To cross or not to cross? Subjectivization and the absent state in Cyprus

Olga Demetriou
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OLGA DEMETRIOU PRIO Cyprus Centre

This article is an ethnographic exploration of the process through which citizens come to conceptualize their identities as political subjects in rapidly changing contexts. The focus of the article is the lifting, in 2003, of a ban on crossing between the northern and southern parts of the island of Cyprus, which had been instituted in 1974. The article examines how this new political change affected state rhetoric, and concentrates on the reactions of Greek-Cypriot citizens to this shift. These data are related to the wider discussion on the political theory of subjectivity and the concept of ‘event’, where, it is argued, anthropology has a significant contribution to make.

Until April 2003, the border between the north and south parts of Cyprus’s capital Nicosia was impenetrable. Cypriots were forbidden from crossing it, and foreigners who could did so in the knowledge of traversing a border between two sides in conflict (officially a ceasefire line since 1974). Gigantic posters of ‘Turkish atrocities’ plastered on the Greek-Cypriot police checkpoint and large signs declaring (the existence of the) ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for ever’ fixed on the roof of the opposite checkpoint instilled this knowledge of the conflict. The opposition was explicit, the imagery raw, intended, and inescapable, and the boundary clearly demarcated by it. The now derelict Ledra Palace Hotel in the middle, housing UN peacekeeping personnel, had come to signify the ‘point of division’ (Figs 1 and 2).

On 23 April 2003 this border opened. In the first three days the number of people crossing from either side shot from 5,000 to 45,000. The prospect of the opening of the border had come as a surprise, when two days previously the Turkish Cypriot Council of Ministers had decided ‘to allow Turkish-Cypriots to pass to the south’ (Phileleftheros, 22/4/03; Vatan, 21/4/03). The reactions to this news were at first confused. There had been short media reports about the decision, but nobody had a clear idea about whether and how it would be implemented. On the designated morning a small group of Greek-Cypriots arrived at the checkpoint and asked for information (what exactly was supposed to happen?), which the police manning it were unable to give. At first some twenty to thirty people were allowed over the border, and as more arrived, long queues quickly formed. The BBC ran news stories on the events of the day, naming one
Turkish-Cypriot as the ‘first to cross’ and thus marking the historical importance of the crossing. Footage from that day was still being shown on national TV four years later.

Since 2003, the sight of masses waiting to cross to the other side in those first few days has come to signify ‘the political issue’ and all its attending concepts: ‘re-unification’ and ‘division’, ‘peace’ and ‘(negotiation) stalemate’, ‘hope’ and
disillusionment. These connotations have been retrospectively formed; in the aftermath not only of the opening of the border, but also of the referendum that followed a year later, in April 2004, and in which the vast majority of Greek-Cypriots voted against the island’s re-unification on the basis of a UN-proposed plan, while the majority of Turkish-Cypriots voted in favour.

This expansion of signification of ‘the political (problem)’ indicates the historical significance of the opening of the border. It is a critical moment, a moment of ‘prejudgment’ that is both embedded in and betrayed by tradition, uniting pre-understanding and experience, the said and the unsaid (Gadamer 1976: 38). A different kind of temporality, beyond the historical (its historicity not yet determined), is at play. This temporality of ‘the event’, in which subjectivity is transformed, is my focus in this article. My main proposition is that political subjectivity changes on the basis of claims and understandings about what happened in April 2003; claims and understandings which in remembering the event may also remain oblivious to the subtle processes and mechanisms that bring it into being. Revisiting the makings of the event provides a glimpse into the possibilities for change opened up by the event, which are foreclosed in its unfolding, and reveals the conditions that constrain these possibilities.

Anthropology and event theory

The article speaks to anthropological analyses of political subjectivity – that is, the structures of knowledge perpetuated by particular forms of political organization. Political philosophy inspired by Heideggerian phenomenology has largely been the arena for such discussions, seeking to expose the forgetfulness of ‘being’ that metaphysics of presence obscures (Agamben 1998; Badiou 1988; Butler 1997; Derrida 1978; Gadamer 1976; Nancy 1991; Ricoeur 1986; Žižek 1999). There, the political question of ‘being’ concerns the unveiling of the modes of organization that give rise to particular structures of agency and subjection. My discussion of ‘political subjectivity’ focuses on these relations.

As a starting-point I take analyses of the workings of ‘ideology’ in relation to political authority and control, such as Gadamer’s, where ‘prejudgment’ mediates reason and authority which ‘stand in a basically ambivalent relation’ (1976: 33). Hermeneutical reflection brings these prejudgments into view, allowing a glimpse into ‘being’ (1976: 38). Ricoeur further notes that the goal of this exercise is not to uncover an objective notion of ‘freedom’ (as Habermas’s critique of ideology does), but to interpret the relations of authority existing even there (1990: 328-33). The theory of political subjectivity thus attempts to analyse this tension between ‘being’ and its representation and the relation of both to claims of authority, including the authorization of discourse and practice.

‘Political subjectivity’ has only recently begun to be employed as an anthropological tool. Das and Kleinman define political subjectivity as ‘the felt interior experience of a person that includes his or her positions in a field of relational power’ (2000: 1), and can create ‘both resistance to norms ... and an elaborate subjection to these norms’ (2000: 10-11). An example is Navaro-Yashin’s study of Turkish secularism (2002), which shows how specific ‘structures of feeling’ (e.g. cynicism) come to inform political experience and shape the way in which citizens relate to the state, allowing criticism but foreclosing the possibility of effacing the state. Methodologically, Aretxaga’s work (1997) shows that examining how political subjectivities come to be formed can yield powerful insights for
ethnographers of resistance, and that to examine this in situations where subjects have been excluded or suppressed (e.g. Republican women in Belfast) means attending to the transformations in their experience.

[A]n account of political agency must go beyond, not beside, the narratives of political experience as told by specific individuals to inquire about the formation of political subjectivity. This means asking how political subjects come to be formed ... not just formed in abstract, general ways but within systems of ethnic, gender, and sexual difference that are particularly configured within local places (Aretxaga 1997: 9).

This opens up the question of whether there is a culturally specific subjectivity and how this is universalized. In this article, I want to suggest that the culturally specific manifestations of subjectivity can be reconciled with the universalism advocated in its theorization through an account of the ‘evental’ dimension of the formation of political subjectivity. This is still under-theorized in anthropology, despite the fact that the notion of ‘event’ has been a point of reference in many oft-cited works: for Gadamer, for example, it determines ‘[u]nderstanding itself [which] is ... the entering into an event of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated’ (Gadamer 1976: xvi, emphasis added).

