SYMBOLIC CRETANNESS IN MERSIN AND AYVALIK: ASSERTION OF DISTINCTIVENESS AND THE NEED FOR RECOGNITION

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ABSTRACT

SYMBOLIC CRETANNESS IN MERSIN AND AYVALIK: ASSERTION OF DISTINCTIVENESS AND THE NEED FOR RECOGNITION

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The present dissertation explores the way the second- and third-generation Cretans in Ayvalik and Mersin relate to their Cretanness today. They are the descendants of Cretan Muslims who were expelled from the island of Crete within the framework of the Lausanne Convention Concerning the Exchange of Populations signed between Turkey and Greece in 1923 or had sought refuge in Anatolia after the withdrawal of the Ottomans from Crete towards the end of the nineteenth century. The study aims to understand the public manifestations of and heightened involvement with Cretanness that have recently been taking place in Turkey, and to explore the relevance of Cretanness in the present. The fieldwork was conducted between 2018 and 2020 in Mersin and Ayvalik and involved a total of 36 semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observation. The findings were analysed and interpreted drawing on theories and concepts from different strands of ethnicity literature.

The thesis argues that Cretanness has been transformed and has acquired a symbolic form, which involves the pursuit of visibility, an intermittent involvement with the origins and the precedence of symbols, the most significant of which is food.

Additionally, it is argued that Cretanness today encompasses an affective component, and that it is employed as a basis for asserting distinctiveness and superiority, constructed within the context of contemporary realities. Furthermore, it contends that the visibility aspect of symbolic Cretanness in Mersin parallels a need for recognition, which differentiates the two sites of research and is linked to the distinct contextual factors.

Keywords: Cretan Muslims, symbolic Cretanness, populations exchange, distinctiveness, recognition

ÖZ

MERSİN VE AYVALIKTA SEMBOLİK GİRİTLİLİK: AYIRT EDİCİLİK İDDİASI VE TANINMA İHTİYACI

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Bu tez, Ayvalık ve Mersin'deki ikinci ve üçüncü kuşak Giritlilerin, Giritlilikle ile nasıl ilişki kurduklarını araştırmaktadır. Bu kişiler, 1923 yılında Türkiye ile Yunanistan arasında imzalanan Lozan Nüfus Mübadelesi Sözleşmesi çerçevesinde Girit adasından sürülen ya da on dokuzuncu yüzyılın sonlarına doğru Osmanlıların Girit'ten çekilmesinin ardından Anadolu'ya sığınan Giritli Müslümanların çocukları ve torunlarıdır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de son dönemde Giritliliğin kamusal tezahürlerini ve Giritlilikle artan ilgiyi anlamayı ve Giritliliğin günümüzdeki önemini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Saha çalışması 2018-2020 yılları arasında Mersin ve Ayvalık'ta gerçekleştirilmiş ve toplam 36 yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşme ve katılımcı gözlemi içermiştir. Bulgular, etnisite literatürünün farklı kollarından teori ve kavramlardan yararlanılarak analiz edilmiş ve yorumlanmıştır.

Bu tez, Giritliliğin dönüştüğünü ve görünürlük arayışını, kökenlerle aralıklı bir ilişkiyi ve en önemlisi yemek olmak üzere sembollerin önceliğini içeren sembolik bir biçim kazandığını savunmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, Giritliliğin günümüzde duygusal bir bileşen içerdiği ve çağdaş gerçeklikler bağlamında inşa edilen ayırt edicilik ve

üstünlük iddiası için bir temel olarak kullanıldığı savunulmaktadır. Ayrıca, Mersin'deki sembolik Giritliliğin görünürlük boyutunun, iki araştırma bölgesini farklılaştıran ve farklı bağlamsal faktörlerle bağlantılı olan tanınma ihtiyacıyla paralellik gösterdiği ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Girit Müslümanları, sembolik Giritlilik, nüfus mübadelesi, ayırt edicilik, tanınma

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My very first encounter with the Cretans in Turkey was during a trip I took with a Greek friend of mine in 2015 to Southern Turkey. It all started in Adana, while enjoying the local delicacies at a restaurant. The owner of the restaurant told us about a Cretan village nearby and suggested that we visit it. He was acquainted with Ismail, one of the residents of the village, whom he called the same night to inform him about us. Ismail would be waiting for us the next day. The following day, we headed to Tarsus and from there to the village of Melemez.

Ismail and his wife, Zehra, were waiting for us. We had lunch at their place and afterwards, we went for tea to *Giritli Cemile'nin Yeri* (The Place of Cretan Cemile) the only Cretan restaurant in the village at that time. Curious passers-by joined us at the restaurant's courtyard. We talked about the life in the village, their ancestors and how they had been settled there. Some had visited Crete, while others had not. Many expressed a feeling of nostalgia. The late Fatma told us some Cretan *mantinades*[1]. Although I wanted to record her, I was hesitant to ask. After a while, she stopped her recitation to ask, surprised and slightly annoyed, why I was not taping her. During the visit to the village, I did my best to tap into my knowledge of the Cretan dialect and communicate with the villagers in Cretan[2]; however, it seems that I was not entirely successful, as one of them noticed that my accent was not heavy enough. We stayed in the village for a few hours, and I left thinking that I would visit again someday.

I grew up in Crete and received education based on the school textbooks written according to the official Greek national history. As Theodossopoulos (2007, p. 13) puts it, Greek textbooks, "tend to ignore many other cultures and civilisations,

[1] Rhyming couplets, part of the Cretan tradition. I shall refer more extensively to them in the following chapters. Greek (or Cretan Greek) is transliterated according to the ELOT 743 standard.

[2] We were communicating in Turkish, as well.

ethnic minorities within the national territory, the possibility that confrontational Others, like the Turks, do have culture. They do not ignore Turkey and Turks, however". Within this framework the period in which Greece was part of the Ottoman Empire (referred to as *Tourkokratia* in Greek, meaning Turkish rule) is portrayed and generally perceived, as a dark period for the Greek nation, leading to backwardness in all fields. As for Crete, it has been endowed "with nationalist symbolism of resistance against the occupier" due to the several revolutions against the "Turkish yoke" (Kostopoulou 2012, p. 133), another term used to describe Ottoman rule. The Cretan Muslims or *Tourkokritikoi* (Turkish Cretans) as they are called in Greek, in the general mind are subsumed under the category "Turk".[3]

The Cretans residing now in the village of Melemez are descendants of the Cretan Muslims who were transferred and settled as refugees in Anatolia and other parts of the Ottoman Empire towards the end of the nineteenth century. The Cretans in Turkey also include the descendants of the Muslims expelled from Greece in the 1920s under the Lausanne Convention, which stipulated the exchange of the Muslim and the Greek Orthodox populations between Greece and Turkey. Despite my distancing from the official Greek historical narrative and my long engagement with Turkey, my knowledge about the Cretan Muslims and their fate after Crete remained limited and superficial. The visit I described above was a milestone for me, as it was meant to be a starting point for my doctorate research. It holds further importance for one more reason: the *Tourkokritikoi* became flesh and blood.

After that visit, I maintained contact with some of the Cretans I had met in the village and I began following some Crete-related pages on Facebook, mostly out of personal interest but also considering the possibility of conducting relevant research in the future. I discovered that a Cretan festival in Kusadasi had been organised for

[3] *Tourkokritikoi* have found a relatively better place in Modern Greek Literature (e.g., Kazantzakis, 1953/2017; Galanaki, 1989; Douka, 2004/2012). Moreover, journalistic texts about Cretans in Turkey, have recently started being published in Greece, contributing in a positive way to the familiarisation of the Greeks with their old compatriots. Such texts are mostly occasioned by the Cretan festivals and events organised in Turkey or by Cretan Turks' heritage trips to Crete, and usually speak of Cretans in Turkey in a quite romanticised way. Such an example is an article covering the festival in Kuşadası in 2017 entitled "A second Crete lives in Turkey!" (Spanakis, 2017). Great interest attracted some years ago the story of a refugee family in Chania, Crete from Al-Hamidiyah, a town on the Syrian coast, where Cretan Muslims were settled at the end of the nineteenth century. The refugee family are descendants of Cretan Muslims and speakers of the Cretan dialect (Konstas, 2017).

some years, to which I participated for the first time in 2018, and noticed the establishment of numerous Cretan associations. I also came across a small-circulation newspaper called *Giritliler* (Cretans), published, as I learnt afterwards, by the same third-generation Cretan who has been undertaking the organisation of the festival in Kusadasi. All of the above had been relatively recent developments.

My research was initiated by these observations, and throughout my fieldwork, I aimed to explore the framework within which the aforementioned developments, which have been taking place in recent years, can be located and what Cretanness means for Cretans today. While there are no studies that would allow us to have a comprehensive view of the itinerary of Cretan culture, expressions of and identification with Cretanness, and interactions with the others throughout the years, we know that these specific public expressions of Cretanness are dated to the past two to three decades; I consider them as a significant starting point for a deeper exploration of Cretanness today. It should be noted here that such developments are not exclusive to the descendants of Cretan Muslims but reflect a general tendency among the exchangees (and other populations with similar historical background) and are related to larger historical and societal processes in Turkey (Chapter 5 delves into more detail). Nevertheless, despite common patterns, the emphasis on Cretanness through the label "Cretan" is an aspect that should not be overlooked and calls for a further investigation in order to understand the dynamics of Cretanness today.

