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‘Two Homelands and None’: Belonging, Alienation, and Everyday Citizenship with the Expatriated Greeks of Turkey

Huw Halstead

Research Fellow, School of History, University of St Andrews,
St. Andrews, UK

hh79@st-andrews.ac.uk

Abstract

For the expatriated Greeks of Istanbul and Imbros – some of whom have Greek citizenship, some Turkish – citizenship is neither an irrelevance nor a panacea. Turkish citizenship provided limited protection for ethnic Greeks in Turkey, and Greek citizenship could only go so far to ease the burdens of their ultimate emigration to Greece. Moreover, their expressions of self and identity are altogether more complicated and malleable than the apparent fixity and dichotomousness of statism. Nevertheless, citizenship looms large in their experiences, in both pragmatic and affective dimensions. The acquisition, loss and performance of citizenship – even the very materiality of identity documents – are intimately connected to expatriate efforts to navigate the everyday experience of migration and belonging. Whilst the significance of citizenship thus goes far beyond mere words on an official document, these formal aspects of citizenship are nevertheless a part of, not something apart from, the lived experience of citizenship.

* I dedicate this article to the memory of Thodoris Isaakidis, a gentle, intelligent and unpretentiously eloquent friend who aided me tremendously in my research amongst the Greeks of Istanbul. His company and laconic ability to capture the essence of his community’s issues will be greatly missed. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my interviewees for generously sharing their stories with me and for their hospitality, kindness and good humour.

Keywords

dual citizenship – ethnic identity – everyday life – Greece – lived citizenship – national identity – Turkey

In the lobby of the Imvrian Association in Athens – a community organisation¹ representing Greeks expatriated from the island of Imbros in Turkey – I am sitting down for an interview with nonagenarian Ilias, an ethnic Greek, born on that island as a Turkish citizen in 1923 and a resident of Greece since 1965. He carries with him a pouch that functions as a sort of portable memory trove, from which he periodically produces items to orientate and substantiate his life reminiscences. These include: letters he has written and received in both Greek and Turkish; copies of his tailoring qualifications; photographs of notable people for whom he has tailored, often adorned with personal notes of thanks to Ilias, such as that of the incumbent (and Imvrian-born) Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I; a digital camera that Ilias uses primarily as a portable photo album; and even a photograph of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk cut from a Greek magazine, on which Ilias has written, in Turkish, ‘I, Ilias, love the Turks with all my heart’ (he is somewhat evasive on why he carries this, seeming by turns to suggest that it is to facilitate social or business interactions with Turks and to express some personal admiration for Kemal).

Early in our conversation, Ilias produces from his pouch two identity cards, one Turkish and one Greek. He is keen to point out to me that he has defaced his Greek identity card, having written across the front with a black marker pen in capital letters the Greek word ‘*ÓHI*’, meaning ‘NO’. As he explains, the ‘no’ means ‘I do not want you’, a symbolic rejection of the Greek citizenship he acquired shortly after arriving in Greece in the 1960s. He explains that, whenever possible, he uses his Turkish papers to identify himself, only using his Greek ID in specific formal contexts, like the bank, where his Turkish ID makes it difficult for him to get what he needs (and then clearly finding amusement in the dismay of the clerks encountering his altered Greek ID). Nevertheless,

¹ For more on the community organisations established in Greece by the expatriated Greeks of Istanbul and Imbros, including their community roles, their memory activism and their relationship with the Greek and Turkish states, see Huw Halstead, *Greeks without Greece: homelands, belonging, and memory amongst the expatriated Greeks of Turkey* (Abingdon and New York 2019).

it is clear that he is distancing himself from Greek *citizenship* rather than 'Greekness' *per se*; as he puts it, 'I wanted to be a Hellene, but a proper Hellene'.²

Ilias' understandings of self are complex, layered, and shifting, not easily reducible to the (apparent) exclusivity and simplicity of citizenship and statism. There is no straight line linking citizenship to identity.³ Nor – as Ilias' case, and that of the Greeks of Turkey more generally, demonstrate – can citizenship alone guarantee safety, belonging and ontological security. Ilias was persecuted in, and ultimately driven out of, Turkey despite being a Turkish citizen, and whilst Ilias' acquisition of Greek citizenship certainly eased his access to critical services, it did not prevent him from feeling like an outsider in Greece living in exile from his homeland Imbros.⁴ Yet, citizenship is far from irrelevant for Ilias and his compatriots. Ilias acquired his citizenship in slightly murky circumstances during the Greek dictatorship (1967–1974), when an unnamed minister in the regime – for whom Ilias had tailored suits – offered to provide him with a plot of land as a personal favour. At that time, the state was reticent to issue Greek citizenship to the expatriated Greeks of Turkey, so Ilias asked the minister if he could instead intervene to arrange for him Greek citizenship (which was duly done). Ilias' preference for citizenship over land gives a clear sense of how much he felt the former would ease his adaptation to his new life in Greece.

Most importantly, Ilias' testimony shows that citizenship is not merely an inert, formal and distant matter that becomes relevant only during interactions with the state or other representatives of officialdom. Rather, citizenship is something intimate and personal to Ilias, something that he manipulates

2 Ilias' defaced identity card is also referred to in Halstead, *Greeks without Greece*, 66–67.

3 Robin Cohen, *Global diasporas: an introduction* (London 1997) 157; Renée Hirschon, 'Identity and the Greek state: some conceptual issues and paradoxes', in: Richard Clogg (ed.), *The Greek diaspora in the twentieth century* (New York 1999) 158–180, 163; Rogers Brubaker et al., *Nationalist politics and everyday ethnicity in a Transylvanian town* (Princeton 2006) 14, 231; Elif Babül, 'Claiming a place through memories of belonging: politics of recognition on the island of Imbros', *New Perspectives on Turkey* 34 (2006) 47–65; Ulrich Beck, 'Mobility and the cosmopolitan perspective', in: Weert Canzler, Vincent Kaufmann and Sven Kesselring (eds), *Tracing mobilities: towards a cosmopolitan perspective* (Aldershot 2008) 25–36; Giorgos Tsimouris, *Imvrioi* (Athens 2008) 159; Michael Rothberg and Yasemin Yildiz, 'Memory citizenship: migrant archives of Holocaust remembrance in contemporary Germany', *Parallax* 17:4 (2011) 32–48, 44.

4 The concept of ontological security, first developed by Anthony Giddens, is used in this article, after Jennifer Mitzen, to refer to 'the need to experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time – as being rather than constantly changing', i.e. possessing a sense of stability and surety in one's identity and sense of self: Anthony Giddens, *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration* (Berkeley 1984); Jennifer Mitzen, 'Ontological security in world politics: state identity and the security dilemma', *European Journal of International Relations* 12:3 (2006) 341–370, 342.

and plays with to navigate everyday complexities, construct his sense of self, and express this identity to others. In particular, it is these everyday performative aspects of citizenship with which I am concerned here, which has elsewhere been called (amongst other things) 'lived citizenship'.⁵ By 'everyday' I do not (necessarily) mean mundane or routine usages of citizenship, nor performances of citizenship that take place in certain discernible 'quotidian' spaces. Instead, after Joshua Arthurs, Michael Ebner and Kate Ferris, I treat the everyday as a 'heuristic device' that equips us to explore the multivalency, unpredictability, and 'messiness' of human experience on the level of the local, the individual and personal acts of agency in interacting with macro structures and manifestations of power.⁶ In other words, to borrow terms from Michel de Certeau, I am interested in how the expatriated Greeks of Turkey developed 'way[s] of using imposed systems' – like citizenship – to make them expedient and meaningful for themselves in their own lives, and, insofar as possible, on their own terms.⁷

I conducted oral history interviews with 107 expatriated Greeks (49 from Istanbul, 58 from Imbros) as well as ethnographic fieldwork and archival research.⁸ Oral history was conducted in Greek between 2011 and 2015, using a semi-structured approach that treats the interview as a dialogue, not a monologue, a 'mutual sighting', to use Alessandro Portelli's term, between interviewer and interviewee in which information and perspectives are exchanged in both directions.⁹ All interviewees are given pseudonyms in this article, and translations from Greek are my own. In the text, I provide interviewees' birth year

5 Ruth Lister, 'Inclusive citizenship: realizing the potential', *Citizenship Studies* 11:1 (2007) 49–61.

6 Joshua Arthurs, Michael Ebner and Kate Ferris, 'Introduction', in: Joshua Arthurs, Michael Ebner and Kate Ferris (eds), *The politics of everyday life in Fascist Italy: outside the state?* (New York 2017) i–xii, 6, 9.