Even ‘the event’ per se has recently become the focus of theories in the works of Badiou and Nancy. For Badiou, the event uncovers the ethics of truth. This truth is differentiated from knowledge, and ‘must be submitted to thought, not as a judgement, but as a process in the real’ (2004: 61). Truth thus becomes, and for the process of a truth to begin, something must happen. What there already is – the situation of knowledge as such – generates nothing other than repetition. For a truth to affirm its newness, there must be a supplement. This supplement is committed to chance. It is unpredictable, incalculable. It is beyond what is. I call it an event. A truth thus appears, in its newness, because an eventual supplement interrupts repetition (2004: 62, original emphasis).

The event defines the process of a truth-making and this process stems from ‘the decision to relate henceforth to the situation from the perspective of its eventual supplement’ (Badiou 2002: 41, original emphasis). This decision Badiou calls the ‘fidelity to the event’, out of which emerges the subject as the bearer of this fidelity. What is ultimately determining of an event is the different kind of temporality at play in the transformation of subjectivity. This temporality is different to historicity; as Nancy argues, ‘the event-ness of the event (its appearance, its coming into being, its taking place – das Geschehen) is only the external, apparent, and inconsistent side of the effective presentation of truth’ (2000: 160, emphasis added). This inconsistency is concurrent with the event and it allows for new understandings to be uncovered, new knowledge to be thought, irrespective of whether such knowledge will eventually settle into ‘prejudgment’ (lending the event its historical dimension). The analysis of this temporality, I argue, must thus be attentive to the micro-processes taking place, the minor ways in which discourses may change, even if momentarily; it must be attentive to the new questions articulated as unanswerable before their answers have had time to be formed. This is what anthropology can do best, and this is what I attempt here.

I further intend to show that it is this ethnography of the micro-processes taking place that allows us a glimpse into the possibilities opened up by the event. And while remaining faithful to these possibilities is near-impossible, becoming aware of the...
different understandings of the situation that are enabled through the event offers us an opportunity to understand the impediments that undermine this fidelity.

Thus, this article has three aims: (i) to show how an ethnography of the subject is possible; (ii) to talk about the event in ways that bring into view the subtle processes of subjectivization, the paradoxes and complexities that lead to specific changes in subjectivity; and (iii) to use this ethnography to explore the question of fidelity to the event.

I read Heidegger’s statement that being ‘is to be shown as it is ... in its average everydayness’ for the purpose of a ‘“philosophical” anthropology’ (1962: 37-8, original emphasis) as a call for anthropology to enrich a phenomenological understanding of the formation of the subject. Towards this I undertake an ethnographic analysis of the attempt to traverse the gap between the ‘real’ and its representation at the moment when representation/ideology/prejudgment are put into question and subjectivity is re-negotiated.

Analysing these processes in Cyprus during April 2003, I use the notion of ‘event’ to speak about the ways in which Cypriots were called on to make choices that defined them as different kinds of subjects to what they previously had been, when the authority of the state momentarily receded. To many this event signalled the approaching end of decades of conflict between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots. To others it became an event followed by developments that raised doubts about such hopes. Nevertheless, it is an event loaded with significance and in terms of which views about the political problem were framed.

The pre-event situation
Perhaps the two most significant features of the conflict in Cyprus since its inception have been the questionable status of the state and the concentration of political discourse on appeals to the international community. Greek and Turkish nationalisms took hold during the colonial period (1878-1960) (Attalides 1979) and became a tool for instilling a thoroughly ethnicized sense of person-hood into the masses through separate educational systems (Bryant 2004). The UN has offered a lobbying platform for demanding ‘justice’ since 1951, when the religious leader of the Greek-Cypriot community addressed the Secretariat to request self-determination for the island, after a referendum in his community showed a preference for annexation to Greece. In 1954, the representative of Greece to the UN raised the issue at the General Assembly, shortly before the eruption of the nationalist guerrilla campaign (Nicolet 2001: 41). The treaty that confirmed the island’s independence in 1960 was guaranteed by Greece, Turkey, and Britain; the new state was to be a bi-communal one, with powers shared between the two communities, and individual rights largely dependent on ethnicity, which became politically organized under the Greek and Turkish Communal Chambers.

The weakness of the emergent state was soon evident in the failure to deter paramilitary activities, often led by those who had been active during the previous period of violence and had achieved high status within the leadership in the post-colonial period. These activities erupted in late 1963, with a wave of violent attacks against Turkish-Cypriots and retaliation from Turkish-Cypriot paramilitaries. In response, a UN peace-keeping force was sent to the island in 1964 and has been stationed there since. This marked the beginning of a process of geographical division between Greek-Cypriot-run areas and Turkish-Cypriot enclaves, which was epitomized by the demarcation of Greek and Turkish sectors in the capital Nicosia, respectively located south and north of the UN-controlled ‘Green Line’. During this period the role of the state (by
then completely run by Greek-Cypriots, the Turkish-Cypriots having been ‘withdrawn’) was under question, due to its inability to tackle the sporadic violence that ensued.

The division was consolidated during the war of 1974, in the extension of the Green Line to the west and eastern coasts, now separating the Greek-Cypriot-controlled south (referred to as ‘the Republic of Cyprus’) and the Turkish-Cypriot-controlled north (referred to as ‘the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’, abbreviated as TRNC, which was declared in 1983). Throughout the period 1974-2003, communication between the two parts was impossible, whether through crossing, post, or telephone. The international community became, in this period, the major addressee in the two sides’ political rhetoric, which focused on the refusal to recognize, on the northern side, the Republic of Cyprus’s claims to represent Turkish-Cypriots, and, on the southern side, the status of the TRNC as a state (a status granted only by Turkey).

As attempts to reach an agreement through UN-sponsored high-level negotiations failed throughout the 1980s and 1990s, this communication block became a major impediment to citizen-level conflict-resolution attempts, which have been undertaken since the late 1980s, largely under the sponsorship of international bodies such as the UNDP, USAID, and the Fulbright Commission. These attempts culminated in the formation of what is known as the ‘bi-communal movement’ in Cyprus, comprising a number of well-educated peace activists from both sides. The movement slowly grew to encompass, by the late 1990s, groups as diverse as business people and elderly inhabitants of formerly mixed villages. Throughout this process, the Green Line became the central focus of bi-communalist attempts to ‘overcome the division’ (Cockburn 2004), making the ‘other side’ a ‘compelling’ destination (Papadakis 2005). Bi-communalists became exceptional in that they were able to cross the Green Line on special occasions, with permission from the UN and the two political leaderships, and meet either in the UN-controlled buffer zone or in specific locations (e.g. conference halls) in the north or south. At times when such permission was refused (usually by one of the sides, and usually the Turkish-Cypriot), meetings were arranged abroad.