Since Cretan Muslims have been dispersed in different regions of Turkey, I decided to conduct field research in two sites in order to grasp a more comprehensive picture of the situation. The two sites of my research are Ayvalik, located on the Northern Aegean coast, and Mersin, situated on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. Apart from the geographic distance from each other, these two locations demonstrate significant differences in terms of population size and constitution, both historically and currently (more detailed information about the two sites and why I have chosen them will be provided in Chapter 4).

The aim of the study, then, is to understand the recent public manifestations of and heightened involvement with Cretanness and to explore the relevance of Cretanness in the present. To this end, I have proceeded by asking a set of questions that will shed light on the way Cretans in Turkey, more specifically in Ayvalik and

Mersin, relate to Cretanness today. What place does Cretanness hold in the repertoire of identifications? What meanings do actors attach to it? To what extent is Cretan culture[4] practiced today? Is there an aim or an attempt to revitalise Cretan culture? Are there different patterns observed in Ayvalik and Mersin?

I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with second- and third-generation Cretans[5] in Ayvalik and Mersin (the full list of informants can be found in appendix A). Several Cretans I interviewed had either participated or were participating at that time in the associations of Cretans in Mersin or Ayvalik. Others were people I met at different festivals and events or were introduced to me as knowledgeable Cretans who would be of help for my research. Therefore, the majority of the people I interviewed demonstrated an active interest in their origins, while I also reached out to individuals who may not exhibit the same level of interest.

The interviews were conducted from March 2019 to March 2020. However, prior to that period, I had visited Ayvalik twice, Mersin twice, and Kusadasi once in order to attend the International Cretans Festival organised there. During my trips I tried to spend as much time as possible with the people in the field. Among them there are those I eventually interviewed and others with whom, for various reasons, I could not conduct a formal interview. My objective was to capture multiple aspects of their lives by observing their interactions with others, whether in social settings or with family members, and exploring their perspectives on various matters. Additionally, I continued to follow the activities of Crete-related groups on Facebook and attended festivals and events whenever possible.

[4] Cretan culture is not seen as a single, stable, and authentic thing originated from the bounded "culture region" of Crete (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 10). What I mean by "Cretan culture" in this thesis is the set of certain aspects that are known to have been brought by the Cretan migrants to Turkey, in combination with the way my informants define it.

[5] I follow the general logic of distinguishing generations; first generation is the generation born in Crete, second is the generation that has at least one parent born in Crete, third is the generation whose both parents were born in Turkey, and so on. Interestingly, many of the Cretans counted as first generation the generation of the elderly ancestors who migrated from Crete and as second generation the family members who were born in Crete but migrated to Turkey in a very young age.

1.1 The Cretan puzzle and the analytical framework

The world "puzzle" reflects the challenge of locating Cretan Muslims analytically within a framework. Certainly, this challenge is not exclusive to Cretans. It is rooted in the specific and social processes and the dialectic between internal identification and external ascription. Internal identification does not necessarily imply homogeneity; there may be multiple individual perceptions and definitions of what constitutes the group's identity, values or culture (Gefou-Madianou, 1999, p. 414). External definition, borrowing Jenkin's (2008) concept, can also include anything from official and state discourses to personal views by others with whom a collectivity shares the social terrain.

In the context of the nation-state building process in Turkey the Cretan Muslims exchangees and refugees were supposed to become incorporated as Muslim Turks in their new homeland (see Chapter 2). However, the first-generation Cretans exhibited distinct cultural traits, including language, culinary culture, customs, music, and even religion, as a considerable number were affiliated to the Bektashi order. Such cultural differences were often a source of discordance among them and the "others" in the areas they were resettled, while their Turkishness and Muslimness were often questioned by their new compatriots. In the later generations, who are the focus of this thesis, it becomes harder to detect the same cultural markers; the category attached to them by the state has been fully "internalised" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 74ff) and the majority takes pride in their Turkishness. At the same time, many are those who acclaim or celebrate their Cretanness in different ways, attach a certain value to this component part of their identifications and voice their distinctiveness vis-a-vis fellow Turks or minority groups in the society.

Andrews (1989/1992) in an atlas about ethnic groups in the Republic of Turkey lists Cretans as one of them. Tekelioğlu (2014) refers to them as "return migrants". Along similar lines they can also be characterised as "co-ethnic migrants" (Pratsinakis, 2021) or "ethnically privileged migrants" (Žmegač, 2005). I propose that we move beyond such labels and keep the complexity explained above in mind, a complexity that is relevant not only for the social scientist but also for the people who happen to be the subjects of a research. In the present thesis, I will base my approach mostly on

how they view themselves, being, at the same time, attentive to the dialectic of assimilation and difference. In this respect, the preservation of certain cultural characteristics -fading away but pointed out-, the emphasis on origin, but most importantly the articulation of difference in comparison to others, enables us to approach them analytically as a separate collectivity.

In my analysis I will benefit to a great extent from the theories on ethnicity. At this point I would like to make clear, that, by doing that, I am not arguing that Cretan Muslims constitute an "ethnic group". I utilise relevant theories and concepts as analytical tools in order to discuss attachments and affiliations, culture, groupness and identification. Ethnicity has been defined in various ways and has been part of various discourses accommodated to "historical demands of specific countries, regions, and internal political and social dynamics (Fenton, 2010, p. 49). It has been one of the most malleable –in positive and negative terms– concepts of sociological inquiry but also a concept with "legislative and institutional underpinnings" (Malesevic, 2004, p. 2). It has been associated to descent and territory; it has been conflated with nation and race; or in many cases it has been used only in association to minority or immigrant groups. Ethnicity can have a political and a cultural dimension; it may constitute an important source of discrimination and exclusion and even incite violence. In short, ethnicity can be a very loaded term, but it does not need be that way as an analytical tool.

I will deploy to a great degree perspectives and theories by Richard Jenkins, Rogers Brubaker, and Fredrik Barth, whose common axis is that they have problematised static notions such as "group" and "identity". Barth (1979) bases his theory on "ethnic groups", but by introducing the concept of boundary, he suggests an active and complex understanding of the group. He recognises the central role actors play in the creation of groups and shifts the focus to the "boundary", in other words to the cultural features that are used by the actors as markers of difference. Brubaker (2004) has drawn attention to the dynamic, processual character and contextual nature of activities such as "identification", "categorisation" and "classification". Instead of referring to groups, he suggests the concept "groupness", which should be treated "as event, as variable and contingent rather than fixed and given" (p. 12). Furthermore, he suggests treating ethnicity "as a way of understanding, interpreting, and framing experience" (p. 86), highlighting the cognitive construction of ethnicity. Within

Brubaker's framework processes and perceptions do not take place in the void, but are directly connected to the configuration of power, values, everyday experience, and larger sociohistorical processes.

Jenkins (2008) distinguishes between "two mutually interdependent but theoretically distinct processes" (p. 76): the process of "group identification", which involves the self-definition of individuals as members of a group, and the definition of its name(s), its nature(s) and its boundary(ies) (p. 56); and the process of "social categorisation", that is the process by which a set of persons are defined and consequently socially categorised by others, involving mechanisms of power and authority. Along similar lines of thought lies the constructionist framework proposed by Cornell & Hartmann (1998). They have brought together the societal and social conditions – the "construction sites" as they call them, and the "group assets or characteristics" (p. 196), that is, the internal factors that contribute to identity construction. They have developed a comprehensive framework for the creation, maintenance, reproduction and transformation (p. 96) of ethnic and racial identities based on the interaction between circumstances and actors. Their analysis of "construction sites" will be used in this thesis in order to explain current expressions of Cretanness and differences between Ayvalik and Mersin.

In addition to the aforementioned concepts and frameworks, I will also benefit from the literature developed on the ethnicity of the descendants of the immigrants of European origin in the United States. Most specifically I will benefit from Gans' (1979) concept of "symbolic ethnicity" who argues that ethnicity for later generations of White ethnics is a matter of personal curiosity, highlighting the potential shallowness and limited significance of ethnic cultural commitments. Bakalian (1993) takes upon the concept and outlines the components of symbolic Armenianness in the United States. In a similar vein, Alba (1990) observes the transformation of White ethnicity, arguing that the communal aspects of ethnicity have given their place to a private and individual form and pointing to the consequent latitude of choice that individuals have when it comes to the manifestations or expressions of ethnicity. Waters (1990) explores the concept of "option" as the basis for constructing ethnic identification, emphasising that individuals selectively utilise information and

knowledge about their family background within historical, structural, and personal constraints.

To be sure, there are important differences between the case of Cretans in Turkey and that of the White ethnics in the US. The case of Cretan Muslims is a case of forced or, at least, top-administered and assisted migration and there was no continuous influx (not even the possibility of it) of immigrants as was the case with many ethnic groups in America. Moreover, political and social processes in the two countries in respect of ethnicity and immigration are by no means comparable. However, two important similarities can be pointed out, mostly related to present dynamics: despite the very different trajectories, the once migrant or refugee status has given way to full-fledged assimilation. Furthermore, both migrant groups can be classified as advantageous within their respective societies, and their identity is not currently considered "threatening or divisive" (Alba, 1981, p. 98).