7 Michel de Certeau, *The practice of everyday life* (Berkeley 1984) 18.

8 Interviewees were located, variously, via: expatriate community organisations (both through formal introductions and by providing a venue for meeting community members); by asking interviewees to introduce me to friends and relatives; through mutual acquaintances or chance encounters; and by approaching shopkeepers whose establishments boasted likely-sounding names. This helped to ensure greatest diversity in terms of factors such as age, gender, occupation, economic situation, date of migration, precise place of origin and degree of integration within formal expatriate communities in Greece. The majority of interviews were conducted in Athens and Thessaloniki. Interviewees were given free rein to select the interview setting, and whilst some chose to conduct interviews in private so that their narrative would not be disturbed, others preferred to be interviewed in public places, sometimes involving friends or passers-by in the discussion.

9 Alessandro Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli, and other stories: form and meaning in oral history* (Albany 1991) 31.

(b.) and year of migration to Greece (mg.). I call the Greeks of Istanbul *Polítes* – singular *Polítis* (m.) or *Polítissa* (f.) – a contraction of *Konstantinoupolítes* ('Constantinopolitans'), and the Greeks of Imbros *Imvriótes* – singular *Imvriótis* (m.) or *Imvriótissa* (f.) – mirroring each community's own terminologies.¹⁰ Collectively, I call members of both communities who left Turkey 'expatriates', again the term typically preferred by the communities. It encompasses those forcibly expelled from Turkey in 1964 (see below) and those who left on their own initiative to escape persecution. I also refer regularly to 'native Greeks', which is how the communities often distinguish Greeks born in Greece from themselves.

The Greeks of Turkey: the Limits of Citizenship

Leaving Turkey

The final decades of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw extensive conflict, violence and displacement. After the 1919–1922 Greek-Turkish War, brought to an end by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, a compulsory population exchange was enforced between Greece and Turkey, with Orthodox Christians living in Turkey displaced to Greece and Muslims living in Greece forcibly moved in the other direction; religion, not ethnicity, was the criterion for the exchange. There were notable exemptions: the Orthodox Christians of Istanbul and the islands of Imbros and Tenedos (in the Aegean Sea in the Çanakkale province) were permitted to remain *in situ*, as were the Muslims of Western Thrace in Greece. As a result, some 100–110,000 Greeks in Istanbul, around 10,000 Greeks on Imbros, and a few thousand Greeks on Tenedos became an official minority in the newly established Republic of Turkey, whose rights were protected (theoretically) by both the Lausanne Treaty and the Turkish constitution.¹¹ Around one-third of this community held Greek citizenship, although many had never set foot on Greek soil and held Greek citizenship purely because their forebears had come from former Ottoman territories that became part of the Greek state after Greek

¹⁰ Istanbul is still called Constantinople in Greece.

¹¹ Alexis Alexandris, 'Imbros and Tenedos: a study of Turkish attitudes toward two ethnic Greek island communities since 1923', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 7:1 (1980) 6–23; Renée Hirschon, "Unmixing peoples" in the Aegean region', in: Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: an appraisal of the 1923 compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York and Oxford 2004) 3–12, 8; Umut Özkirimli and Spyros A Sofos, *Tormented by history: nationalism in Greece and Turkey* (London 2008) 165.

independence. The remaining two-thirds were former Ottoman subjects who were granted Turkish citizenship.¹² The Greeks of Istanbul ranged across the socioeconomic spectrum, but most were middle-class professionals/traders/employees or skilled workers/craftsmen, whilst the Greeks of Imbros were primarily agriculturalists.¹³

Possession of Turkish citizenship, however, proved to be scant protection against state persecution. Soon after the signing of the Lausanne Treaty, various measures undermined the Greek community's rights. In 1926, for instance, the Civil Servant Law was enacted, requiring that all civil servants be *Turkish* rather than simply Turkish *citizens*.¹⁴ Pressure was also exerted to suppress Greek ethnic identity and the Greek language, for example, through the 'Citizen, speak Turkish!' campaign.¹⁵ The situation worsened during and after the Second World War. Between 1942 and 1944, non-Muslims were disproportionately targeted by a 'wealth tax' (*Varlık Vergisi*) that imposed harsh and often unpayable duties, with those defaulting having their property confiscated and/or facing deportation to forced labour camps.¹⁶ On 6–7 September 1955, Istanbul's non-Muslim communities fell victim to the state-sanctioned Istanbul Riots, in which rioters attacked non-Muslim properties and people, resulting in widespread damage, injury, sexual assault, including rapes, and several deaths.¹⁷ In March 1964, against the backdrop of escalating intercommunal violence in

12 Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish relations, 1918–1974* (Athens 1992) 281; Alexis Alexandris, 'Religion or ethnicity: the identity issue of the minorities in Greece and Turkey', in: Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: an appraisal of the 1923 compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York and Oxford 2004) 117–132, 118.

13 Alexandris, *The Greek minority of Istanbul*, 185, 250; Soula Bozi, *O Ellinismós tis Konstantinoúpolis: Koinótita Stavrodromíou-Péran* (The Hellenism of Constantinople: the community of Stavrodromi-Pera) (Athens 2002) 216 and *passim*; Maria Christina Chatziioannou and Dimitris Kamouzis, 'From a multiethnic empire to two national states: the economic activities of the Greek Orthodox population of Istanbul, ca. 1870–1939', in: Darja Reuschke, Monika Salzbrunn and Korinna Schönhärl (eds), *The economies of urban diversity: Ruhr area and Istanbul* (New York, Houndmills and Basingstoke 2013) 117–143, 122; Tsimouris, *Imvrioi*, 296.

14 Özkirimli and Sofos, *Tormented by history*, 165.

15 Alexandris, *The Greek minority of Istanbul*, 140, 183; Özkirimli and Sofos, *Tormented by history*, 167; Dilek Güven, *Ethnikismós, koinonikés metavolés kai meionótites: ta episeidia enantion ton mi mousoulmánon tis Tourkías (6/7 Septémvriou 1955)* (Nationalism, social changes and minorities: the episodes against the non-Muslims of Turkey (6/7 September 1955)) (Athens 2009) 171.

16 Alexandris, *The Greek minority of Istanbul*, 215–222; Özkirimli and Sofos, *Tormented by history*, 169–170; Güven, *Ethnikismós, koinonikés metavolés kai meionótites*, 215–218.