The significance of the opening of the border, then, was largely due to the fact that it ended three decades of near-complete lack of access. But its event-ness is not exhausted here – it lies in the fact that it did so unexpectedly and that because of this surprise it required a re-evaluation of what such ‘access’ meant.6 The concept of the ‘state’ played a central role in this re-evaluation. Thus, the transformation of subjectivity that took place rested on the re-configuration of knowledge around concepts such as the ‘state’, which allowed the disclosure of ‘truths’ not previously perceived.

The surprise
For that first week after the opening of the border, I was told later, ‘people behaved as if they were drunk’. I find this moment of the ‘breakdown of order’ central to the analysis of the event, not only because it marked a change in the way in which Cypriots related to the ethnic Other, but most importantly because it re-framed discourses concerning the relation of individuals to the state as well as to what was going on. Descriptions of a ‘chaotic’ atmosphere during the first days of the opening of the border abounded, in contrast to reports of police attempts to order the chaos, and even though many crossers were waiting in massive but orderly queues to have their papers checked instead of tumbling over each other to get across. The descriptions of ‘chaos’, therefore, more than reflecting the disorder that this change created, underline the surprising
aspect of the event. This aspect, though, was retrospectively constructed. In this section I argue that the surprise is not a matter of fact in the unfolding of the event – it needs to be constructed in order for the radical break with the previous situation to be denoted. As Bowman says, speaking of 9/11, ‘communities cohere around the representations they use to make sense of the post-trauma world, but with this narrative closure comes an amnesia of sorts about not only the earlier explanatory schemas but also the configurations of perceived events which validated them’ (2001: 19). In the (traumatic in some ways) case of the opening of the border, the narrative closure sought not to order the chaos of explanations that emerged with the event, but to construct it – the result was a re-ordering of the concept of ‘authority’ that ‘community’ could cohere around. It is this process that I want to examine in detail.

The prospect of an open border was not always welcome. In the years following the 1974 partition, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership had declared the north a safe haven where Turkish-Cypriots would no longer be persecuted by Greek-Cypriots. The Greek-Cypriot leadership, on the other hand, maintained that the dividing Green Line was not a border (since the TRNC was not a state) and that it was the Turkish-Cypriot side that was prohibiting movement. This did not relate to the experience of a number of individuals, including me, who had attempted to cross prior to 2003. On such occasions, discouragement came from the Greek-Cypriot side, where the police guarding the only traversable checkpoint in Nicosia repeatedly disallowed such crossings on the basis that ‘a special permission from the Chief of Police’ needed to be granted first – individual requests for such permissions in practice remaining unanswered. Yet, since the mid-1990s, when bi-communalism flourished, the government had officially maintained that it was not opposed to bi-communal meetings, even though when they were first attempted, the Greek-Cypriot participants had been branded as ‘traitors’ undermining the government by holding negotiations in secret, behind the official state’s back. This disjunction (between the rhetoric that the Green Line is not a border and the practice of maintaining its function as a border) shows that, in fact, the discursive gap between the rhetorics of the two leaderships contributed to the maintenance of the physical divide. The border seems to have been a central part of the discourses through which the states on both sides were sustained. This situation changed at the turn of the millennium.

In the period 2000-3 a series of demonstrations took place in the north, which increasingly gathered momentum, reaching massive proportions and attracting nearly half of the population at the end of 2002. The demonstrators opposed their leadership’s handling of the negotiations on the Cyprus problem and called for ‘solution [of the political problem] and EU’, that is, re-unification of the island to allow it to join the EU as a single member state. Such membership, it was thought, offered a way out of the problems that the decades of political isolation had created: unemployment, dependence on the Turkish state, financial mismanagement, cronyism, limitations to free speech. The demonstrations brought about a profound shift in the discourses on the Cyprus problem. In the south, the prejudicial views of Turkish-Cypriots that the media had presented up to then subsided and Turkish-Cypriots came to be seen as victims of a Turkey-bound regime which had been oppressing them. In the north the border became the focal point of political action, signifying the barrier to EU membership. For a considerable number of more radical Turkish-Cypriots, each new demonstration came with plans of symbolic crossings of the border – jumping from one of the bastions on the Venetian walls of Nicosia, slipping through buildings on the narrow stretches of the line, using the old sewerage system. It is indicative of the momentum...
gathered over the prospect of crossing that on one of these demonstrations, on 26 December 2002, the authorities of the TRNC reportedly took special measures to ‘seal’ all possible crossing-points to the south and stationed army contingents (in addition to the police usually manning the crossing checkpoints) along the Green Line in Nicosia (Demetriou & Vlachos 2007: 100).

In the aftermath of these demonstrations, another round of negotiations collapsed, dashing hopes that something was changing. Yet change came in the form of reports published in the north’s media soon after about a package of measures that the leadership was preparing to combat unemployment by allowing ‘free movement’ and ‘lowering army service’ (Yenidüzen, 19/3/03; Kibrish, 19/3/03). The ‘plan’ was soon reproduced by Greek-Cypriot dailies and continued to feed discussions on both sides as to its plausibility for the next few days (Phileleftheros, 20/3/03; Politis, 20/3/03 and 21/3/03; Kibrish, 20/3/03). Asked about a possible ‘mass arrival of Turkish-Cypriots’, the Greek-Cypriot Interior Minister assured the media that even though it had ‘no data to justify or confirm such information’, the government was fully prepared to face such a situation (Haravghi, 27/3/03). His government soon announced its own package of ‘special measures in support of Turkish-Cypriots’. Having signed the EU Accession Treaty, the (Greek-Cypriot) President of the Republic claimed that the purpose of the package was to ‘give out a message that there is hope for them [Turkish-Cypriots] to be able to share the commodities and benefits from Cyprus’ accession’ (Public Information Office (Republic of Cyprus), 18/4/03). Official visits by the Turkish Vice-President to the north and the Greek Prime Minister to the south followed. Upon their departures the Turkish-Cypriot Council of Ministers met on 21 April and announced that, as from 23 April, ‘the process of securing a permit to cross to the South 48 hours beforehand was to be lifted and would now be done on the spot at three border gates upon showing an identity card or passport’ (Vatan, 21/4/03).