1.2 Existing studies and rationale for the study

The issue of the 1923 Population Exchange has been overlooked in Turkish national history, as "the exchanged Muslims were expected to melt into the Turkish national identification pot, constructed and consolidated with official history" (Iğsız, 2008, p. 456). The affected populations were largely "forgotten" (Yıldırım, 2006b) until the 1990s when nationalist historiography started to be questioned. In this context the population exchange became one of the most revisited topics (Iğsız, 2018, p. 117). Since the late 1990s, and particularly in the first decades of the twenty-first century, historical studies have explored the diplomatic aspects of the population exchange, the resettlement of the exchanged populations in Anatolia, and the impact of the exchange on Turkey (e.g., Arı, 2003b; Aktar, 2003; Yıldırım, 2006a; Emgili, 2011; Çomu, 2016b; Şenışık, 2016). However, the absence of sociological and anthropological studies has limited our understanding of various aspects, such as the political inclinations of the exchangees, their identities, and the process of their social, economic, and cultural adaptation (Arı, 2003a, pp. 390-391).

The end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed an increased interest in studies (by both Turkish and international scholars)

that include oral accounts by the exchangees or their descendants and shed light on the experiences of forced displacement, on the adaptation process in their new homeland and the interactions with the local or other refugee or exchangee populations. Kaplanoğlu (1999) examines the impact of the population exchange on the region of Bursa and shares the first-hand experiences of the exchangees before and after the exchange. Köker & Keskiner's (2003) study, which includes findings from research conducted in 1998 in two towns near Izmir, is one such study that focuses on the personal experiences and memories of the refugees. Emgili (2011), in her study on the province of Mersin, combines information from historical archives with narratives by exchangees from Thessaloniki and Crete who settled in the region, focusing on the settlement and adaptation process of the exchangees.

Kolluoğlu (2013) concentrates on Izmir, specifically on the changes that exchange brought to the social and economic fabric of the region. The study draws attention to friction that was created between the locals and the exchangees, as well as among different exchangee groups. Tekelioğlu (2014) on the other hand, in his study on exchangees and refugees from Crete and Thessaloniki in Izmir, presents a picture where migrants had no problems with each other after settlement. In his research he explores differences and similarities between the two groups in terms of resettlement to Turkey, values, social mobility, and their perceptions of self today. Bayındır-Goularas (2012), in her work on exchangee villages in the region of Marmara, Northwestern Turkey, examines the spaces that contribute to the preservation of identities and cultures.

Karakılıç Dağdelen (2015) investigates different generations of exchangees in a village in the Black Sea province of Samsun. She explores varying levels of engagement and identification with their origins, focusing on the role of everyday practices, structural conditions, and social memory. The exchangees who settled in a town outside Istanbul from the Thessaloniki area are the subject of Paköz Türkeli's (2016) work. She delves into the second and third generation and explores the impact of the exchange on their lives and whether their identities were still preserved at the time of the research. A collective volume edited by Hirschon (2003a), to which some of the works cited in this overview also belong, examines different aspects of the exchange in both Greece and Turkey. Important contributions are also included in the

published proceedings of two conferences organised by the Lausanne Treaty Emigrants Foundation[6] (Pekin, 2005; Gönül, et al. 2016). Collections of oral histories also shed light on the experiences before and after displacement (Yalçin, 1998/1999; Özsoy, 2007a, 2007b, 2014; Güvenç & Rigas, 2015).

There are also studies that concentrate on the Cretan Muslim population. Koufopoulou (2003), in her study on Cretan Muslims in Cunda, Ayvalik, explores the reformulation of their "ethnic identity" after resettlement in Turkey. She points to the prominence of the Cretan identity as well as the cultural differences between Cretan Muslims and the exchangees from the island of Lesvos. Yılmaz (2011) also studied Cretans in Ayvalik, focusing on their adaptation to the new social structure. The study examines the allocation of properties and interactions with other refugee and exchangee groups, particularly the Lesviots, over the years. Sepetçioğlu (2011) conducted a comprehensive ethnohistorical analysis of the Cretans who were settled in the village of Osmaniye in Davutlar in 1902. The study explores the development and transformation of the Cretan identity and various aspects of Cretan culture across generations.

Şenesen (2011) presents aspects of the folklore culture of the Cretan Muslims who settled in the Çukurova region. Suda Güler (2012) through oral history interviews among the descendants of Cretan refugees explores the reasons that led people to flee, and their perceptions of Çanakkale, their new place of settlement. Psaradaki's (2022) study is the most recent study on the descendants of Cretan Muslims in Turkey. She explores the role of memory in the construction of the current aspects of Cretanness among the second- and third-generation Cretans in Bodrum. One more study on Bodrum, by Mansur (1972) deserves mention here. Although not focused exclusively on Cretans, it provides information about marriage strategies, family relations, economic and social activities, and interactions with the others, based on ethnographic research.[7]

[6] The Lausanne Treaty Emigrants Foundation (Lozan Mübadilleri Vakfı) is one of the first and more important initiatives by civil society in Turkey engaging with the compulsory population exchange. Established in 2000, it aimed, among other things, to open up the debate about the memory of displacement (Karakatsanis, 2014, p. 119).

[7] Two studies on the village of İhsaniye in Antalya, where Cretan Muslims were relocated in the Ottoman Empire, provide insights into the life in the village and, by implication, the experiences of Cretan Muslims in the 1950s (Tütengil, 1954; Yurduseven, 1960).

These studies are complemented by two collective volumes on Crete and the Cretan Muslims (Sepetçioğlu & Pullukçuoğlu Yapucu, 2019; Özgün, 2019) and the publication of the proceedings of an international symposium organised in Kusadasi in 2015 (Adıyeke & Sepetçioğlu, 2015). The works by Erkal (2008) and Bilgehan (2019), both second-generation Cretans in Turkey, provide a record of cultural aspects combined with personal accounts. Moreover, a number of historical studies focus on the Cretan Muslim refugees to Anatolia during Ottoman Empire, the settlement process, and the years following their resettlement (e.g. Şenışık, 2013; Dayar, 2017; Menekşe, 2018).

Studies that encompass first-generation exchangees focus on the process of displacement and resettlement. These studies provide evidence of complications in property allocation, often resulting in conflicts between exchangee groups and the indigenous populations. The lack of knowledge of Turkish language knowledge by some of the exchangees meant additional issues with adaptation and communication barriers when interacting with local authorities and asserting their rights. In addition to the loss of economic capital, resettlement also often led to the dispersion of members of the same family to different regions in Turkey, while there are also references of family members who stayed in Greece. Few cases where the affected population was able to have some agency regarding their place of settlement have also been recorded. Immigrants brought their own culture and traditions, skills and everyday practices with them. While some were able to utilise their skills in the new environment, at most instances the conditions at the relocation site did not align with their existing skills.

The cultural differences between the locals and the newcomers, as well as between different exchangee and refugee groups, often resulted in situations of mutual "social closure" (Karakasidou, 1997), which in several cases persisted until the 1970s (e.g. endogamy, gathering at separate coffee houses). While cultural difference has largely been replaced by assimilation and integration, the diverse origins of individuals continue to hold varying degrees of relevance and manifest in different forms in the lives of later generations, and this aspect of their identities has not been discarded. At this juncture, I would like to provide a more detailed overview of recent studies, cited briefly above as well, that delve into the relationships of second and third generations

with the origins, cultures, and identities of their ancestors, as the scope of these studies is more relevant for this thesis.

Bayındır-Goularas (2012) argues that the coffee houses, in the villages, where exchangees were settled have played a significant role in preserving the identity and memory among the later generations of exchangees. She also highlights recent initiatives such as the establishment of voluntary associations and foundations aimed at preserving the exchangee identity and culture, fostering connections between later generations and their past, and contributing to the expansion of knowledge. The advent and widespread use of the internet has further complemented this preservation effort by providing an accessible platform, reaching a wider audience.

Karakılıç Dağdelen (2015) discusses how structural conditions, everyday practices and social memory relate to each other in the production of what she calls "exchangee habitus". She does not make an explicit differentiation between generations; she instead differentiates between "conscious and indifferent villagers", "interested villagers" and "committed villagers" according to the different levels of engagement with the origins. She also argues that shifts in everyday practices influence the way social memory is transferred across generations and consequently the identification processes of the descendants of the exchangees.

Paköz Türkeli (2016) observes a "silent period" experienced by the first generation, which seems to have distanced their children from their migrant identities, disrupting the transmission of values and traditions. However, the third generation, having completed the transition from "being the 'other' to being a 'local'", demonstrates a renewed interest in their origins. This increased interest takes place along historical and sociological processes and is further nurtured by the enhanced accessibility of knowledge.

Sepetçioğlu (2011) observes the decline in the knowledge of the Cretan dialect among later generations of Cretan Muslims, which has led to a decline in other cultural elements that relate to language, such as music. He places the distancing from the Bektashi faith within the same framework, as the religious rituals performed by the Bektashi Cretans were conducted in the Cretan dialect. Food emerges as the most enduring and the most emphasised aspect of Cretanness among the Cretans in Davutlar. Furthermore, he argues that a "rediscovery" of the Cretan identity is taking

place, facilitated by the widespread use of the internet and the establishment of foundations, and that the Cretan identity is endowed with renewed meanings that may differ from how previous generations perceived it.

Psaradaki (2022) examines the descendants of Cretan Muslims from the perspective of memory, exploring the elements that define Cretanness in the present. She identifies memory as being embedded in objects, artifacts, and photographs that decorate the houses at the "Cretan neighbourhood". Additionally, memory is found in the realm of food and its preparation, the usage of the Cretan dialect, and the recollection of children's songs and *mantinades*, as well as on different traits and behaviours articulated by her informants.