17 Alexandris, 'Religion or ethnicity?', 119; Güven, *ethnikismós, koinonikés metavolés kai meionótites*; Baskin Oran, 'The story of those who stayed: lessons from articles 1 and 2 of the 1923 convention', in: Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: an appraisal of the 1923*

Cyprus, Turkey expelled all Greek citizens from the country – some 10–13,000 people – who were followed by around 30–40,000 Turkish citizens. This was principally because different members of the same family often had different citizenships, such that the expulsion of a single Greek citizen could result in an entire family leaving.¹⁸ Meanwhile, on Imbros, a series of measures were eroding the Greeks' rights and safety, chief amongst them was: the closure of Greek-language schools in 1964 (which were guaranteed by the Treaty of Lausanne); the state confiscation of farming land (ultimately amounting to 90 per cent of the cultivable land); and the introduction of open prisons on the island for serious offenders from the Turkish mainland, who were allowed to wander freely and committed acts of vandalism, thefts, assaults and even murders.¹⁹ Greek emigration from Turkey escalated, and the Greek population dwindled: in the 1970s, there were some 10,000 Greeks in Istanbul and around 2,500 on Imbros; by the turn of the century, only 2,500 or so Greeks remained in Istanbul and a few hundred on the two islands.

Oral testimonies paint a mixed picture of everyday life in Turkey and the daily relationships between the Greek minority and the Turkish majority. On the one hand, many expatriates vividly recall a climate of fear, for example, being frightened when speaking Greek in public. Some report that neighbours joined in with the rioting in 1955 or treated them with suspicion during the Cyprus crisis. This pervasive sense of fear even spread to children: one interviewee, Theodoros (b.1951, mg.1973), described an occasion when, as a young boy, he was queueing for ice cream in his Istanbul neighbourhood when his sister, sitting on a wall nearby, began to shout to him in Greek, and his agony at trying to 'shush' her – for fear of being singled out as Greeks – without losing his place in the queue. When another interviewee, Stefanos (b.1950, mg.1964), was similarly overheard speaking Greek in public and told by some angry passers-by to 'speak Turkish', he evoked citizenship in response, turning to them to say, 'I am a citizen of this country, and I can speak whatever language I want'. In practice, however, this afforded precious little protection.

On the other hand, many interviewees offered fond memories of cosmopolitan diversity, warm intercommunal interactions, and firm friendships with Turks. Testimonies were filled with recollections of Turkish friends and

compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey (New York and Oxford 2004) 97–116, 113; Alfred de Zayas, 'The Istanbul pogrom of 6–7 September 1955 in the light of international law', *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 2:2 (2007) 137–154.

18 Alexandris, *The Greek minority of Istanbul*, 284–286; Alexandris, 'Religion or ethnicity?', 119; Oran, 'The story of those who stayed', 104.

19 Alexandris, 'Imbros and Tenedos', 25–26; Tsimouris, *Imvrioi*, 120, 134; Giorgos Xeinou, *Imvros kai Tenedos: istoría parállili* (Imbros and Tenedos: parallel histories) (Athens 2011) 70–71.

neighbours protecting Greeks during events such as the Istanbul Riots, either overtly or through cryptic warnings. Fotis' (b.1950, mg.1976) father – who spoke broken Turkish with a strong accent – was locking up his workplace on the night of 6 September 1955 when a Turkish girl who worked for him pressed a small Turkish flag into his hands, saying to him, 'you might need this', and nothing more. On his way home, he was accosted by some rioters, but when they saw the flag, they let him be without him needing to open his mouth and betray himself.²⁰ Memories of strife and memories of harmony thus jostle with one another in expatriate testimony, and oftentimes these contrasting narratives are offered by the same person during an interview.²¹

Arriving in Greece

The majority of these departing Greeks resettled in Greece. Although the expatriates did not arrive in the same state of destitution as the refugees who came in the 1920s with the Treaty of Lausanne, many had lost much or all of their financial and material wealth, and the early years in Greece were often difficult. Many interviewees recalled that they or their parents had to work several different jobs to make ends meet, commonly taking on lower paid and less prestigious or less skilled employment than that which they had undertaken in Turkey. Still, whilst living in Turkey, many in the community had idealised Greece: interviewees described seeing Greece variously as a 'lifeline', a 'rescue boat', a 'promised land', and a 'dream life'. The experience of being driven out of Turkey was bitter and traumatic, and many expatriates hoped – and expected – that they would find sanctuary, security and solace in Greece. To some extent, they did; as *Imvriótis* Pavlos (b.1970, mg.1987) put it, in Greece they experienced 'freedom, that feeling that you are not different from the others, as you experienced as a minority [in Turkey], as a fly in the milk'.

Yet, many expatriates were also profoundly embittered by the reception they received in Greece. The Greek state was reluctant to issue Greek citizenship to those expatriates who had arrived with Turkish citizenship (see below), forcing this (sizeable) group to apply for, and periodically renew, residence and work permits at the Aliens' Bureau (*Tmíma Allodapón*), which had various practical and psychological implications. The expatriates also found that many in Greece were unaware of their experiences of persecution in Turkey – or even that there were any Greeks left in Turkey after 1923 – and they frequently

20 For more on acts of intercommunal protection, see Halstead, *Greeks without Greece*, 21–22, 92–100.

21 On this, see Huw Halstead, 'Harmony and strife in memories of Greek-Turkish intercommunal relationships in Istanbul and Cyprus', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 32:2 (2014) 393–415.

encountered suspicion and scepticism about their Greek ethnicity. Alexandros (b.1962, mg.1978) from Istanbul complained that he constantly had to explain to native Greeks ‘that you were baptised, that you went to a Greek school, that you ate the same food, that you breathe the same air, that you have two hands and two feet, that you are not an elephant!’ Interviewees were called ‘Turks’ or ‘seeds of the Turks’ by some native Greeks (mirroring, in this sense, the experiences of the refugees in the 1920s). Tasos (b.1949, mg.1964), for instance, remembered people making fun of his accent and how he pronounced words with a ‘fat L’, and when he explained that he was from Istanbul, they would say, ‘so, you are a Turk then’.

Social, cultural, political and religious life in Greece also frequently failed to match the idealised expectations the expatriates had developed whilst living in Turkey. The *Polítes* – as well as many younger *Imvriótes* who had grown up partly in Istanbul after the closure of the Greek language schools on Imbros – were accustomed to the cosmopolitanism and urbanism of Istanbul, and found Greek cities to be comparatively backward and parochial. Panagiotis (b.1946, mg.1963) recalled that his first impression of Thessaloniki on arrival from Istanbul was ‘what a village it is here’. In Turkey, the community – largely due to its status as a vulnerable community – was generally aloof from party politics and socially oriented around shared Greek ethnicity. In a reflection of this, expatriates also frequently complained that native Greeks lacked patriotism and unity, tending too much towards political partisanship and egocentric behaviour. *Imvriótis* Loukas (b.1967, mg.1992), seeking to convey his disappointment with what he perceived as the disunity and anarchy of the Greek political system, joked that when he was living in Istanbul he used to walk past the Greek embassy just to be able to see the Greek flag, but when he arrived in Greece ‘the flag was burning!’ Interviewees also frequently voiced their dissatisfaction with levels of piety in Greece: *Polítis* Michalis (b.1940, mg.1971), for example, was deeply unimpressed with ‘the [native Greek] who passes by the church, makes the sign of the cross, and then two steps later curses God, Christ, and the Virgin Mary’.

Expatriate Identity

Partly as a product of these ambivalent experiences of belonging in both Turkey and Greece, expatriate expressions of Greek identity are fluid and diverse. It is very rare to hear expatriates refer to themselves as ‘Turks’, but some interviewees do reject Hellenic identity altogether, preferring to call themselves exclusively *Romioí* (singular *Romiós* (m.) or *Romiá* (f.)). The word variously connotes the descendants of the Eastern Roman Empire, the contemporary Greeks of Turkey, or (Greek-speaking) Orthodox Christians more broadly, and in modern

Greek is sometimes used synonymously with the term 'Hellenes'.²² In pointedly using this label, some expatriates seek to distance themselves from Greece and its inhabitants whilst still laying claim to the legacy of Byzantium and an identity distinct from that of the Muslim Turks. Others – partly motivated by a fear that highlighting distinctions between themselves and the Greeks of Greece might hamper their assimilation and weaken their case for receiving support from the Greek state – prefer to present themselves unambiguously as 'Hellenes', and to downplay any distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* native Greeks. One approach prioritises difference, the other sameness.