In light of this background, the decision of the ministers should not have appeared any more surprising than the announcement that there had always been a clear-cut process for crossing. The plan to allow crossings had found its way into the ‘public domain’ more than a month before it was actually implemented – and it had been picked up across the then closed border, reproduced, and commented upon by the top levels of officialdom before it was abandoned as a newsworthy item. Furthermore, when this plan was abandoned, the topic of ‘freedom of movement’ across the Line had been engrained in the Republic’s own plans for the Turkish-Cypriots. Then why did the opening of the border still appear shocking?

I want to argue that this invention of the surprise marks the moment of the ‘leap’ into existence of a new subjectivity that Nancy calls ‘spacing of time’ (2000: 173), where the limits of possibility in the previous situation collapse and new ways of doing things become possible.8 In the aftermath of yet another collapse of negotiations, that previous situation had been determined by a loss of expectation that anything would change. This was a ‘structure of feeling’ (Williams 1977: 132) based on the notion of ‘waiting’. ‘Waiting’, Crapanzano writes,

means to be oriented in time in a special way. It is directed toward the future – not an expansive future, however, but a constricted one that closes in on the present. In waiting, the present is always secondary to the future. It is held in expectation. It is filled with suspense ... In waiting, the present loses its focus in the now. The world in its immediacy slips away; it is derealized. It is without élan, vitality, creative force. It is numb, muted, dead. Its only meaning lies in the future – in the arrival or the non-arrival of the object of waiting (1985: 44).

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In short, the review of the events that preceded the opening of the border helps to uncover the makings of Cypriot political subjectivity that the surprise sustains. The event need not have been surprising; but the fact that it was shows that there was no way in which it could have properly been understood other than as a totally shocking event. Tracing the invention of this shock illuminates the politics of subjectivity that made the memory of expectation (of the event) irrecoverable.

The surprise is not central to the event only because it designates the point of subject-formation. In opening up the horizon of the situation, the surprise also obliterates the expanded value of possibility prior to the event. In this case, the fact that the opening of the border should have been part of a package of measures had been forgotten. And with that, the rest of the measures, for example the lifting of army service, were forgotten as well. In other words, in the pre-event situation, the opening of the border was as unimaginable as the rest of the measures; but when it was actualized, in the post-event situation, those very same measures were forgotten. In that post-event situation, therefore, to remember them, and to press for their implementation, would have signalled in Badiou’s terms fidelity to the event, where the awareness of its event-ness would co-exist with a new understanding in which the new situation would be related to from the ‘perspective of the evental supplement’ (Badiou 2002: 41) – a situation where the implementation of all the measures would not be unimaginable but made ordinary. However, this may have also undermined the surprising quality of the event, putting its event-ness into question.

Loss of fidelity is thus directly related to the surprise that makes the event what it is. Therefore, the possibility, at least, for this loss of fidelity must be part and parcel of the event. Fidelity provides a glimpse into the utopian possibilities (however defined) opened up by the indeterminacy of the event at the moment of unfolding – in this case perhaps a glimpse into ‘the solution’ of the Cyprus problem. But the realization of these possibilities rarely comes to be. Instead, the maintenance of fidelity brings into focus the obstacles that obscure that utopian vision – for example, the failure fully to implement the plans that might have contributed to such a ‘solution’, like the lifting of army service. It is in this sense that fidelity and the event undermine each other. To recover this fidelity after the event, a tracing back of the surprise is necessary, through an analysis that ultimately dissolves this surprise. This makes it possible to imagine the ‘what if’s’ that could otherwise not have been asked. This counter-factual questioning uncovers the makings of the specific temporality of the event explored here.

The absent state

Greek-Cypriots whom I spoke to described that first week of the opening of the border as ‘the closest Cyprus had got to anarchy since [the war of] 1974’. This sense of the state being absent would analytically be mirrored onto that ‘kind of institutional capsule or pocket which contains the germ of future social developments, of societal change’, that Turner called *communitas*, marked by ‘the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints’ (1969: 44-5). This description is not far removed from accounts of Greek-Cypriots of their crossing on those first few days.

One of the recurring points in these accounts was the enthusiasm with which they were greeted by Turkish-Cypriots on the first day. In many cases this meant the breakdown of formalities in social communication. The absence of a common linguistic code to facilitate this communication was in itself significant – people described how
they would be greeted with hooting and excited waving by passing cars, just because their own car carried ‘Greek-Cypriot’ number-plates, or how when stopping to ask for directions Turkish-Cypriots got out of their cars to hug and kiss them before escorting them to their destination. And perhaps even more significant than the invention on the spot of these sign-language codes was the provision – albeit limited to that first day – of free drinks by many Turkish-Cypriot restaurateurs, which could be read as a suspension of the very ground of social structure that is economic exchange. This was not only also the first domain to be reinstated with vengeance when by the weekend prices for Greek-Cypriots had sky-rocketed and menus appeared with two sets of prices, one in Turkish lira, the other in Cypriot pounds, their correspondence not always obvious. But the ultimate suspension of state order was the very fact that for Greek-Cypriots all this took place in a thoroughly liminal space that was clearly out of the bounds of their own state authorities but was also ‘their own country’.

To explain the process beyond the concept of social organization, however, the notion of subjectivization needs to supplement the Turnerian interpretation. One anthropologist who has recently re-thought this is Crapanzano, who employs phenomenology to critique Turnerian liminality. In his essay ‘The between’ (the second chapter of *Imaginative horizons*), he suggests a different conceptualization of liminality that does not ‘flatten it’ but instead sees it as ‘encourag[ing] invention but, if only through negation, ... also affirm[ing] tradition’ (2004: 63-4). This alternative view of liminality as positivity enables a clearer understanding of the kind of temporality involved in the unfolding of the event, because it allows liminality to be conceptualized as a condition of being, not a momentary state. This makes it possible to imagine that the extraordinariness of the event could be made ordinary, that the event could be normalized in ways that do not undermine fidelity to it. But this process of imagination is highly political, and it is this politics that Crapanzano’s proposition does not address. I suggest that this politics – of who authorizes what sort of normalization, who remains faithful, and how this fidelity is evaluated (and what kind of emancipation it may lead to) – is crucial to the analysis of the subjectivization process. Understanding this politics helps uncover the workings of authority as a constituent of subjectivity because through this process of imagination we are also made aware of this function of authority.9 Thus, in taking Crapanzano’s argument further, I want to show, in the coming sections, that seeing liminality as a condition of being allows a better grasp on the power relations at stake at the moment of emergence of the new subjectivity born of the event.10 I thus propose a view of liminality as an evental site, which transforms the ‘logic of the situation’, allowing a different political subjectivity to emerge (Badiou 2004: 173). What made this liminality an evental site in the case of the opening of the border in Cyprus was the absence of the state.