The above studies have been conducted at different sites and approach the later generations of exchangees and refugees from different lenses. My thesis contributes to the existing literature on exchangees in general, with a particular focus on Cretan Muslims. It will exclusively examine later generations of Cretan Muslims and the expressions and perceptions of Cretanness today, as they deserve to be studied in more depth on their own. Additionally, this thesis goes beyond a mere investigation of the current state of affairs and the extent to which the culture of the ancestors has been preserved. It brings together the findings and observations under a conceptual framework that I refer to as "symbolic Cretanness". It highlights in a systematised what defines Cretanness today, with a focus on public expressions of Cretanness. Furthermore, this thesis explores and analyses the meaning(s) attributed to identifications with Cretanness and contextualise them within present-day Turkey. It will delve into the underlying processes of my informants' narratives, refraining from accepting them at face value, which is a gap detected in existing studies.

The present study is the first study to collect oral narratives from two distinct sites, recognising the interplay between large-scale processes and unique contextual circumstances that can lead to diverse experiences. Consequently, it offers more comprehensive answers to the research questions at hand. Ayvalik and Mersin have been previously studied, but the focus of those studies differs significantly from the present study. Emgili's (2011) study on Mersin primarily examines the post-resettlement years. Yilmaz's (2011) study on Ayvalik, although taking a diachronic approach, primarily focuses on the conditions of the first generation. Koufopoulou's

(2003) study on Cunda has a contemporary focus but relies on fieldwork conducted in the 1990s. As the following pages will reveal, both sites provide rich material for gaining an in-depth understanding of how Cretanness operates today and unveiling its different dynamics.

1.3 Clarifying some terms

In literature, the Muslim community that emerged in Crete during Ottoman rule is referred to as "Cretan Muslims". My interlocutors call themselves "Cretans" (*Giritliler* in Turkish) or "Cretan Turks" (*Girit Türkleri* in Turkish). Alternatively, they may also use the Greek equivalents *Kritikoi* or *Tourkokrites/Tourkokritikoi*, respectively.[8] In this thesis I will primarily refer to them as "Cretans". I will use the term "Cretan Muslims" when referring to the historical entity and the term "Cretan Turk" in quotations from respondents who prefer the term or when necessary to avoid possible misunderstandings.

Cretan Muslims were speakers of the Cretan dialect of Modern Greek, which displays a blend of Italo-Romance (Venetian) and Turkish loans (Ralli, 2016). When my informants referred to the language spoken by themselves or their ancestors, they used the term *Rumca* or *Giritlice/Giritçe*[9]. *Rumca* is usually used to denote the Greek spoken in the Ottoman territories outside of the Greek state.[10] The term *Giritlice* or *Giritçe*, can be translated as the language of the Cretans or the language of Crete respectively.[11] When referring to their language in Greek they opt for the term *Kritika* (Cretan) and less for the word *Romeika*, which is the equivalent of *Rumca*. I will use

[8] In the nineteenth century, Cretan Muslims were known in Greek as *Tourkoi* (Turks) (Herzfeld, 2003, p. 304). The term *Tourkokrites* is likely a continuation of their nineteenth-century name. Their self-identification as *Girit Türkleri* today encompasses an emphasis on their ethnicity, as well. For a comprehensive discussion of the historical itinerary of the name "Turk" see Ergul (2012).
[9] The suffix -ce/-ca/-çe/-ça in Turkish is used to indicate the language.

[10] As Ergul (2012, p. 630) explains: "Rum was generally used by the Ottomans, and now by the Turks, for the Orthodox people of Greek origin in Anatolia and its surroundings. Etymologically, it derives from the term "Roman", the people of the Eastern Roman Empire".

[11] To my knowledge these terms are used mostly by the Cretans and are not established words in the Turkish language.

the terms “Cretan Greek” or simply “Cretan” when discussing the language spoken by the Cretans, referring specifically to the Cretan dialect. [12]

Another set of terms that requires clarification pertains to the way populations from the former Ottoman lands are referred to. Hirschon (2003a, p. xiii) explains that “*muhacir* (refugee) has been the main word in Turkish referring to the forcibly displaced entering the Ottoman Empire and Turkey from the Balkans and the Caucasus, and *mübadil* the main word referring specifically to the 1923 exchangees”. It should be noted that this is not only an issue in literature but also a matter of self-identification of the affected populations. Those who were expelled from Greece in accordance with the Lausanne Convention often tend to emphasise their “exchangee” identity in order to differentiate themselves from those who had to flee (see, for instance, Koufopoulou, 2003; Kolluoğlu, 2013; Sepetçioğlu, 2014). According to Kolluoğlu (2013, p. 542),

> *By differentiating themselves from other migrant groups, the exchangees were attempting to create a unique space for themselves to cope with the traumatic experience of displacement. This self-appellation also reminded both themselves and the locals that they were forcibly brought to Turkey and were not only the rightful owners of the property but were also rightfully entitled to their space within the Turkish state.*

The Cretan Muslims belong to both categories, as there are those who were displaced under the Lausanne Convention and those who had fled to Anatolia before. I was aware of the distinction between *muhacir* and *mübadil* in Turkish and attentive to it during fieldwork. However, despite encountering some limited comments highlighting this distinction, identifications denoting the Cretan origins prevailed over this differentiation. In this thesis, as an attempt to encompass both categories, I will primarily use the generic terms “emigrant” and “immigrant”. The terms “exchangee” and “refugee” will also be used when referring to the specific historical experience, or when those terms are preferred in cited sources.

[12] It should be noted that the Cretan dialect itself exhibits variations and is not a homogeneous whole (Chairetakis, 2020).

1.4 Chapters overview

Chapter 2 (*Cretan Muslims in Crete and Turkey*) aims to place the Cretan Muslims in a historical framework, focusing on the origins of the Muslim population on the island of Crete. It also provides a brief history of Crete after its occupation by the Ottoman until the signing of the Lausanne Treaty. The second part of the chapter briefly discusses the resettlement process and the challenges faced by refugees and exchangees, with a specific emphasis on Mersin and Ayvalik.

In Chapter 3 (*Theories and concepts*) I outline the theoretical and conceptual framework on which the analysis and the interpretation of findings are based. Chapter 4 (*Methodology*) explains the choices of Mersin and Ayvalik as sites of the research. It includes information on the fieldwork process, an overview of the interview questions and an analysis of methodological considerations that arose from the fieldwork. I also delve into my positionality during and after fieldwork and touch upon the limitations of the thesis.

In Chapter 5 (*Symbolic Cretanness*) I discuss the context in which public expressions of Cretanness began to occur in Turkey. This context is marked by the questioning of official narratives, the emergence of different actors in the social and political terrain, the renewed interest in familial past, and the normalisation of relations with Greece. I argue that Cretanness found a place for public expression within this context, which has paralleled its transformation into symbolic Cretanness. I present an analysis of its main pillars, as they emerged from the fieldwork, and argue that central elements of the transformed Cretanness are visibility, an intermittent engagement with origins and the prominence of symbols, the most significant of which is food.

Chapter 6 (*Meanings of Cretanness*) argues that symbolic Cretanness is laden with meaning, which is where its relevance for today's Cretans lies. The first section concentrates on the sense of distinctiveness that accompanies my informants' identification with Cretanness. This distinctiveness goes beyond mere differentiation and uniqueness, encompassing a sense of superiority. Cretans construct their distinctiveness by emphasising their values, lifestyle, and egalitarian gender relations. Their dietary choices further enhance their sense of distinctiveness and superiority. In the second part of the chapter, the focus shifts to the affective dimension of symbolic

Cretanness, more specifically, the concept of "feeling Cretan" and the emotion of pride. "Feeling Cretan" denotes a positive association and an abstract connection with the origins. The feeling of pride, which also aligns with the aspect of visibility, is part of the transformed nature of Cretanness, as the later has been detached from its previous negative associations as a threat to the Turkish national homogeneity.

In Chapter 7 (*Recognition*) I delve into the differences observed between Ayvalik and Mersin, and I interpret them under the prism of a need for recognition in the case of Cretans in Mersin. I argue that this need has paralleled the visible expressions of symbolic Cretanness in Mersin, while the absence of a similar need in Ayvalik accounts for a less active pursuit of public articulations. The need for recognition was identified in the narratives of my informants, who expressed their discomfort with the lack of knowledge and the misunderstandings they have encountered from their fellow residents of Mersin, as well as their desire to present themselves in public as Cretans, and simultaneously as Turks and Muslim. I also detect a connection between the need for recognition and a process of self-awareness that has been taking place in Mersin. To explain this difference between Ayvalik and Mersin, I consider the contextual factors, that is the residential concentration and the degree of diversification of everyday interactions in the two sites, as well as their distinct geographical positions.

In Chapter 8 (*Conclusion*) I recapitulate my arguments and summarise the main findings, connecting the points between the different chapters. I also highlight the contribution of this research and include suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

CRETAN MUSLIMS IN CRETE AND TURKEY

The purpose of the present chapter is to put Cretan Muslims in a historical context. The information included in the chapter is based on secondary sources. The first part of the chapter includes a fragmented history of Crete mostly in connection to the Cretan Muslim community and the relations with the Christians. It aims to provide an overview of the origins of the Muslim population on the island of Crete, and to highlight some of the most significant historical events that are relevant to the itinerary of the Cretan Muslims.