Yet, most of my interviewees lie somewhere between these two extremes, and, whether they use the terms *Romioí* or 'Hellenes' to describe themselves, they do so in such a way as to emphasise simultaneously both sameness and distinctiveness: that they are Greek, but a distinctive kind of Greek. I have elsewhere called this 'inclusive particularity', by which I mean attempts to establish belonging by *emphasising* rather than downplaying local particularities.²³ The expatriates, in both oral and written testimonies, frequently draw on the distinctiveness of their local origins. This includes the connection between Istanbul/Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire, a crucial historical juncture in Greek nationalism that links ancient Greece to modern, as well as the association between that empire and Orthodox Christianity, itself a cornerstone of Greek national identity. In relation to Imbros, the fact that the island is mentioned in ancient texts like Homer – and the existence of Greek identity and language in spite of the absence of protection from the Greek state – is often highlighted. All this is used to stress that the expatriates are not just *legitimately* Greek but *particularly* Greek: Greeker, even, than the Greeks born in Greece. This, in fact, was the retort that the expatriates often gave to native Greeks who called them Turks: 'you call me Turk, but I am more Hellenic than you!'

As Michael Herzfeld has written, the apparent semantic fixity of the language of national identity belies quotidian plasticity and malleability in terms of how identity labels are used and made meaningful by individuals.²⁴ This

22 The two terms *Ellines* (Hellenes) and *Romioí* (which lacks a suitable English equivalent) are often both translated into English as 'Greeks', but in the Greek language their meanings are subtly distinctive (if often overlapping). On expatriates temporarily adopting Turkish identity for humorous, satirical, or provocative purposes, see Huw Halstead, 'Heirs to Byzantium: identity and the Helleno-Romaic dichotomy amongst the Istanbul Greek migrant community in Greece', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 38:2 (2014) 265–284, 280–283; Halstead, *Greeks without Greece*, 81–83.

23 Halstead, *Greeks without Greece*, 59–86.

24 Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural intimacy: social poetics in the nation state* (New York 1997) 42–45.

everyday slipperiness helps the expatriates to negotiate between inclusion/sameness and distinction/difference in shifting contexts. Interviewees often seem to ‘taste’ the two words ‘Hellenes’ and *Romiói* when delivering their testimonies, feeling out which might be more appropriate at a given moment. *Polítissa* Ioanna (b.1944, mg.1964) – discussing why she never taught her Greek-born children any Turkish – speculated that ‘maybe [it was] because I married a native Hellenic man. [I specify] “native” because I’m a Hellene too. A Hellenic *Romiá*, let’s say’. Initially distinguishing her husband as a ‘Hellene’ – i.e., in this case, a Greek from Greece – to account for why her children did not learn Turkish, she then felt obliged to state that she *too* was Hellenic in a broader sense, before finally combining the two terms to establish that she was a different type of Hellene than her husband. By playing around with different combinations and inflections of these identity labels, Ioanna ensured that she could be included as a Hellene whilst remaining distinctive as a *Romiá*.²⁵

Citizenship further complicates this picture. Many in the community recall that, whilst living in Turkey, they commonly used the term ‘Hellene’ to distinguish those with Greek citizenship from the *Romiói* who held Turkish citizenship. Nevertheless, because different members of the same family, social circle, or school class often held different citizenships, several interviewees also reported not differentiating or even knowing what citizenship their acquaintances held; that is until men with Turkish citizenship were conscripted into the Turkish army at age 18, or those with Greek citizenship were expelled in 1964. Moreover, whilst the two words are sometimes used to make distinctions based on citizenship, there is no simple equation between citizenship and identity. It is common to hear people with Turkish citizenship call themselves ‘Hellenes’, and *vice versa*. As we will see below, possession of a particular citizenship can be tied up with expressions of identity, but not in uniform or necessarily predictable ways.

Everyday Citizenship

I will now look at the everyday significance and performance of citizenship, considering decision-making and meaning-making in relation to the loss and acquisition of different citizenships. To borrow terms from Evangelia Tastsoglou and Alexander Dobrowolsky, this is about viewing citizenship not

25 I adopt the idea of identity ‘inflections’ from Jane Cowan and Keith S Brown, ‘Introduction: Macedonian inflections’, in: Jane Cowan (ed.), *Macedonia: the politics of identity and difference* (London 2000) 1–28, 20.

simply as something passive 'bestowed by states on people' but rather 'as practice, and as a *process*'.²⁶

Acquiring Greek Citizenship

Having idealised Greece as a national homeland that would welcome them and provide a safe haven from persecution, and in light of the importance Greek nationalism accords to the protection and 'redemption' of Greeks living beyond the boundaries of the Greek state, those expatriates with Turkish citizenship had assumed, not unreasonably, that after arriving in Greece they would in short order be awarded Greek citizenship. This was particularly the case given that Greek citizenship law makes a distinction between those who are of Greek descent/national consciousness (*omogeneís*) and those who are not (*allogeneís*).²⁷ In reality, however, Greece was highly reluctant to extend Greek citizenship to the expatriates, and, as the case of Ilias demonstrates, in the 1960s and 1970s, it was primarily only those with pertinent personal connections (or those whose parents were Greek citizens) who were able to acquire Greek citizenship. This was most likely due to Greece's reluctance to allow the Greek community in Turkey to disappear. Indeed, several interviewees reported being told at the Aliens' Bureau that they should return to Turkey.

Operating without Greek citizenship created a whole range of practical problems. These included: the cost and hassle of periodically renewing work and residence permits; difficulties in acquiring (or selling) property; the inability to vote or to enter public service; problems relating to pensions; and, for men who had left Turkey without completing their military service, fear of returning there (for instance to visit or collect relatives who remained, or to deal with outstanding property issues) lest they be detained as deserters. For various reasons, some expatriates struggled to acquire work and residence permits, and accordingly lived not only under the potential threat of expulsion

26 Alexandra Dobrowolsky and Evangelia Tastsoglou, 'Crossing boundaries and making connections', in: Evangelia Tastsoglou and Alexandra Dobrowolsky (eds), *Women, migration, and citizenship: making local, national, and transnational connections* (Aldershot 2006) 1–35, 7, 16.

27 Dimitris Christopoulos, 'Country report: Greece', *EUDO Citizenship Observatory* (2009) 1–2. Greek citizenship law is complex and convoluted, particularly in relation to dual citizenship, and many of these complexities rest upon the distinction between *omogeneís* and *allogeneís*. For a detailed discussion of the history of dual citizenship in Greece, see Konstantinos Tsitselikis, 'Citizenship in Greece: present challenges for future changes', in: Devorah Kalekin-Fishman and Pirkko Pitkanen (eds), *Multiple citizenship as a challenge to European nation-states* (Rotterdam 2007) 145–170.

(from the country or their jobs) but also without legal rights and protections at work, such as the ability to accrue pension contributions.