In Cyprus, although the decision was a governmental one, the opening of the border and the crossings that followed were definitively outside institutionalized practice. On the contrary, at this point, concepts like ‘country’ and ‘authorities’ as discursive tools of subjection were suspended. Many of the experiences recounted to me were articulated in a surrealist frame reminiscent of what Arendt describes as the revolutionary’s drunkenness on ‘the wine of freedom in the abstract’ (1963: 49). ‘It is unbelievable that ...’ was the usual introduction to descriptions of walking on the other side of Nicosia, driving to the northern coastal town of Kyrenia, lunching in the mountain village of Bellapais, with the ‘most unbelievable’ of all that one sat at Kyrenia harbour and not only heard Greek, but also met (Greek-Cypriot) friends whom one had not seen for years. The
Greek-Cypriot society that one knew and lived in had been reconstituted, ‘at random’, in a place that, however one chose to define it, was out of the state’s control. This was a moment when the interpellatory capacity of the state, the epitome of the success of its ideological apparatus (Althusser 1971: 170–7), was removed. The suspension of this apparatus was also threatening to the whole institution of the state. Indicative of this was another comment, made by a friend, questioning the very change in the perception of the pre- and post-event situation: ‘Isn’t it actually surreal that we consider what is now possible surreal?’

This threat to the disappearance of the pre-event situation also implied the suspension of the state itself. It is this threat that the approaches of the authorities north and south sought to address in order to ensure that these revolutionaries knew, to paraphrase Arendt, that they ‘were not free agents’ (1963: 49).11 It is to these techniques of re-situating the state that I now turn.

The re-emergence of the state
On the first day of the opening of the border, checks were carried out until the afternoon, when people from both sides began crossing en masse, at which point the authorities gave up and simply let people through. On this day, Serdar Denktaş, son of the Turkish-Cypriot leader and leading politician himself, made statements urging ‘the international community not to intervene and to let the Cypriot people get to know each other’ (Politis, 24/4/03). He said that this was not a time for politicians to make statements, and that the showing of passports required of Greek-Cypriots crossing the line by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities did not amount to recognition of the state in the north. This last point was repeated by a Greek-Cypriot ex-Attorney-General, Alecos Markides, who stated on the same day that individuals cannot recognize states, and that therefore the showing of passports required of Greek-Cypriots would not amount to ‘treason’ or any other form of an illegal act.12 This last statement was credited by many Greek-Cypriots I spoke to as having helped catalyse the ‘flood’ of crossers into the north the following day and over the following (Easter) weekend.

These two statements, exactly the same in content, are in fact diametrically opposed to one another. While in the statements of the Turkish-Cypriot politician the state recedes in order to allow a ‘de-politicized’ socialization of individuals, the statement of the Greek-Cypriot ex-Attorney-General in effect re-instates the state. At the same time, in practice, the attempts of both statements to separate the private from the political end up collapsing one onto the other. Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots socialized in the way they did in the north precisely because they were perceived as ‘Greek-Cypriots’ and ‘Turkish-Cypriots’. In the socialization that took place in those first days, ‘crossing’ came thoroughly to define one’s identity. The state’s de-politicization of the crossings, far from de-coupling crossing from state control, brought the personal domain under it in a way that had not before been as explicit. At this point, the decision to cross or not to cross became a crucial question in the definition of one’s identity – not crossing was as much an act as crossing was.

By explicitly ‘receding’, to leave the citizens space to decide freely, the state was implicitly asserting its authority. The next step in this direction was the moralization of the crossings. Soon, the Greek-Cypriot media flooded with reports of what Greek-Cypriots had experienced in the north: seeing one’s old home, collecting photos that the new home-owners had kept throughout the years, collecting soil from one’s fields and fruit from one’s garden, visiting one’s former village church and cemeteries.13 Soon
after that, other reports began appearing, this time of Greek-Cypriots flocking to the casinos of the north (gambling is prohibited in the south) and to the (considerably cheaper) brothels. With these reports, a moralization of the practice of crossing began to take shape. Within days, government statements appeared that distinguished between acceptable and unacceptable reasons for crossing. With this moralization, a definitional shift was effected from Greek-Cypriots as subjects of the state to the subjects of the state as Greek-Cypriots (since this moral scale did not by definition apply to anybody other than Greek-Cypriots). In other words, a code of conduct between the state and its subjects was created that was beyond law and that, by applying only to Greek-Cypriots, rendered them not simply subjects of the state, but the only subjects of the state. And as with any moral code, its efficacy lay in the fact that it was internalized by those subjects. The epitome of this process was the self-enacted practice by individuals of imposing prohibitions that did not officially exist (e.g. many perceived that there was a midnight limit on visits to the other side and that spending the night was prohibited, when in fact neither was the case).