The Muslim experience has changed throughout history, particularly in response to political and social changes and shifts in the balance of power on the island. It is important to note that it should not be viewed as a monolithic entity; as Kostopoulou (2009, pp. 306-307) argues: "The Muslims of Crete were not all the same. They presented sound differences of social, educational, linguistic, and financial status; cultural and ideological practices; and patterns of self-identification". The community had been constantly influenced by larger policies, local conditions, and its own agency in shaping its fate. Considering that the Muslims on the island had existed as a part of an Ottoman province for more than two centuries,[13] had been a part of Autonomous Crete for 25 years and citizens of the Greek state for just over a decade, it becomes obvious that the Muslim community in Crete underwent significant transformations throughout its history.

The second part of the chapter traces the lives of the Muslim emigrants after their settlement to the Anatolian part of the Ottoman Empire and later to the Republic of

[13] According to Anastasopoulos (2008, p. 124), "Crete's incorporation into the Ottoman realm manifests certain peculiarities" that lie in its distance from the centres of power and the accessibility issues faced due to its geography. Besides that, Crete can also be seen as a "closed system", as an island with "strong local identity, in which local elites and officials (…) enjoy[ed] more independence from state control". Dimitriadis (2007, p. 210) draws attention to cases of conflict of interest between local Muslims and outsiders and refers to "a strong sense of local sentiment", due to the island's geographic isolation.

Turkey. It includes brief information about the settlement process and the plight of the immigrants with a focus on Mersin and Ayvalik.

2.1 The Muslims of Crete

2.1.1 Population

The Muslim presence on the island of Crete starts with the conquest of the island by the Ottoman Empire. Crete had been under Venetian rule from 1204 to1669. It was conquered by the Ottomans in 1669 after the 1645-1669 Cretan War, the war between the Venetian Republic with the Ottoman Empire. The western parts of the island had been conquered by the Ottoman forces in 1645 and the conquest of the whole island was completed in 1669.

It seems that the origins of the Muslim population vary a lot, while we cannot talk about stable religious categories, as conversions to Islam but also to Christianity took place during the whole period of the Ottoman rule, often dependent on the balance of power on the island. The political developments and the conflicts on the island kept affecting both the size of the population and the religious constitution of it.

The central administration of the Ottoman empire did not follow the practice of resettling population from Anatolia to the island (Adıyeke, 2015; Greene, 2000). Apart from the around 300 soldiers and public officials who were sent to Crete, there was a small number of dervishes who participated in the conquest of the island, then stayed there and founded *tekkes* (lodges of Muslim orders) or settled after the Ottoman conquest (Adıyeke, 2015; Anastasopoulos, 2005). The existence of a considerable Muslim population around 100 years after the conquest is attributed to the conversions during the 1645-1669 Cretan War between the Venetians and the Ottomans and in the period after the Ottoman conquest. Conversions were both individual and mass (Detorakis, 1990). During the Cretan War, a large number of the population converted to Islam and fought against the Venetians, supporting the Ottoman forces (Dimitriadis, 2007, p. 206). Following the conquest of Crete, a great number of conversions lead to the formation of the body of the local janissaries[14] (Adıyeke 2005, p. 369; Detorakis

[14] The janissary army was established in the fourteenth century. The corps were recruited from among the Christian children of the Empire, who were trained as soldiers (Hasluck, 1929, p. 485). The janissary

1990). In fact, Crete became "the island par excellence of the janissaries" (Greene, 2000, p. 33).[15] Conversions were also an attempt, both by Orthodox and Catholic elements, to benefit from the new administration and improve their status (Peponakis, 1994, pp. 24-27), as well as a result of oppression, although on a limited scale (Anastasopoulos, Kolovos & Sarigiannis, 2017, p. 175).[16] Marriages between Christians and Muslims can also be listed among the reasons for the increase of the Muslim population on the island (Andriotis, 2004, p. 63)[17]. Other Muslim groups, such as Ethiopians and Arabs from Egypt and Benghazi, who would work as slaves or in general in low status jobs[18] were also recorded among the Muslims of Crete.

The composition of the Muslim population is not exactly known, but it seems that the religious orders played in general a crucial role in the conversions of the local population. During the conquest of the island, religious orders' dervishes joined forces with the ruling-military class. The establishment of *tekkes* immediately after the conquest facilitated and at the same time accelerated the transition to Islam (Kara, 2008, pp. 78-79). The Bektashi order, which had in general undertaken the task to convert recently conquered populations to Islam (Doja, 2006, p. 429), had a great presence in the towns, with the exception of Chania were the Mevlevi sect was dominant (Peponakis, 1994, p. 111).[19] The syncretic version of Islam offered by the sects made it easier for people to convert to Islam without having to completely

corps, which had long been "an integral part of the Ottoman machinery of conquest," (Mazower, 2000, p. 28) were abolished in 1826.

[15] Kostopoulou (2009, p. 36), based on foreign sources, argues that it is plausible to suggest that Crete was in fact ruled by the local janissary regime rather than by an absent and abstract central administration.

[16] Anastasopoulos, Kolovos & Sarigiannis (2017, p. 176) emphasise that "the cultural identity of those who converted to Islam and their descendants, including Greek as their mother tongue, does not seem to have differed significantly from that of their Christian compatriots, while the large number of converts to Islam meant that those who made this decision were not socially ostracised".

[17] Nuri Adiyeke (2003, p. 21) argues that the practice of inter-communal marriage among Muslim and Christians was a common practice in Crete, which in this respect constituted an exception compared to the rest of the Ottoman territories. Nevertheless, the increase of violence after the Greek revolt of 1821 lead to a decrease of such marriages.

[18] According to Fournarakis (1929, p. 15) "the original Cretan Turks" refrained from working at "low status jobs" which were undertaken by Arabs from Benghazi and Ethiopians.

[19] There is a debatable, but also to some extent acknowledged, affiliation between the Bektashi order and the Janissaries (Kafadar, 2007)

abandon their old traditions. By incorporating elements of their existent culture into their practices, the sects allowed the local population to avoid the discomfort of entering a completely different cultural circle, thus facilitating their conversion to Islam (Ocak, 2001, p. 170).

Adıyeke (2005, p. 368) drawing from Western sources argues that 1/3 or 1/4 of the local population had converted to Islam by the second half of the seventeenth century. In the middle of the eighteenth century the Muslim population on the island is calculated as around 200,000 (Adıyeke 2005, p.3 67). According to another source in 1779 the Muslim population on the island is around 65,000 and corresponds to the 1/3 of the total population (Peponakis, 1994, p. 38). Detorakis (1990, p. 287) argues that at the end of the eighteenth century the total population of the island is calculated as 350,000 among which 200,000 were Christians and 150,000 Muslims. The suppression of a crucial revolt by the Christians against the Ottomans in 1770[20] caused a new wave of conversions to Islam during the period of 1790-1821, which led to the increase of the Muslim population (Peponakis, 1994, p. 51). In the eve of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the Muslim population was equal to the Christian population or according to some sources even higher (Peponakis, 1994, p. 53). Detorakis (1990, p. 287) based on Greek sources calculates the numbers in the same period as 113,320 Christians and 99,764 Muslims. Peponakis (1994) argues that during that period there was also a large number of crypto-Christians. However, their exact number cannot be known due to the mixed Christian and Muslim habits, especially by the Bektashi Muslims.

According to Adıyeke (2005, p. 372), conversions to Islam continued in a decreasing pace until the nineteenth century and stopped during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The demographic constitution of the island after the Greek War of Independence is not exactly known. However, it can be said that the Cretan population at the beginning of 1830s was not more than 110.000 – 140.000, among which the Muslim population is calculated as the 1/3 (Peponakis 1994, p. 70). The Greek War of Independence, along with the emergence of ethnic consciousness and the dominance of the Christians in the rural areas during the war years contributed to

[20] The first revolution by the Christian population was the 1770 revolt, orchestrated by Daskalogiannis, as part of the Orlov revolt that broke out in some of the territories that now constitute Greece.

the strengthening of the Christian element on the island. The decreasing tendency of the Muslim population continued, especially in the villages, throughout the nineteenth century.

The constant revolts of the second half of the nineteenth century and the violence against the Christians in the cities and against the Muslims in the villages forced both communities to mobility. The Christian population moved towards the rural areas or mainland Greece (Andriotis 2004, p. 68). The Muslim population moved to urban areas, while around 40,000 Cretan Muslims, mostly from rural areas, abandoned Crete (Detorakis, 1990, p. 458). The Ottoman rule ended in 1897 and Crete continued its life as an autonomous state until 1913 when it was annexed to the Kingdom of Greece. A large number of Muslims left Crete in 1898 and 1899 heading to Anatolia, Rhodes, Kos, Syria, North Africa and Lebanon as well as to other parts of the Ottoman Empire (Andriotis, 2004, p. 76; Şenışık, 2013, p. 101). A small number of Muslims later returned to Crete, to be eventually expelled again under the populations exchange between Turkey and Greece.

In the 1900 census the Cretan Muslim community was decreased by half compared to 1881 and numbered 33,496 (Detorakis, 1990, p. 458). The Muslim population of the three big cities, however, dropped only by 13% (Andriotis, 2004, p. 73)[21]. According to other sources, in 1912 20% of the Cretan population was Muslim (Tsitselikis, 2005, p. 345). In any case the Muslims of Crete gradually declined in numbers as the massive Muslim emigration from Crete continued during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and the First World War (1914–1918) as well (Kostopoulou, 2012, p. 131). The final migration wave occurred within the framework of the compulsory exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece. The numbers vary according to the source: 19,121 (Peponakis 1994, p. 100), 23,821 (Andriotis, 2004, p. 84) or 33,000 (Detorakis, 1990, p. 466).