Just as importantly, however, the denial of Greek citizenship to expatriates with Turkish citizenship in many cases negatively impacted their assimilation in Greece, and their attempts to establish a sense of belonging in what was purportedly their national homeland. The expatriates deeply resented having to queue for permits at the (somewhat unfortunately named) Aliens' Bureau; in the words of the newspaper of the Imvrian Association, *Imvros*, those who 'find themselves in their true homeland should not be thought of as aliens'.²⁸ Receiving Greek citizenship would, for many expatriates, have been a cathartic acknowledgement of the ethnic identity for which they were persecuted whilst living in Turkey, representing not simply a narrow sense of belonging in the Greek state but rather 'symbolic recognition' of a more transcendent Greek ethnicity.²⁹

Moreover, possessing Greek citizenship would have gone some way to alleviate popular suspicion of the expatriates' ethnicity. As interviewees attested, the necessity for operating with Turkish citizenship – alongside such factors as accent, vocabulary, or dietary preferences like drinking tea rather than coffee – was an opportunity for their alterity to be revealed and interrogated by segments of the native Greek population. *Polítis* Andreas (b.1943, mg.1973) remembered that whenever he went to the bank or the library and showed his residence permit from the Aliens' Bureau, they would look at him strangely and say, 'what is that? Are you Greek?' At the Aliens' Bureau itself, Evangelos (b.1945, mg.1963) from Istanbul was asked for his name. When he gave a Greek name, the official said derisively, 'sir, your own name', assuming that, as he had Turkish citizenship, he would also have a Turkish name. Interviewees often cited stories of this nature to explain why they were so eager to obtain Greek citizenship.

Ultimately, Greece began to issue citizenship to the expatriated Greeks of Turkey, largely thanks to pressure from expatriate community organisations. According to a former president of the Constantinopolitan Society – an organisation in Athens representing Greeks from Istanbul – the final hurdle in this struggle was overcome in a rather fortuitous manner. He told me that

28 *'Enó vrískontai stin pragmatikí tous patrída: oi omogeneís Imvroi-Ténedoi na min theoróuntai allodapoi'* (While they are in their real homeland: the *omogeneís Imvroi-Ténedoi* should not be thought of as aliens), *Imvros* (December 1980).

29 Irene Bloemraad and Alicia Sheares, 'Understanding membership in a world of global migration: (how) does citizenship matter?', *International Migration Review* 51:4 (2017) 823–867, 855.

an agreement was reached with the New Democracy government of Georgios Rallis for the *Polítes* to be awarded citizenship at a rate of 500 people per year, but his government lost the October 1981 general election to Andreas Papandreou's PASOK. Expatriate activists were able to secure the newly appointed Minister of the Interior's agreement to honour the arrangement made under the previous administration, but they made no mention of the yearly quota; and this, the society's former president maintained, is how the impasse was finally broken.³⁰ There would be other bumps in the road, but from the early 1980s onwards, a growing number of expatriates were able to acquire Greek citizenship. Nevertheless, for many, the wound of being denied Greek citizenship for many years has never properly healed. It remains a symbol of the indifference of successive Greek governments towards their plight. As one of my interviewees put it, their experiences of persecution in Turkey followed by alienation in Greece have led many in the community to feel that they are a people who have 'two homelands and none'; for those who became stateless (see below), this was true in a somewhat more literal sense.

Nevertheless, by no means did all expatriates see the acquisition of Greek citizenship in affective terms as something strongly connected to their sense of self and belonging. Stelios (b.1958, m.g.1970) from Imbros lost his Turkish citizenship in the late 1970s but felt no pragmatic need to apply for Greek citizenship until 2011, when he was considering making a return visit to Imbros. I asked him if he had ever considered acquiring Greek citizenship for cultural or psychological reasons related to his identity, to which he replied: 'No, no, no, I did not feel like that because, in essence, I felt that we were in Greece [anyway], they [the native Greeks] had accepted me as a Greek, so [acquiring Greek citizenship] was a purely formal thing'. For people like Stelios, formal citizenship status – a name on a piece of paper – was, at least in affective terms, secondary to the more informal and ephemeral feeling of 'being a citizen' that derives from a sense of belonging and acceptance within a community.

Losing Turkish Citizenship

In parallel with these issues around Greek citizenship, those expatriates who held Turkish citizenship faced another drama. Men who had left Turkey without completing their military service had their Turkish citizenship revoked when they did not report for duty. Every month, community members would read the names of those affected in the expatriate newspapers, reprinted from

³⁰ Giorgos Isaakidis, interview with Huw Halstead, Athens, 22 March 2014. The interviewee gave consent to be named.

the Turkish government bulletins. With Greek citizenship not forthcoming, many of these individuals became stateless, with all the attendant problems and insecurities. *Imvriótis* Kostas (b.1963, mg.1981) was stateless for over six years, describing himself as ‘a foreigner in a foreign country, stateless, without a homeland, without a passport, without the ability to travel’. Panagiotis – who during our interview went off to fetch his old laissez-passer, fearing that, without proof, it would not be believed that Greece had allowed him to become stateless – was told by an official that his soon-to-be bride might lose her Greek citizenship when she married him (though in the end a bureaucratic solution was found). Unsurprisingly, such experiences caused significant anxiety and practical difficulties, and exacerbated resentment towards the Greek state for failing to provide a solution in the form of Greek citizenship.

Meanwhile, some expatriates were actively renouncing Turkish citizenship of their own accord. For some, this was a question of catharsis, of erasing, in Ioanna’s words, ‘everything that was Turkish’ as a means of psychological distancing from traumatic memories of persecution and exile. As Alekos (b.1971, mg.1971), whose family came from Istanbul when he was a baby, put it, ‘I could have kept it, but I did not want to keep Turkish citizenship. I did not like it. I did not want to have any relation to Turkey’. Michalis, discussing his frustration at not being able to acquire a Greek passport to travel, likewise saw citizenship as not purely utilitarian but also identarian. He answered his own rhetorical question: ‘you’ll say to me, “why didn’t you just travel with the Turkish passport?” But we didn’t want to have Turkish citizenship anymore. We wanted to take Greek citizenship’. The ways in which Turkish citizenship opened the expatriates up to popular scrutiny about the authenticity of their Hellenic credentials played a significant role in these decisions. As was demonstrated in the previous section, Turkish identity papers could create moments of identity breach by disrupting the assumed congruity between, on the one hand, nationality and, on the other hand, ethnicity, language, and religion (not helped by the fact that in common Greek parlance there is no distinction between ‘nationality’ and ‘ethnicity’).³¹

Other calculations were also involved in decisions to renounce Turkish citizenship. Tasos submitted paperwork to renounce his Turkish citizenship when applying to a Greek university because his father was concerned that possessing Turkish citizenship might create difficulties in securing a place. Fellow *Polítis* Vangelis (b.1934, mg.1980) likewise renounced Turkish citizenship shortly after acquiring Greek citizenship because of fears about what might happen to him

31 Herzfeld, *Cultural intimacy*, 41–42.

if he returned to Istanbul as a Turkish citizen (particularly in light of newspaper articles he had written about the expatriation of the Greeks). Kyriakos (b.1951, mg.1975) made an application to renounce his Turkish citizenship in the mid-1990s after his mother had sold their remaining property in Istanbul because, at that stage, Turkish citizenship was no longer an economically viable asset. A fee was payable at the Turkish embassy to retain Turkish citizenship, which was not just a financial burden but also something many expatriates resented, given that they held the Turkish state accountable for their expatriation.³² Nevertheless, some would come to regret their decision to renounce Turkish citizenship. Still, others elected to retain Turkish citizenship despite the cost.