This interpellatory attempt had a direct reference to the concept of the ‘Greek-Cypriot citizen’ prior to the opening of the border. Up to that point, when the Green Line was impenetrable and crossing required special permits, the Greek-Cypriot official governmental rhetoric had been that the showing of passports by those few individuals allowed to cross was morally reprehensible because it implied recognition of the ‘illegal pseudo-state’ in the north. Thus, the stigmatization of those individuals (bi-communalists) not only set boundaries around what was acceptable political involvement, but also cast the preservation of the state, its very substance and existence, as the duty of every Greek-Cypriot citizen. The phrase ‘the substance and existence of our state’ (i kratiki mas ipostasi/ondoida) was invoked to support (and criticize) all policies on the national issue in government declarations and statements, pressing the point that particular acts, especially those not condoned by the state, were not simply frivolous or naïve, but jeopardized the very being of the state. The ‘substance and existence of the state’ was at the same time pitted in inverse relation to any possible recognition (anagnostisi) of the TRNC, which threatened it directly. Such recognition could be realized through those individual acts, the logic went, that required submitting an internationally valid Republic of Cyprus passport to the inspection of the authorities of that ‘illegal’ state. This discourse placed the preservation of the state in the (passport-holding) hands of every non-crossing Greek-Cypriot. The efficacy of this ideology lay in the active participation of citizens who did not cross in maintaining it, rather than simply resting on its acceptance. Consequently, in so far as entry into the north was prohibited by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities (prior to the opening of the border), the question of individual responsibility for crossing was a marginal issue, confined to the disregard and occasional castigation of those (bi-communalists) who went through the trouble of crossing after securing permits via the UN. The imparting of the state in the passport-holding hands of every non-crossing Greek-Cypriot. The efficacy of this ideology lay in the active participation of citizens who did not cross in maintaining it, rather than simply resting on its acceptance. Consequently, in so far as entry into the north was prohibited by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities (prior to the opening of the border), the question of individual responsibility for crossing was a marginal issue, confined to the disregard and occasional castigation of those (bi-communalists) who went through the trouble of crossing after securing permits via the UN. The imparting of the state in the passport-holding hands of every non-crossing Greek-Cypriot. The efficacy of this ideology lay in the active participation of citizens who did not cross in maintaining it, rather than simply resting on its acceptance. Consequently, in so far as entry into the north was prohibited by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities (prior to the opening of the border), the question of individual responsibility for crossing was a marginal issue, confined to the disregard and occasional castigation of those (bi-communalists) who went through the trouble of crossing after securing permits via the UN. The imparting of the state in the passport-holding hands of every non-crossing Greek-Cypriot. The efficacy of this ideology lay in the active participation of citizens who did not cross in maintaining it, rather than simply resting on its acceptance. Consequently, in so far as entry into the north was prohibited by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities (prior to the opening of the border), the question of individual responsibility for crossing was a marginal issue, confined to the disregard and occasional castigation of those (bi-communalists) who went through the trouble of crossing after securing permits via the UN. The imparting of the state in the passport-holding hands of every non-crossing Greek-Cypriot.
be formally articulated but not necessarily acted upon, which is why bi-communalists were castigated but the assertion that bi-communalism was wrong was never officially included in their castigation. The other point upon which official discourse was based was that the division of the island was a historical aberration, the dissolution of which hinged on the active sustaining of the memories of occupied towns and villages, not only by the refugees who had left them, but also by those who had never visited them. In this sense, the longing for ‘our lands’ (dous dópous mas) was a structure of feeling into which refugees and non-refugees alike were socialized, thus generalizing ‘refugeeness’ into an ‘imagined’ condition of Greek-Cypriot political subjectivity. The possibility of crossing, then, brought these three conditions of subjectivity into conflict, rendering the question of crossing or not crossing of fundamental importance to the being of the Greek-Cypriot subject: should one see one’s land, or withhold showing one’s passport? Should one socialize with Turkish-Cypriot ‘compatriots’ or risk the substance and being of the state? Crossing meant realizing one’s duty as a ‘refugee’ (actual refugees, as well as second- and third-generation ones and people for whom the north was imagined as ‘our lost land’) and as a supporter of a solution to the problem that would provide for harmonious and peaceful co-existence between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots. Not crossing meant resisting the longing for the land or co-existence for the sake of upholding the state.

The ex-Attorney-General’s statement, then, that citizens cannot recognize states solved the conflict by de-coupling the two structures. In that simple statement of fact the possibility of (not) legitimizing the status of the TRNC and of (not) undermining the standing of the state was taken away from the citizens’ control. The state was thus re-instated as the sole agent of assuring its own ‘standing’ and ‘existence’. The domain of political subjectivity had not only been reduced, but was declared to have always been that much narrower.

Reclaiming the political
The new process of subjectivization should be viewed in relation to this limiting of subjectivity, in which not only the government, but also a number of groups and individuals were involved. I thus argue that the insistence of particular individuals in resisting crossing and declaring publicly their particular reasons for doing so is to be seen as an attempt to reclaim this domain of personal choice as a political one. This is why some of those who did so should not be viewed simplistically as nationalists.

Of course, the strongest rhetoric against the crossings came from refugee associations, most vocally represented by the (Greek-Cypriot) mayor of Kyrenia (a municipality in exile since the actual town is in the north and under Turkish-Cypriot administration), who called on Greek-Cypriots not to cross because the showing of passports ‘amounts to indirect recognition of the pseudo-state’ (sinistá émmesi anagh-nórisi dou psevdográdous) and because the will for co-existence can be shown anyway, by the fact that ‘we welcome the Turkish-Cypriots here with open arms’ (Phileleftheros, 28/4/03). Even there, the reference to ‘indirect recognition’ and the need to account for the ‘will for co-existence’ is a noticeable sign of the hegemonic acceptance of the changed official discourse on recognition as well as of the increasing emphasis on socialization between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots as a nationalist practice, to be undertaken in the name of ‘proving Denktash wrong’ in his assertion that ‘Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots cannot live together’ (Phileleftheros, 28/4/03). These nationalistic arguments soon became visible in slogans appearing near the checkpoints declaring, in
the first-person singular, that one should ‘not need a visa to visit one’s own house’
(dhen thēlo víza na bāo spidí mou). The order of the verb here is significant, because it
harks back to the older rhetoric of the 1980s campaign against losing the memory of
‘our lands’, entitled ‘I don’t forget’ (dhen xehnō). The slogan thus attempts the inter-
pellation that is not practised by the state. The ‘I’ in the ‘I don’t need a visa to go home’
becomes the eye of the ruptured community (the community of Greek-Cypriots
without the state). It is a power taking over from the state and looking out for those not
heeding the call to resist crossing, branding them ‘traitors’. The universalized ‘I’ thus
makes traitors of those who choose to differentiate themselves from it, either because
their identity is not predicated on refugee-hood as a generalized mode of being, or
because refusing to cross is for them not a matter of ‘pride’.

But there were also people who refused to show their passport because, as they put it
to me, ‘this was not what we wanted’. ‘I crossed before, when I was not supposed to, when
there was a price to pay and a point to make’, Anita14 had said, ‘but now it’s different’.
Anita has been and continues to be involved in bi-communal activities, but explained
that for her this new regime of crossing was tantamount to accepting Denktash’s rules.
She was less successful, however, in articulating this fully: ‘It was a personal choice that
people just had to respect’. Other bi-communals expressed similar feelings, some
going further to state that they had worked so hard to break down that border, and had
in the process envisioned it as the solution to the Cyprus problem. This was not that,
they claimed, and asked for their refusal not to cross to be read as a political statement
against a solution they did not want. There were yet others for whom the problem was
not that this was a bad solution but that it was not a solution at all, because it was not
agreed officially by the two sides. Crossing was to be undertaken ‘not in the midst of this
havoc, but once there is a solution, whatever kind of a solution it is, and we know what’s
what’, Rena, a middle-aged woman, had said. Many of these individuals have subse-
quently crossed – activists because they saw potential for continuing the political
struggle from here on; moderates because the situation has now normalized, and if not
the solution itself, then at least the ‘roadmap’ to it has become visible. This event was no
longer threatening to be the solution.15 Instead, reactions to crossing were modified even
more clearly with the prospect of that other solution-promising event, the referen-
dum.16 In the temporal space between the two, the space of political subjectivity that had
been taken away was either reclaimed or abandoned.

