of Greek Cypriots who, since the relaxation of border restrictions between north and south in April 2003, have been heading northwards to gamble in the casinos (Cyprus Mail, 23 June 2004).

8. As Stansfield (1996, p. 135) observes, 'In most Western cultures, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, legalised gambling has been restricted to the periphery, spatially mirroring the widespread public opinion that it *should be* on the periphery of society'. Many peripheral locations have seized on the opportunity to turn their peripherality into a comparative advantage. Border locations appealing to a target market on the other side of the border '... can appropriate all the benefits from gambling (all demand is export), while [they] can re-export all the costs (problem gamblers, bankruptcies, broken families and the like) that flow back over the border' (Felsenstein and Freeman, 1998, p. 146). Legislative 'islands' can be created, where gambling is permitted amidst a sea of prohibition. Perhaps the best known example of this is in the USA, where Native Americans have developed legal commercial gambling on Indian tribal lands, even though gambling is prohibited in the surrounding state. Location in peripheral places can also promote the kind of 'liminal' behaviour - suspension of inhibitions, role reversal and relaxation of constraints - which are often observed in tourist spaces, and which are reinforced by the atmosphere of the casinos themselves, where gambling takes place in enclosed, windowless rooms, lubricated by the free flow of alcohol. See further Scott and Aşıkoğlu, 2001a; Scott, 2003.

9. The average for the casinos of northern Cyprus is 10 tables and 70 slot machines per casino. The smallest has 7 gaming tables and 18 slot machines, whilst the largest has 22 tables and 377 slot machines. All are attached to, or located within, hotels, holiday villages, or other tourist accommodation (Scott, 2003). The larger casinos in Las Vegas typically boast around 2,000-plus slot machines and 100 gaming tables.

10. Before the advent of commercial casinos, gambling was a segregated activity which men of all classes pursued in cafes and private clubs, and upper class women in the home. See Scott, 2003.

11. Political parties seeking electoral advantage have frequently played on popular fears that the casinos lead to increased crime and rates of problem gambling; c.f. Scott, 2001b.

12. The majority of the staff were from Turkey and Eastern Europe.

13. Despite the division of the island, bi-communal meetings and activities have been able to take place periodically under UN auspices in the single remaining mixed border town of Pyla, or in the UN buffer zone. Such bi-communal meetings, and the social and cultural

context in which they occur, are portrayed in the 2003 film *Living Together Separately: Py/a, A Mixed Borderline Village in Cyprus* (Elias Demetriou and Yiannis Papadakis).

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