Rejecting Greek Citizenship

The ability to acquire Greek citizenship, beginning in the 1980s, was a major victory for expatriate activists. Nevertheless, not all expatriates availed themselves of this opportunity. Maria Tsiropoulou from the island of *Prínkipos* (one of the Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara off the coast of Istanbul), interviewed by Turkish researchers for a separate project, explained her decision to forgo Greek citizenship as follows: 'I belong there [*Prínkipos*]. My homeland is there. I still come and go with a Turkish passport. I never took Greek citizenship. I believe in 1980–82 they gave citizenship to those who had come from Turkey. I did not even think about doing it'.³³ My interviewee Menelaos (b.1946, mg.1989) was similarly disinterested in acquiring Greek citizenship, lamenting that Greece failed to live up to the expectations he had formed whilst living in Turkey, and explaining that he got on just fine with his Turkish citizenship and Greek residence permit. In common with several interviewees, he contrasted pejoratively Greek state bureaucracy with its Turkish counterpart, insisting that when he needed to correct a mistake on his Turkish identity papers, the process took just a few minutes. In contrast, in Greece, he claimed that a similar process would have required him to go from pillar to post, answering endless superfluous questions.

While some expatriates forwent Greek citizenship altogether, others, disillusioned with their new country of residence, sought to distance themselves from the citizenship they had acquired in Greece. Ilias' defacing of his Greek identity card with the word 'NO' graphically illustrates this. Ilias holds dual nationality but is emphatic that he only carries his Greek ID out of necessity

32 'Gnómai kai sképsēis: ta problímata ton Konstantinopolitón' (Opinions and thoughts: the problems of the Constantinopolitans), *O Polítis* (January 1979).

33 Çimen Turan, Müfide Pekin and Sefer Güvenç, *Hasretim İstanbul: İstanbul Rumlarının göç öyküleri ve özlemleri* (Istanbul 2010) 190.

for use in official contexts and only in its 'modified' form. As he put it: 'I use it only to go to the bank, I do not want anything else [...] I do not want it. I am a Turkish citizen. That's it'. Immediately after producing his defaced card for me to see, he took the opportunity to compare it with his Turkish ID, in the process re-enacting a conversation he had with a former president of Greece for whom he tailored:

'Here,' I say to [Karolos] Papoulias, 'you will see that the Turks have the nation's emblem [on their identity cards]. I ask him, 'where is the Greek flag [on the Greek ID]?' 'Mr President,' I say to him, 'on the back [of the Turkish ID], it says, "Christian". Where does it say that here [on the Greek ID]?'

Ilias is likely referring to the decision in the early 2000s to remove a whole suite of information from Greek identity cards, including the person's religion, which caused quite a stir in Greece at the time. The opportunity for comparison between the two country's identity cards afforded by Ilias' dual citizenship here serves as a device for critiquing what he saw as a lack of patriotism and national pride in Greece. To call into question Greek patriotism through comparison with Greece's quintessential Other is a particularly potent and provocative technique and one that is not uncommon in expatriate discourse.³⁴

Ilias' act of auto-vandalism may be seen partly as a private act, an intimate gesture of catharsis in relation to his profound disappointment with Greece. He spoke at length about how he felt the native Greeks had betrayed the ideal of Hellenism and, citing personal encounters with various Greek politicians, complained bitterly that Greek politicians are corrupt and self-serving and the Greek people themselves complicit in this nepotistic system. Yet, his handiwork is also clearly a public, performative act. His comments make clear that he relishes the opportunity that his defaced ID provokes to justify his rejection of Greek citizenship to public officials, dignitaries, and others he meets. He told me that he is frequently questioned about his altered ID and responds to these challenges by declaring 'that [Greek citizenship] does not interest me' and that 'I am a *Romiós*. I am not a Hellene'. He complained that Greek citizenship carries a stigma and that, when travelling abroad, Greek citizens are labelled as thieves. For instance, he told a story of when, during the Koskotas financial scandal in Greece,³⁵ he made a trip to Spain and, because he was

34 For other examples, see Halstead, *Greeks without Greece*, 104–105.

35 Giorgos Koskotas was a Greek banker who embezzled huge sums of money from the Bank of Crete, a scandal which ultimately led to the fall of Andreas Papandreou's government in 1989.

a Greek, had difficulty exchanging money in Seville, where they made fun of him, calling him 'Koskotas'. Accordingly, Ilias makes a point both domestically and internationally of using his Turkish identity rather than his Greek one when going about his daily business, and of presenting himself to others as a Turkish and not a Greek citizen.

This sense of stigma regarding Greece's political and economic fortunes was cited by several other interviewees in relation to their choices about Greek citizenship, particularly in the context of the Greek financial crisis that was in full swing during my research. Manos (b.1941, mg.1972) from Istanbul, who has Turkish citizenship, told me that he had no real inclination to apply for Greek citizenship, joking that, 'with the situation as it is currently, it is better that I don't vote!' Pavlos, a dual Greek and Turkish national, referred to the crisis when answering my question about which passport he uses when travelling abroad: 'Look, until the financial crisis happened, the Greek passport was amongst the most welcomed in the world. Wherever you set foot, you were received in a very friendly manner. Now, in recent years [said with wry laughter], it has changed'. I have elsewhere discussed other examples of expatriates disassociating themselves from the financial crisis by distancing themselves from Greek citizenship or Hellenic identity, including a man from *Chálki* (one of the Princes' Islands) called Dimitris (b.1956, mg.1975) who described himself as 'Hellenic' on his 'papers' but 'not Hellenic' in 'spirit', having 'got to the point today, unfortunately, that we are embarrassed to say that we are Hellenes'.³⁶ Preference in particular contexts for Turkish citizenship and/or efforts to distance oneself from Greek citizenship can be deployed as strategies for evading association with (and, by extension, responsibility for) the Greek state's economic plight, in the eyes of others as much as anything.³⁷

(Re)claiming Turkish Citizenship

Whether they lost Turkish citizenship voluntarily or otherwise, in recent years, a growing number of expatriates have elected to apply to take their Turkish citizenship back. In some cases, this is primarily pragmatic, for instance to facilitate return visits, to enable employment opportunities in Turkey or to make it possible to buy or inherit property there. This latter issue has become particularly important for the Greeks of Imbros. Since the early 1990s, there has been a growing Greek return movement to the island (primarily seasonal but also semi-permanent and permanent), which has triggered a communal struggle

³⁶ Halstead, 'Heirs to Byzantium', 277–279.

³⁷ It is, of course, important to place these discourses within the context in which the interviews were conducted, at the height of the financial crisis.

to retain property titles in the Greek villages to support a sustainable Greek presence on the island. The Imvrian Association has urged all *Imvriotes* who have the wherewithal to retain their Turkish citizenship to do so for these reasons. Many younger Greek-born *Imvriotes* are themselves applying for Turkish citizenship to be able to inherit parental property in the future.³⁸

For some expatriates, however, the reacquisition of Turkish citizenship goes deeper and is tangled up with feelings about identity, belonging and nativity. Dimitris from *Chálki* explained his rationale to me as follows:

What can I say for you to understand? I know why, but it is difficult to express. It's like, you were born in a place, and you want to return to your homeland [...] Your home, where you have your memories, your friends, your brothers, and your parents buried there. You want not to return as a tourist [with a foreign, i.e. Greek, passport]. Because every time I go to Turkey, and I go almost once a year, I go as a tourist, with a Greek passport. I might not think of myself as a Turk, but still I was born and I grew up there. And as strange as it might sound, I love my island. I can't say that about Turkey, but my island I love. That's why I want the Turkish passport again.