Yet, the decision to cross or not to cross was not to everyone a choice between
embracing and rejecting the possibilities opened up by the freedom to cross. Youla’s
account indicates this. She was driving me and a colleague of hers to Kyrenia three
months after the opening of the border to show us the house where she had grown up
until the age of 6. ‘We never really celebrated Easter this year’ (en ekatalávamen Páscha
fétos), she said, and then recounted her experience of the ‘upheaval’ of those initial days.
She had been among those who had tried to pass on the second day; she had initially
considered the possibility of not crossing. ‘To tell you the truth, I had always been
opposed to bi-communal meetings and events’ (en je imoun boté dis ebabanabroséngisis
eghó; dhiginodigá, j’ étsi prámada, imoun andíthedi), she said to me.

In fact, apart from her subscription to the nationalist discourse, she had never taken
any active political role. However, when she was given the chance to cross and see her
house, she organized a family excursion with aunts, uncles, and cousins. They had spent
a night in their cars waiting in the queue before they crossed. ‘We children [referring to
her age when the family fled] remembered everything much more clearly than the
adults. Me and my sister actually showed my uncle the correct turning to his house when he missed it – I felt so sorry for him, forgetting the way to his own house ...

She spoke about that first visit, and the subsequent visits she had made, with excitement, even about the eventual meeting with the current inhabitants of the house, which was less cordial than most of the stories that appeared in the media. The home was now apparently owned by a Turkish army general, and his wife who had been at home at the time of their visit showed them reluctantly around the house.

It all gave her a different perspective on things, she concluded. She did not think twice about crossing now, and she had a totally different understanding of the north. She was, however, cautious with her behaviour there. She was reluctant to pay money because she did not want to ‘support Denktash’s economy’; thus, she had prepared sandwiches for us to eat and had brought a miniature stove and a pot for making Cypriot coffee, as well as a shaker to make iced coffee. She had also been vehemently opposed to the practice of sleeping over, she said, but recently she had been reconsidering it – some of her friends had done it on an excursion to the northeastern tip of the island. ‘I suppose I would also, if there was a reason, if I had work to do or something,’ she said rather hesitantly. Then, she took a breath, changed tempo, and exclaimed in frustration: ‘If only this government would come out and tell us what we are supposed to do and what not!’ (je doúdi i givérnisi ... – na fjoun re bedhí mou na mas boun: di ebídrebédé, di én ebídrebédé!)

This final phrase initially struck me as odd, chiefly because of the paradox of criticism of the government and the will to be subjected to it that it articulated. The phrase ‘this government’ (doudi i givérnisi ...) had been uttered almost as a question but not quite, in the way used in Cypriot-Greek to express a veiled insult, as one would say in English ‘this stupid government’ to express questioning of it. In other words, the paradox lay in the fact that this was an offensive call for subjection. Furthermore, this explicit statement of surrendering one’s ‘freedom of choice’ seemed to sit rather uncomfortably with her previous description of her decision-making moment and perseverance to cross despite the impediments she faced – somehow, the fact that she had not thought twice about sleeping in her car in order to cross, but had failed to make the decision about sleeping or not in the north and had instead called on the government to do that for her, seemed to clash as indications of her personal relation to the ‘political’.

But what is in fact most paradoxical is that this call on the government for instruction, this complaint about the lack of subjection, is exemplary of what Goffman calls ‘release anxiety’ (1968: 69). It is paradoxical because Goffman is talking about release from total institutions, when one encounters the spectre of freedom and, despite one’s hate for the incarceration condition itself, is tempted to ‘re-enlist to avoid the issue’ (1968: 69). Therefore, it would seem that what is rejected here is not the ‘freedom of choice’ but the ‘choice of freedom’. Revisiting Turner’s approach, it would seem that the absence of institutionalization in this ‘liberation of human capacities’ (1969: 44) marked the limit of the new Greek-Cypriot subjectivity.

It is paradoxical because the hegemonic discourse on incarceration in Cyprus had thus far declared that it is the Turkish-Cypriots who were living in an ‘open prison’ in the north. It thus seems that this process of subjectivization also entailed a process by which the state became the prison of the subject. Thus, to take the government to task was tantamount to accepting that the conditions one deplores are also the conditions one has learned to live by.
Conclusion

This article has sought to analyse the emergence and negotiation of political subjectivity by viewing the ‘opening of the border’ in Cyprus as ‘event’. I have shown that in the period prior to the event, the border had been the primary vehicle for discursively sustaining the state on both sides of the island. Consequently, its opening also opened up the possibility of its removal, especially for the Greek-Cypriot state, as this possibility had already presented itself on the northern side with the demonstrations of the opposition. In turn, this possibility of removal of the border also implied the possibility of subjection (maintained by the discourse of the border) being removed from the constitution of the political subject. It was this possibility that was most threatening to the state and this threat that authorities were mostly concerned to neutralize. Indeed, it could be argued that the decision to open the border was a way of neutralizing this pre-existing threat on the part of the Turkish-Cypriot authorities, because it allowed them to set the terms for a changed discourse on the border. In the south, this threat of the removal of subjection only came into existence with the opening of the border, and before any such change of discourse had time to be formalized. Thus the state responded more directly by limiting the domain of political subjectivity. The fundamental change in its discourse came in the form of the state disengaging itself from its subjects, not re-situating its position on institutions such as the border. And herein lies the event-ness of the event: the appearance of the possibility of life without the border, which caused the state to reassert itself by redefining the terms of subjectivity and articulating something that had not previously been articulated (the existence of the state was not the subject’s to uphold), gave rise to a new subjectivity where political choice, one way or the other, entailed the employment of agency uncoupled from subjection.

Youla in effect articulates this event-ness in her critique of the government. Her anger was directed at the fact of the receding of the state, pointing to it as a more fundamental problem than the state appeared to recognize in its attempts to reclaim its subjects. Based on this, I would argue that this receding allowed a transformation of Greek-Cypriot political subjectivity that in turn inaugurated a process of radicalization (of the already existing polarization) of Greek-Cypriot politics. This subjectivization process in the absence of the state yielded, on the one hand, individuals who became the state (by putting into place techniques of interpellation in an effort to make citizens ‘turn back’ from the border) and, on the other hand, individuals who became free from it. In the aftermath of this change, fidelity to the event (in the form of a radically different relation to the new situation) may have been lost, a reassertion of subjection brought about; but what remained was the knowledge of that subjection. The event, in short, offered, if nothing else, a more politically informed view of who one was.