Before proceeding to the next section, let me also refer to the language of the Cretan Muslims. Fournarakis (1929, p. 5) argues that although the mother tongue of Cretan Muslims was Greek, this does not mean that they also had writing and reading skills in Greek. Moreover, often they would write Greek with "Turkish" characters.

[21] Despite the Ottoman Empire's political retreat from the island, Muslims remained the majority in the urban centres of Crete (Kostopoulou, 2012).

Kostopoulou (2009, p. 328) notes that nineteenth-century sources describe Cretan Muslims as a Greek-speaking population. However, she makes a differentiation between the local dialect and standard Greek. According to her, although the majority of locals seems to have been able to use the Greek language in everyday life, educated Christians were the only ones who mastered it (Kostopoulou, 2009, p. 329). Tsitselikis (2005, p. 345) mentions that as of 1912, the Cretans Muslim community was one of the few Greek-speaking Muslim communities in Greece.[22] The Greek language became obligatory at the Muslim schools after Crete's annexation to Greece.

2.1.2 A brief history of Crete and the Cretan Muslims

As shown above boundaries between the Christian and the Muslim population were not always clear, and the religious composition of the island was constantly changing. The situation of the Cretan Muslims and the relations with the Christians were often affected by the political developments on the island, the rise of Greek nationalism and changes in the Ottoman Empire. Since the historical details are beyond the focus of this thesis, I will strategically focus on some developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821 lead to a revolutionary mobilisation on Crete as well in the summer of 1821. In 1824 the Sultan asked the governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali Pasha, for support, who managed to put an end to the Cretan revolt. As a result, Mehmed Ali was given the governorship of Crete. The Egyptian administration (1830-1841) took steps to modernise the island's structures, to reform society across all levels, and to eliminate military anarchy. The 1830-1841 Egyptian rule in Crete and its relatively higher tolerance towards the Christians led to conversions back to Christianity and, therefore to a decrease in the number of Muslims (Peponakis, 1994, p. 71-72). The granting of more rights to non-Muslims by the Ottoman administration during the *Tanzimat* era (the period of reforms) and especially

[22] The mother tongue of the Muslims living in Macedonia and on the islands of East Aegean was generally Turkish. There were, however, some Greek speakers in Western Macedonia, Bulgarian speakers in Eastern Macedonia and Wallachian speakers in Central Macedonia. In Epirus they were speaking Greek and Albanian. In Northern Greece it was also possible to find Slavic and Romani language speakers. In Thessaloniki there was also a number of Muslims (*dönmeler*) who spoke Spanish. See Tsitselikis, 2005, p. 345.

with the reform edict of 1856 seems to have opened the way for some more conversions to Christianity, the exact number of which is unknown (Peponakis, 1994). In 1866 a large-scale revolt took place. In 1868 the sultan declared a ceasefire which was followed by a number of administrative concessions which constituted the base for the so-called Organic Act.[23] After the 1866 revolt the chasm between the two communities became bigger, and the conflict took a religious dimension (Andriotis, 2004, p. 68). Russian Empire's war against the Ottoman Empire in 1877, the parallel uprisings that broke out in Crete and other provinces, and the weak position of the Ottoman Empire after the war lead to some concessions on the island in favour of the Christian but to the detriment of the Muslim population.

The Pact of Halepa, signed in 1878, ended the war in Crete and provided for certain fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of religion and language. It stipulated that the island's representation would now include a local Chamber and a governor who could be Muslim or Christian, and who would have the authority to organise local institutions and security forces. It was also officially acknowledged that the Christian population constituted the majority, and as such, they would be properly represented in the local administration (Kostopoulou, 2009, p. 97). According to Peponakis (1994, p. 99) the increased benefits for the Christians resulted in a number of individual conversions to Christianity in some villages. The positive impact of the Pact of Halepa lasted for ten years, and in this period, Crete became "one of the most privileged provinces of the Ottoman Empire" (Şenisik, 2011, p. 79), while the Pact in a way "prepared the grounds for the island's further 'Hellenisation'" (Kostopoulou, 2009, p. 97). Towards the ends of the nineteenth century, the conflicts between the Christians and the Muslims continued and became increasingly tensed (Kara, 2008, p. 18-19).

Between 1895 and 1898, numerous homes and crops owned primarily by Muslims were destroyed and what the Christians aimed at was the final expulsion of the Muslims from their homes in the countryside. In the summer of 1896, serious incidents occurred in the countryside of Heraklion. Six months later, a mass slaughter

[23] The Organic Act envisaged, among others, that Christians would be appointed to the central and provincial administration, participate in the courts together with Muslims, recognised tax reliefs and the equality of the Greek and Turkish languages (Detorakis 1990, p. 374).

of Muslims took place in the area of Sitia, which was followed by another mass slaughter in Heraklion, this time of Christians (Andriotis, 2004, p. 71-72).

The autonomy of Crete was proclaimed in 1897, as a result of the war between Greece and the Ottoman Empire and with the support of the Great powers. Under the supervision of the Great Powers (France, Great Britain, Russian Empire, and Italy), the Ottoman troops were forced to evacuate the island and Prince George, son of the King of Greece, was appointed High Commissioner of Crete (Kostopoulou, 2012, p.131). Autonomy was granted to Cretans as a temporary "experiment of peaceful coexistence", contingent upon the cooperation of both communities with the new regime. Within this framework, a number of local Muslims cooperated with the new authorities and occupied some of the most prestigious administrative offices (Kostopoulou, 2009, p. 309).

The autonomous Cretan state moved on to the consolidation of the rights of the Muslim community, while many Christian politicians aimed at a peaceful coexistence. The participation rate of Muslims in the administrative bodies and the Cretan Assembly was quite high. The Constitution of 1899 also established religious freedom, while special laws regulated the organisation of the Muslim community and the education of Muslim children (Andriotis 2004, p. 77-78). Within the new state of affairs, the Muslim community of Crete was only abstractly linked to the Ottoman Empire (Kostopoulou, 2012, p. 138). However, the conflicts between the two communities were frequent in the villages either due to local issues or as a result of the souring of Greek-Turkish relations (Andriotis 2004, p. 79). As Christian voices about union with Greece and Greek nationalism were being spread in Crete, Muslim culture was being placed in a position of ever lower importance (Kostopoulou, 2009).

The annexation of Crete to Greece was stipulated in the London Peace Treaty signed between the Ottoman and the Balkan states on May 30, 1913, after the end of the First Balkan War. The island was eventually annexed to Greece in December 1913. The years that followed were again characterised both by moments of tension and insecurity, but also moment of rapprochement between the two communities. As Kostopoulou (2012, p. 142) argues the Greek state appeared less concerned than before with Muslim communal rights. Muslims were now a religious minority and were organised in religious orders and other Islamic organisations (Kara, 2008). At the same

time, there were also those who despite the political change appeared more and more concerned with proving their loyalty to Greece (Kostopoulou, 2012). Clark (2006, p. 31) describes the situation on the island as follows:

> *By 1922, after a decade of Greek-Turkish warfare in other places, relations between the Christians and Muslims of Crete remained tense but in most places, there was no open violence. Those Muslims who had stayed on included those who were most deeply attached to Crete, and who continued to believe that despite everything it might be possible to go on co-existing with their Christian neighbours.*

Gökaçtı (2002, p. 139) presents a different picture, arguing that Muslims in Crete and other regions of Greece, "wished to migrate to Turkey as soon as possible, without thinking of anything else, and save themselves from the negative conditions they faced". In any case, their fate, along with the fate of hundreds of thousands of people, was once again to be directly affected by the course of the relations between Turkey and Greece and by both countries' nation-state projects for ethnic homogeneity.

The Cretan Muslim presence on the island was terminated by the signing of the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Populations between Turkey and Greece in Lausanne on January 30, 1923. Following the violent conflict of the Turkish and Greek armies in Anatolia and the defeat of the latter, an international peace conference was held in Lausanne on November 21, 1922, with the participation of Greece, Turkey and the Allies, namely Great Britain, France and Italy. Greece and Turkey agreed on the exchange of Muslims of Greek nationality (excluding the Muslim populations of Western Thrace) for the Greek Orthodox population of Turkey (excluding the Greeks of Istanbul, and of the islands of Imbros and Tenedos).[24] The Turkish definition of minority was adopted by the conference and the criterion to determine groups subject to exchange was that of religious affiliation (Yıldırım, 2006a, p. 110). The agreement on the population exchange "canonise[d] a *de facto* situation" (Yıldırım, 2006a, p. 83) of the movement of the Greek Orthodox to Greece during the Turkish-Greek war and constant migration movement of Muslim populations from the former Ottoman territories to Anatolia.

[24] See Hirschon (2003b) for an overview of the background and the details of the Convention.

2.2 Cretans in Anatolia – The first years

As shown above, the immigration of Cretan Muslims to Anatolia took place in two large waves: during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and during the 1920s. The Cretan Muslims who took refuge in Anatolia during the first wave are labelled (and label themselves) as "Old Cretans" (*Eski Giritliler*)[25], while the Cretans who were resettled as exchangees are the "New Cretans" (*Yeni Giritliler*). The Old Cretans appear to have left Crete through a combination of their own means and organized efforts with the support of the Ottoman government. From Ottoman records, it is understood that Izmir was the first stop for the Cretan Muslims, who were afterwards sent by train and ship to other territories of the Ottoman Empire, in Anatolia and beyond (Sepetçioğlu, 2011; Şenışık, 2013).