For Dimitris, reacquiring a Turkish passport was something intimate, not abstract; it was about the ability to return to the place of his birth and feel like a native, like he belongs, which means not having to show a foreign passport, to acquire a visa, and to feel – and be treated – like a tourist. Panagiotis – who lost his Turkish citizenship in 1973 when he did not report for military service – had a similar attitude. He first applied to take his Turkish citizenship back whilst on a visit to Istanbul in 1993, and for five years thereafter he would ask relatives who remained in Istanbul to chase up on the status of his application, but to no avail. Ultimately, he engaged a lawyer in Istanbul to pursue the issue. The day before our interview, he learned that he had been granted Turkish citizenship (in fact, his application had officially been accepted in 2002, but the news had failed to reach him). Poring over a dossier he has kept detailing his long bureaucratic struggle, he explained why he expended so much effort to regain Turkish citizenship, and emphasised that the reasons were not simply pragmatic but also, in his words, 'ideological':

Why should I have lost Turkish citizenship? They took it from me by force [...] I want it because it is my right. Some people ask, 'why do you want to "Turkify"?' I don't see it like that [...] I have a homeland in two countries.

38 For more on the Greek return to Imbros, see Halstead, *Greeks without Greece*, 197–228.

Now, it is no concern of mine if that homeland happens to be split by a border. [Simply] I am compelled to have one identity card there and one here.

Dimitris and Panagiotis both intend to retain their Greek citizenship to use in Greece, but when they travel to Turkey they will do so on their Turkish passports, leaving the Greek ones at home. For them, the problem is not that travelling to Turkey on a Greek passport is particularly difficult – a relatively inexpensive visa is easily purchased at the border – but rather has to do with a sense of belonging that comes with being a citizen, formally, in the place where they were born.³⁹

For others, the issue is also connected to their feelings of rejection and alienation in Greece. Vangelis – whom we met above renouncing Turkish citizenship to alleviate fears about travelling to Turkey – was bitterly disappointed with his reception in Greece. He was greatly upset that they did not take his medical qualifications seriously because they were issued in Turkey, and that at school his daughter was asked if she spoke Greek and had been baptised. He castigated Greece as a country with ‘indifferent’ politicians who represent ‘the skin of the nation only’, and who ‘would put roads in the middle of the street and build houses on the Acropolis’. He distanced himself from that monument (and, by extension, the legacy of ancient Greece) by saying that the Acropolis meant no more to him than to me, and instead expressing admiration for the culture and achievements of the Byzantine Empire. He emphatically described himself as a *Romiós* and not a ‘Hellene’. For these reasons, he elected to reclaim his Turkish citizenship in the early 2000s. In his words, when he came to realise ‘what the Hellenic reality was, I said, “I’ll take Turkish citizenship back!”’.⁴⁰ The process of doing so, in turn, fed back into his self-identification and his disillusionment with the Greek state. When his application for Turkish citizenship was approved, he automatically received a pension for the time he had worked in Turkey, whereas (at the time of our interview) he was still having difficulties drawing the pension he had earned as a Greek citizen.

If reclaiming Turkish citizenship is therefore, for some expatriates, an affective decision connected to identity, belonging and feeling at home in their place of birth, it does not follow that they are claiming Turkish *ethnicity*. Citizenship and ethnicity are not reducible to one another, however much states may sometimes wish for this to be the case. Ilias, Panagiotis and Vangelis all associate

39 I tell shorter versions of these stories in Halstead, ‘Heirs to Byzantium’, 276–277.

40 Halstead, ‘Heirs to Byzantium’, 276.

their claims over and uses of Turkish citizenship with their identity as *Romioí*, which, as I demonstrated above, is commonly seen by expatriates as a distinctive and perhaps more authentic kind of Greek identity, one that evokes the intimacy, familiarity and warmth of Byzantium and Orthodoxy, rather than the abstract, distant and pagan ancient past. As Panagiotis explained when we first met at a gathering of expatriates in Thessaloniki – where he had just been complaining to a compatriot that some people in Greece look at him strangely for reapplying for Turkish citizenship – he wanted to take his Turkish citizenship back not because he sees himself as a Turk but because he sees himself as a *Romiós*; as a Greek with a homeland that transcends the borders of the modern Greek state.

Dimitris, too, emphasised that he does not think of himself as a Turk and that holding Turkish citizenship is rather about belonging and nativity when returning to the place of his birth. The sense of belonging afforded by Turkish citizenship is, for Dimitris, specifically located on – and limited to – his island *Chálki* and does not extend to Turkey more generally, reflecting a broader tendency for expatriates to localise their definition of ‘homeland’ in Turkey to the specific city, island, and even neighbourhood or village in which they lived (just as they tend to broaden the Greek homeland beyond the borders of the Greek state to encompass their local homelands). For these individuals, citizenship had precious little to do with any state; more so, it was of local significance, an everyday marker of place familiarity.

Nevertheless, as Panagiotis complained, claiming Turkish citizenship risks exposing the expatriates again to stigmatisation from some native Greeks. Many Greek-born descendants of the *Imvriótes* who are now applying for Turkish citizenship for inheritance reasons face this challenge. When I asked Lia – born in Athens in 1991 to a mother from Imbros and a regular participant in the seasonal return to the island – what impression she has of how the native Greeks treated her mother Aspasia (b.1968, mg.1973) when she arrived in Greece, she turned to her mother for assistance, who replied that in the beginning ‘they thought of us as Turks’.⁴¹ Although Lia had not heard these stories before, it quickly transpired that she had faced similar suspicion from some of her peers in recent years. She said of her friends that, ‘now that we must take Turkish citizenship because of the house [of my mother on Imbros], they think that we are Turks, totally’. Here too, for these young *Imvriótes*, citizenship plays out in the intimate spaces of everyday life and not just on the macro-level of states and borders.

41 In fact, Aspasia earlier told me that the principal reason why her family applied for Greek citizenship was ‘because my father didn’t want them to call us Turks [anymore]’.

Conclusions

The case of the expatriated Greeks of Turkey supports the conclusion that for migrants and minoritised communities in the globalising twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, citizenship is neither irrelevant nor a panacea.⁴² From a pragmatic perspective, citizenship status clearly impacted the expatriates' lives, but its capacity to safeguard rights and provide ontological security was circumscribed and uneven. In Turkey, Turkish citizenship afforded a modicum of protection – for instance, against compulsory expulsion from the country in 1964 – but for most of the Greeks of Istanbul and Imbros, citizenship status affected the manner, not the fact of their ultimate departure. Expelled or not, leave they did. Moreover, as the 1926 Civil Servant Law and the 'Citizen, speak Turkish!' campaign make clear, the Turkish state viewed belonging to the Turkish nation as more than just formal words on a piece of paper. In Greece, economic, political and social adaptation problems were similarly eased – but by no means erased – by possessing Greek citizenship. The way *Polítis* Stefanos invoked his Turkish citizenship as a retort to those criticising him for speaking Greek in public in Turkey, or how many of my interviewees found their dealings with Greek officials to be more fruitful and cordial once they possessed Greek citizenship, lend some credence to Irene Bloemraad and Alicia Sheares' suggestion that 'making claims from a position of citizenship can change the nature, valence, or outcome of interactions with others', but citizenship is no silver bullet to resolve the practical difficulties faced by those expatriated from their homes.⁴³

There is, however, a rapidly growing body of literature emphasising that citizenship does not begin and end with formal papers and rights offered (or not) by a state, but rather must be seen as something that is forged, experienced and made significant in informal and everyday settings. Aspects of this idea have been explored under the rubrics of 'lived citizenship', 'citizenship "from below"', 'cultural citizenship', 'affective citizenship' and 'performative citizenship'.⁴⁴ These approaches involve, firstly, recognising people as active agents in

42 Bloemraad and Sheares, 'Understanding membership', 823–867.

43 Bloemraad and Sheares, 'Understanding membership', 855.

44 Jan Pakulski, 'Cultural citizenship', *Citizenship Studies* 1:1 (1997) 73–86; Nick Stephenson, *Cultural citizenship: cosmopolitan questions* (Maidenhead 2003); Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky, 'Crossing boundaries', 12–14; Lister, 'Inclusive citizenship'; Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Afterword: acts of affective citizenship? Possibilities and limitations', *Citizenship Studies* 20:8 (2016) 1038–1044; Bloemraad and Sheares, 'Understanding membership', 854; Marcel Paret and Shannon Gleeson, *Building citizenship from below: precarity, migration, and agency* (London 2017); Hanne Warming and Kristian Fahnøe, *Lived citizenship on the edge of society: rights, belonging, intimate life and spatiality* (New York 2017); Nancy

the making and unmaking of citizenship. This can be seen in the acts of 'strategic citizenship' undertaken by my interviewees in relation to the acquisition and renunciation of citizenship.⁴⁵ Expatriates could not always control what citizenship status they held at any given moment in time, but were not simply passive agents in an unfolding state drama. Whenever possible they made active decisions about citizenship based on diverse practical considerations, whether these be, for instance, renouncing Turkish citizenship to safeguard against potential employment or study difficulties in Greece, or complications on return visits to Turkey, or, conversely, retaining or reclaiming Turkish citizenship to facilitate return to Turkey and the inheritance of family homes.