The point of the article is thus to show that the reactions to this event presupposed the contemplation of one’s relation to the state, that is, they rendered apparent the making of political subjectivity. In this sense, the process of subjectivization hinges on the conscious decision to act politically, even if one chooses not to act at all. This choice, and the meaning of non-action, is a point that the political theory of the event eschews – and which an ethnographic analysis instead makes visible. Thus, the docility with which informants reacted to the event was itself a political act.

In this example, the limits of the state coincide with the limits of political subjectivity. Consequently, the retreat from these limits indicates the re-establishment of the relations of subjection. Events are the moments that put these limits under question,
and it is by examining them that one can glimpse the possibility of subjectivity beyond subjection. Anthropology has largely neglected the study of such events, and this is even more surprising considering the number of studies on the anthropology of the state that focus on ‘violence’ and ‘war’, where one would expect that such events abound. This article has thus sought to show that events with less devastating consequences, indeed events that in the context of a legacy of violence open up the possibility of overcoming it, can have equally profound effects on the understanding of the self as a political subject. Such events may be rare, and their historical value may wane with time. Indeed, this was the case in Cyprus after the referendum. Yet I want to argue that it is precisely because anthropology has the tools to analyse the micro-processes taking place in the short period of time in which the event unfolds that it has a role to play in the analysis of such events. In turn, the process of subjectivization captured in such analyses can offer illuminating insights in the wider discussion about the state, citizenship, and the political.

NOTES

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2 In this article I refer to ‘the event’ as a theoretical concept rather than simply ‘something that happens’.
3 Examples of this involvement are Polycarpos Georkadjis, a high-ranking member of the guerrilla group, later appointed Interior Minister, who used his control of the police to steer paramilitary activity (Droushiotis 2002), and Rauf Denktash, leader of the Turkish-Cypriot armed group opposed to unification with Greece, who was appointed Head of the Turkish Communal Chamber while continuing to organize armed activities (Kızılyürek 2002).
4 The attacks had been triggered by the refusal of Turkish-Cypriot representatives to consent to constitutional amendments proposed to render the constitution ‘more workable’ by rescinding clauses that guaranteed specific political rights to the Turkish-Cypriot community – one example was the veto right, which Turkish-Cypriot parliamentarians had used to block budget proposals, claiming disproportionate allocation of state funds to the Greek-Cypriot community.
5 Some level of communication became possible with the advent of the internet, even though authorities on both sides made attempts to restrict it (e.g. by blocking access to designated addresses).
6 Lisa Dikomitis (2005) has developed a tripartite categorization of these meanings, where crossing practices are modelled on refugeehood, tourism, and pilgrimage.
8 A theoretical precursor of this leap might be the phenomenological concept of ‘horizons’ that become fused (Gadamer 1975: 273).
9 The analyst is, of course, also implicated in this politics (in designating the event as such, for example) – however, the objective, I want to argue, is not to steer clear of such politics, but rather to be aware of them.
10 In this respect I disagree with Crapanzano’s position that liminality as a condition of being is only possible in certain cultures, such as the Navajo, and foreclosed in others, such as that of the American middle class, typified by the busybody relations characteristic of working- and middle-class American women, who ‘seem impatient. They often have so little tolerance for inaction in deed and word that they appear meddlesome and indiscreet. I find it impossible to imagine them speaking-with-names [as the Navajo do, for example]’ (2004: 50). By assigning the differences he is trying to analyse to culture, Crapanzano explains away
the question of subject-formation as a process, preferring to adhere to a notion of a culturally determined, and, by extension, immutable, subject.

11 Compelling as this parallel is with Arendt’s notion of revolution, I would argue that it is limited because, as discourses, ‘freedom’ and ‘necessity’ cannot be taken as self-evident concepts (and not least so in the way in which they are employed in Arendt’s critique of Marxism [1963: 59–73]). In this sense, the point of an ethnography of the event is exactly to explore the moment before this historical evaluation of the ‘revolution’.

12 It is interesting to compare this argument to the government spokesman’s 500-word statement on the day, in which there are no fewer than ten references to ‘law’, ‘legality’, and ‘illegality’, one to the UN Security Council Resolutions, and one to international judicial decisions, but no mention of citizens’ right to choose (Public Information Office (Republic of Cyprus), 23/4/2003). Indicative of the impact of Markides’s argument was the fact that it was cited to me by crossers supporting their decision to cross. Alternatively, it was also used by people choosing not to cross, as, for example, in the discussions taking place in that period among chat-room users of rather nationalist leanings, where the argument is mentioned in order to be dismissed as naïve or silly (http://www.aeposi.com/cgi-bin/ultimatebb.cgi?ubb=get_topic;f=3;t=000215, submitted on 24 April 2003, 9:33 a.m., accessed 24 August 2007).

13 Dikomitis describes these visits as ‘pilgrimages’ (2005: 11–12). Also note that the only government-sponsored crossings before the border opened took the form of pilgrimages, of visit by Greek-Cypriots to a monastery in the north and Turkish-Cypriots to a tekke (mosque) in the south (Cyprus News Agency, 13/09/98). The word proskinima (pilgrimage) was also explicitly used by the Greek-Cypriot state to justify crossings in the 2003 period (I owe this insight to one of my reviewers).

14 All of the names of informants appearing in this article are pseudonyms.

15 In this sense, the problem can be seen in terms of a conflict between the two events – the ‘opening’, on the one hand, and the solution, on the other. Such an analysis will have to be deferred, but suffice it to say that this view of the solution is a way of maintaining ‘waiting’ as a structure of feeling.

16 In as far as the plan that was put to referendum represented the culmination of efforts made since 1977 to agree on a solution, yet was presented to the Greek-Cypriot public as a ‘rushed’ deal which they were not given enough time to consider, it could be seen to partake in the surprise that sustains the event. However, any discussion of the referendum here would fail to do justice to the range of issues involved.

REFERENCES


Franchir ou pas ? Subjectivation et absence de l’État à Chypre

Résumé

Olga Demetriou has carried out research on the politicization of identity and subjectivity in Greece and Cyprus as a doctoral student at the LSE (Ph.D. 2002) and a post-doctoral fellow at Cambridge and Oxford universities. Since 2006 she has been affiliated with the Peace Research Institute, Oslo, PRIO Cyprus Centre.

PRIO Cyprus Centre, Sophoullis 3, 1096 Nicosia, Cyprus. olga.demetriou@yahoo.co.uk