The task of the resettlement of the Old Cretans was undertaken by the Ottoman Migration Commission, a special commission established in order to deal with the settlement problems of the refugees who would flee from the former Ottoman territories in Crimea, the Caucasus and the Balkans (Sepetçioğlu, 2011, p. 116-117) The Commission was responsible for selecting the settlement sites and allocating land to refugees, as well as facilitating aid and support services (Kale, 2014). The Ottoman state, which had been dealing with different waves of migration, was not indifferent towards demographic and economic considerations, towards the possible implications the Cretan Muslims could have to the inter-communal relations and the ethno-religious composition of the areas they were settled, but also towards objections voiced by the Cretan Muslims themselves regarding their settlement (Şenışık, 2013).

The signing of the Convention for the Exchange of the Populations led to the resettlement of approximately 400,000-500,000 Muslims in Turkey and of around 1,500,000 Greek Orthodox in Greece (Kolluoğlu, 2013, p. 539). Clark (p. 32) describes vividly the arrival of refugees to Ayvalik:

> *The newcomers were greeted on arrival by the booming sound of the traditional drums or daouli; the Turkish villages near the port were hailing the arrival of co-religionists who like them, had suffered at the hands of Greek Christians. That was their formal welcome; but as the Cretans settled down in the solid homes of the town's former Christian residents, they were*

[25] The Old Cretans are also called "Sultani" to emphasise that they immigrated during the Ottoman period (Sepetçioğlu, & Sansar, 2015, p. 195).

increasingly conscious of the things which divided them from their fellow Turkish citizens.

The resettlement process of the Muslims was not without problems and complications.[26] Among the most important ill-managements of the resettlement process, one can mention the classification of the exchangees without a comprehensive consideration of their profile and a vision for their actual economic integration[27], the unjust compensation for the properties left behind[28], as well as the seizure of houses assigned to the newcomers by the local population or corrupt government officials.

Apart from the practical issues of the settlement, the newcomers had to be absorbed ethnically and ideologically in the nascent Turkish republic, which had also to consolidate its ideological foundations and to instil Turkish consciousness into its citizens. Muslimness, which was also the criterion for the population exchange, was the steppingstone for the passage to Turkishness. In fact, Muslimness was a precondition for Turkishness (Ünlü, 2018). The door of Turkishness was open to every (Sunni) Muslim group and individual, regardless of ethnic origin, as long as they did not resist assimilation (Ünlü, 2016, p. 399).[29] In other words, it was expected that "all Anatolian Muslims would merge into the Turkish nation" (Çağaptay, 2006, p. 102).

The linguistic diversity of Anatolia had been an issue from the first years of the Republic.[30] The use of Turkish and "unity in language" was considered initially by the regime as one of the strongest links among the citizens, and one of the prerequisites for being a citizen (Çağaptay, 2006, p. 14). The need to deal with the variety of the languages spoken in Anatolia became imperative with the transformation of the Turkish nationalism in the 1930s towards an ethno-racial definition of the Turkish

[26] See for example Arı, 2003b; Yıldırım, 2006a; Emgili, 2011; Yilmaz, 2011.

[27] The refugees were classified according to their places of origin and divided into three broad categories: 1) tobacconists (*tütüncü*), 2) agriculturalists (*çiftçi*), and 3) grape-growers and dealers in olives (*bağcı ve zeytinci*), regardless of their specialisation and of whether they actually were of a rural background (Yıldırım, 2006a, pp. 140-142). See also Gökaçtı (2002) for the difficulties faced, especially by the exchangees who were settled in cities.

[28] The refugees would get 17.5% of the value of their abandoned properties (Yıldırım, 2006a, p. 142).

[29] It should be reminded that some Cretans were not followers of mainstream Sunni Islam.

[30] According to the first population census of the Turkish Republic, conducted in 1927, the native language of 2 million out of 13.6 million people was not Turkish (Dündar, 1999, as cited in Aslan, 2007).

nation (Çağaptay, 2006, p. 57). The non-Turkish speakers had to be turned into Turkish speakers in order to be fully eligible to be considered Turks.[31] Greek-speaking Cretans did not meet this criterium of Turkishness. The issue was often brought up in the Turkish Grand National Assembly,[32] and was a source of discrimination among their new compatriots.

An example of the efforts to promote Turkish language is the "Citizen speak Turkish" (*Vatandaş Türkçe konuş*) campaign, which was initiated in January 1928 by the Law Faculty Students' Association of Istanbul University under state's support. The campaign soon spread to other cities that accommodated high numbers of non-Muslim minorities and Muslim immigrants from the Balkans whose mother tongue was not Turkish (Aslan, 2007). The campaign was quite fierce in Mersin, where a sizable population of Greek-speaking Cretan Muslim immigrants had settled (Çağaptay, 2004, p. 95), while both Mersin and Balikesir[33], where again a considerable number of Cretans was settled, was among the municipalities that fined those who did not speak Turkish in public during the late 1920s (Bali, 2001 cited in Iğsız, 2008, p. 456; Çağaptay, 2004, p. 95).

What should also be kept in mind is that, on the one side, there has been the official ideology and the social engineering it aimed to implement within the framework of the process of nation-building. On the other side, there is the way this ideology and the polices have been reflected in society and in social interactions. The following quote by a second-generation Cretan in Davutlar, Kusadasi illustrates how state processes infiltrate society: "There was no pressure by the state because we spoke Cretan. Only they called us 'half-infidel' because we spoke Cretan. There was no [pressure] by the state but there was among the people" (Sepetçioğlu, 2011, p. 309).

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[31] Similar issues were faced by Turkish-speaking Black Sea exchangees in Greece, who apart from the difficulties they faced in their relations with the locals, their language was considered a handicap in the eyes of the state as Turkish could not ally with their Greekness. Speaking Turkish was a source of shame and constituted a symbolic boundary that separated them from their fellow Greek citizens. Venizelos government put emphasis on the Greekification of the migrants through the establishment of schools in areas were Turkish-speaking population was settled, while the Metaxas dictatorship banned the uses of all languages apart from Greek (Marantzidis, 2005).

[32] See for example Şenışık, 2016, pp. 94-96 and Sepetçioğlu, 2011, p. 175.

[33] Balikesir is the province where Ayvalik belongs.

In general, the experience of refugeeness and the settlement in the new homeland was accompanied by a variety of issues of economic and cultural nature. Dissatisfaction with the new economic conditions, the loss of properties, insecurity, the need to reconstruct their livelihoods and competition for scarce resources among different groups were some of the bitter realities to which the first generation of Cretans had to adapt. Moreover, the cultural differences that existed between the Cretans and the local population, but also other refugees and exchangees, often led to discrimination, conflict and isolation. Some of these cultural differences continue to occupy the narratives of the second- and third-generation Cretans, as it will be seen in the next chapters.

In this historical section, I tried to present the historical formation of the Cretan Muslims. While I focused on macro-level processes, it is important to remember that all social actors are so much shaped by, as shape these processes. They may internalise, reject, or negotiate these processes and participate actively or less actively in the framework that has been provided for them. In the end, how individual and collective experience is shaped is the result of internal identifications and external categorisations, the complex process of boundary demarcation, the socio-economic context, and everyday practices. Let me quote a recollection by Giritliyim Farkliyim, a second-generation Cretan, in Mersin, which I believe also illustrates the complexity of the circumstances and the fragmentation of the identities that accompanied Cretans after resettlement (of course keeping in mind the operations of memory). Note here that my informant imitates her grandfather's accent, who could not properly pronounce some Turkish phonemes, absent in Greek.[34]

> *EN: Did they narrate [about the past]?*
> *Giritliyim Farkliyim: No, because my grandfather knew no Turkish. He kept speaking Cretan. (…) But he would only say 'Ataturk'. He said nothing else.*
> *EN: Really?*
> *Giritliyim Farkliyim: Yes. He would say: 'Long live Ataturk, Ataturk! He brought us here, Ataturk'. Because he could barely speak Turkish (Türkçeyi çat*

[34] I have purposefully transcribed the words "Ataturk" and "*olum*" wrongly, instead of the correct "Atatürk" and "*ölüm*" respectively, in order to show the change in the pronunciation.

pat konuşuyordu çünkü). He would say: 'Either freedom or death!'[35]*Ataturk on top!' (Ya istiklal ya olum! Ataturk başta!).*[36]

2.2.1 Cretans in Mersin

The province of Adana (*Adana Vilayeti*) was one of the Ottoman territories where Cretan refugees were settled by the state. The refugees sent to the province of Adana were subsequently resettled in Mersin, Iskenderun, Adana and Tarsus. It has not been possible to determine the exact number of the Cretans settled in Mersin. According to Şenışık (2013 Table 1), 2,946 Cretan refugees were sent to Mersin. Sepetçioğlu (2011, Table 9) shares the same number implying that it is the number of the Cretan refugees relocated in the whole province of Adana, without sharing an exact number of those who settled in Mersin. According to Çomu (2016b, p. 86), 3,350 were sent to the province of Adana, and they were subsequently settled in the cities of Mersin and Adana.