Secondly, a more ecumenical and informal understanding of citizenship leads us to explore its relationship with identities, emotions and ontological security. Possession of a particular citizenship can help legitimate feelings of belonging, and construct and manage a sense of self. Whilst this may sometimes be primarily a private endeavour, as in the case of those expatriates who renounced Turkish citizenship as an act of catharsis, the lived experience of citizenship also entails a strong intersubjective dimension.⁴⁶ For many of my interviewees, their decisions to acquire or renounce a particular citizenship were driven by affective and identarian concerns relating to the perceptions of others – whether state officials, teachers, neighbours, or even other expatriates – and how these others treated them as social agents. Substituting Greek citizenship for Turkish citizenship helped to challenge popular perceptions of the expatriates as 'aliens' and to reduce the likelihood of identity breaches when citizenship led their ethnicity to be called into question, thereby serving an inclusive function that reduced the distance between the expatriates and the native Greeks. Conversely, strategies of distancing – whether by not acquiring Greek citizenship or by evasive or irreverent performances of Greek citizenship – were employed by those who wished not to be seen as Greek citizens by others, in order to distance themselves from the perceived negative political and socioeconomic associations with modern Greece.

Thirdly, focusing on the everyday experience of citizenship may mean broadening the definition of citizenship beyond the words on official documents to 'acts of citizenship': public performances that citizens and non-citizens alike

Wonders and Lynn Jones, 'Doing and undoing borders: the multiplication of citizenship, citizenship performances, and migration as social movement', *Theoretical Criminology* 23:2 (2019) 136–55; Kirsi Paulina Kallio et al., 'Lived citizenship: conceptualising an emerging field', *Citizenship Studies* 24:2 (2020) 1–17.

45 Yossi Harpaz and Pablo Mateos, 'Strategic citizenship: negotiating membership in the age of dual nationality', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45:6 (2019) 843–857.

46 Kallio et al., 'Lived citizenship', 5.

might enact to *claim* citizen standing and *behave* as citizens, legal status notwithstanding.⁴⁷ Some scholars complain that this deflates the concept of citizenship to the point of meaninglessness.⁴⁸ It is beyond the scope of this article to evaluate these concerns in detail, but what the evidence presented here does suggest is that just as possessing citizenship of a state does not automatically make one feel a legitimate or accepted resident of that state, so too one might, in some instances, feel like a substantive citizen of a country without possessing formal citizenship. This is illustrated by the case of Stelios, who, even after Greek citizenship became widely available to expatriates in the 1980s, felt no need to apply for Greek citizenship, which he saw as a 'purely formal thing' that had nothing to do with the more substantive feeling of belonging he derived from feeling accepted 'as a Greek' by his new compatriots. Formal citizenship status and everyday feelings of belonging are not the same; for individuals like Stelios, official identity papers may seem distant and irrelevant next to more intimate and concrete feelings of social acceptance on local levels.

Yet, what I want to emphasise here is that the formal dimensions of citizenship – the documents, the legal status, official spaces like borders and government departments – are most profitably seen as *a part of* and not *apart from* the lived, everyday and affective aspects of citizenship. Kirsi Pauliina Kallio and colleagues are correct to argue that the 'lived citizenship' approach crucially broadens the analytical lens by focusing attention on 'agency rather than status or territorial belonging', but it is, I suggest, nevertheless important to avoid a rigid dichotomy between formal citizenship status and informal acts of citizenship agency.⁴⁹ Despite the apparent fixity and exclusivity of citizenship status as prescribed by the state, formal citizenship and its associated paraphernalia are subject to individual agency on local and everyday levels. 'Everyday citizenship', as I understand it here, encompasses all aspects of how people 'do' and perform citizenship, including their creativity in adapting and manipulating formal manifestations of citizenship, often against the grain of their intended, official uses.

Indeed, for many of my interviewees, official citizenship status *mattered* in an affective sense, but not always in ways the issuing states would have predicted or perhaps wanted. Even formal citizenship plays out and becomes significant on multiple scales, both below and above the level of the state.⁵⁰ To

47 Engin Isin, 'Theorizing acts of citizenship', in: Engin Isin and Greg Nielsen (eds), *Acts of citizenship* (London 2008) 15–43.

48 Bloemraad and Sheares, 'Understanding membership', 854.

49 Kallio et al., 'Lived citizenship', 12.

50 Caroline Nagel and Lynn Staeheli, 'Citizenship, identity and transnational migration: Arab immigrants to the United States', *Space and Polity* 8:1 (2004) 3–23, 4–5, 19; Lister, 'Inclusive citizenship', 55.

be sure, citizenship and statehood are often semantically linked in people's minds, as for those who renounced Turkish citizenship because they saw a connection between that citizenship and the state that persecuted them, or those who eschew or distance themselves from Greek citizenship to evade stigma from the Greek state's political and economic difficulties. Yet, for others, citizenship transcended the state. Many expatriates acquired Greek citizenship in part out of a sense of affinity with – and seeking tangible reification of – Greek ethnicity broadly defined, even though this did not always translate into attachment or loyalty to the Greek state *per se*. On the other end of the scale, those retaining or reclaiming Turkish citizenship typically saw little if any connection between this and the Turkish state, or Turkish ethnicity. Rather, they viewed citizenship through a local lens, as establishing belonging and nativity in the city, neighbourhood or village of their birth.

Moreover, for many of my interviewees, even the very materiality of citizenship – paperwork, passports, identity cards – had an everyday significance. Szabolcs Pogonyi has shown how ethnic Hungarians resident outside Hungary place affective value on Hungarian passports they have acquired, for instance, displaying them alongside family photographs or taking great pains to correct minor spelling errors in their names.⁵¹ My interviewees often treated their identity documents – valid or expired – with similar reverence. Like Pogonyi's informants, they frequently produced these documents during interviews to substantiate and enrich their reflections on identity and belonging. Of course, the treatment of official documents can also be more irreverent, as in the case of Ilias' defaced Greek ID. Bloemraad and Sheares suggest, not unreasonably, that '[i]t is hard, in social interactions, to signal citizenship in the same way that accent or clothing can mark social identity', but, armed with a marker pen and a defiant attitude towards authority, Ilias found a way.⁵² That even the most formal and apparently inflexible written documents of citizenship can, on local levels, be turned into something malleable with idiosyncratic personal meanings, is testament to the tactical creativity people possess to make the instruments of the powerful perform affective, identarian, and sometimes subversive work in their everyday lives.

51 Szabolcs Pogonyi, 'The passport as means of identity management: making and unmaking ethnic boundaries through citizenship', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45:6 (2019) 975–993, 985–986.

52 Bloemraad and Sheares, 'Understanding membership', 846.