A new neighbourhood was built for the Cretan Muslims in Mersin (Çomu, 2016a, p. 235). The neighbourhood was named Ihsaniye. The name derives from the word *ihsan*, which means "gift" and indicates that it was endowed to the Cretans. Among the locals, the neighbourhood was also known as the "Cretan neighbourhood" (*Giritli mahallesi*) (Develi, 1990, p. 77).[37] In addition, the villages of Hebilli and Ihsaniye were also inhabited by Cretan refugees. The village of Ihsaniye (Melemez),[38] in particular, was constructed specifically to provide accommodation for Cretan Muslims, as there were insufficient housing options available in more central locations. Initially settled in Tarsus, the refugees relocated to the village after 1902 (Çomu, 2016a, p. 236).

[35] This is a phrase attributed to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey.

[36] All translations of the informants' quotes have been done by me. Whenever English was unable to fully convey the message, I have included the original text in Turkish or Greek (or Cretan Greek). I have also provided the original text when I summarised a quote to incorporate it better into the text. I have tried to maintain the speaker's style and language register as faithfully as possible.

[37] A small number of elderly Cretans still live in the neighbourhood there, but the majority has moved to more residential and affluent parts of the city.

[38] The residents of the village refer to it as Melemez, after the name of the village they originate (Melesos). According to a different version the name Melemez derives from the negative form of the Turkish verb *melemek*, meaning 'to bleat'. It is said that the village was given this name because it is located in a forested area where even sheep do not bleat.

Mersin was also one of the areas where Muslims from Greece were resettled with the Exchange of Populations. The estimations of the number of the exchangees who were resettled in Mersin vary. Emgili (2011, Table 13) estimates the total number as 12,055 and the number of the Cretan Muslims (mainly from Heraklion) as 6,905[39]. Çomu (2016b, p. 167) questions Emgili's estimation, arguing that the total number is much less (between 3,000 and 5,000) and distinguishing the exchangees who reached the port of Mersin from the exchangees who actually settled in Mersin. She gives no specific estimations about the Muslims from Crete.

Newcomers from Crete and other parts from Greece were settled in different neighbourhoods throughout the town (some of them are the neighbourhoods of Ihsaniye, Mahmudiye and Mesudiye), and were provided with pieces of land or small gardens (also Çomu, 2016b, p. 169). The majority of the migrants (Cretans and others) were farmers, with a small percentage of them being workers, merchants, civil servants, coffee shop owners and shoemakers (Çomu, 2016b, p. 169). The authorities provided urban migrants with support to establish a new livelihood, often in the form of shops or other businesses (Çomu, 2018, p. 272).

2.2.2 Cretans in Ayvalik

Erotokritos, a second-generation Cretan from Ayvalik, describes the town as follows:

> *But here in Ayvalik there is an advantage. There are no locals in Ayvalik. Two… there are three groups that settled in Ayvalik. There are the Cretans, the Lesviots, and Bosnians who had come 10 years earlier from Bosnia. And there are Yoruks on the upper side of the Ayvalik. But Yoruks are not in Ayvalik; they are at their own villages. Of course, the Bosnians have also their own village. They did not spread in Ayvalik. Only Cretans and the Lesviots[40] spread in Ayvalik.*

İsparoz, another second-generation Cretan, describes Cunda in a way that most probably reflects the past rather than the present:

> *EN: Who are living in Cunda now?*

[39] Exchangees from Thessaloniki, Katerini and Ioannina - towns located in north and north-western Greece - supplement the number of the exchangees who were resettled in Mersin (Emgili, 2011, Table 13). It is interesting to note that the Cretans made no references to other exchangees, either in the past or present.

[40] Here Erotokritos uses the word *Adalı* in Turkish which means islander. Lesviots are called Islanders by the people in Ayvalik. In the English translations I have preferred to use the word Lesviot.

Isparoz: The Cretans are living in Cunda.
EN: Only the Cretans?
Isparoz: There are Lesviots. But they are very few. They are very few. If there are hundred Cretans, the Lesviots are ten or fifteen. They are few. We have no relations with them (Biz onlarla muhatap olmuyoruz).

In 1904 the Greek Orthodox in Ayvalik and its sub-districts numbered 29,600 out of the total population of 29,934 (Çomu, 2016b, Table III). The Greek-Turkish War and the Exchange of the Populations resulted in a complete demographic transformation of the town, which was in effect "rebuilt" from scratch in a different composition. Cunda was turned into a Cretan island and Ayvalik was inhabited mostly by the two exchanged groups, Cretans and Lesviots. Due to the proximity with the island of Lesvos, around 8000 migrants were transferred to Ayvalik in November 1923 (Çomu, 2016b, p. 156), shortly after the declaration of the Republic on 29 October 1923 and about one year before the arrival of the Cretan Muslims. Later, around 6000 Cretan Muslims from the towns of Rethymno and Chania and smaller groups from the Cretan town of Heraklion settled in the area as well (Çomu, 2016b, pp. 163-164).

Since Ayvalik was basically an empty town, the resettlement of the exchangees was relatively easy (Yılmaz, 2011). However, one of the issues that Cretans bring to the fore is that the Lesviots, who had arrived earlier, had already taken the best houses and olive lands. Regarding the properties granted to the exchangees, each household was allocated a house in the town centre and between 50 to 200 olive trees, depending on the number of individuals in the household (Çomu, 2016b, pp. 164-166). Only a very small number of migrants were granted a business unit in the town centre; almost all of the rest were registered as farmers. Later, this distribution was reassessed, and they were given up to 40% of the properties they had owned before the Exchange (Yılmaz, 2011, p. 174).

CHAPTER 3

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

Some scholars draw attention to the need to differentiate among different levels, dimensions, or components of ethnicity. Mitchell (1974/2001) makes a differentiation between ethnicity as a construct of perceptual or cognitive phenomena and the ethnic group as a construct of behavioural phenomena (p.1). Based on an empirical analysis on the way respondents perceived social distance between themselves and other ethnic categories and juxtaposing those data with the data about whether they would share residential accommodation with the groups in question, he argues that the structure of cognition and "the regularities in the behaviours of persons" (p. 8) might not coincide. Keefe (1992) differentiates among ethnic culture, that is the behaviours and beliefs that separate one group from the others, ethnic group membership which is "the social component of ethnicity" (p. 37), the ethnic network of the individual, and ethnic identity, a term used to "refer to the perceptions of and affiliation with ethnic groups and cultures" (p. 15). Alba (1990) makes a useful differentiation between ethnic identity, the "individualised form" of ethnicity and cultural activities, as he alternatively phrases it the "communal basis of ethnicity, the older form of ethnic solidarity" (p. 302). Ethnic identity and community constitute the two pillars of ethnicity.

These differentiations are very useful as they point to the multilevel and multidimensional character of ethnicity, and this is the reason why I chose to start by listing them. Although different levels are often confused with each other, they do have a different ontological status, analytical basis, and in practice might coexist and coincide or not. In the present chapter I aim first to explain how I view groupness and the processes of meaning production and identification. We cannot talk about processes if we do not stay attentive to the context, as it will be anatomised in the third part. In the fourth part of the chapter, I will touch upon the theories on the

transformation of white ethnicity in the United States, from which I will benefit in order to discuss questions about revival.

3.1 Identification and differentiation

Cornell (1996, p. 268-269) views the existence of assertions of "kinship" or "descent from a common homeland" and "the assertion of either a history or a present of shared culture" as definitional elements of an ethnic group. Cornell's definition, then, classifies groups according to the claims they make about themselves. It is a useful approach, both because of the active role he gives to the actors, as well as because of the differentia of descent. Alba (1990) bases his analysis on descendants of white ethnic migrants in America on "a loose conception of ethnic identity, namely, a person's subjective orientation toward his or her ethnic origins" (p. 25). He elucidates:

> *This definition accepts a variety of names as indicators of ethnic identities, such as, in the case of a person of Italian ancestry: "I am Sicilian", "I am Italian", "I am an American of Italian ancestry", or "my grandparents came from Italy". Although the variations are significant, each constitutes a potentially meaningful acknowledgment of an ethnic background.*

He later explains that although knowing where one's ancestors originated and regarding oneself as ethnic are connected, knowledge of one's ancestry "is no guarantee that ethnicity is a meaningful self-identification" (Alba, 1990, p. 49). Along similar lines, in the present thesis what I refer to by the word "Cretans" is not those, whose ancestors, or some of their ancestors, simply came from Crete. I mean specifically people who, in one way or another, put some emphasis on their Cretan origins. This requires that the complicated relationship between individuals and origins should be kept in mind, as "where one's origins lie becomes eventually an individual choice" (Iğsız, 2008, p. 474).

Similarly, any such identification –ethnic or other– is situated within relations and experience, and articulated by individuals, who are themselves also products of certain conditions. The term "identification" is used here in order to denote the ongoing process through which the agents choose to talk about themselves and to choose a place in the social terrain. This process of identification might be a cognitive or an emotional one, an intentional or unintentional one, a conscious or an unconscious one.

What is certain is that identification does not take place in a void. As Brubaker and Cooper (2000, p. 14) note,

> *Identification of oneself and of others is intrinsic to social life. (…) One may be called upon to identify oneself to characterise oneself, to locate oneself vis-a-vis known others, to situate oneself in a narrative, to place oneself in a category in any number of different contexts.*

There can be as many identifications of self as the number of the times one is asked to express one. That is why, "if we want to understand society in all its complexity, we should shift the analytical attention to 'group-making' and 'grouping' activities such as classification, categorisation, and identification rather than take 'groups' as basic units of analysis" (Brubaker, Loveman, & Stamatov, 2004, p. 45; Brubaker, 2004).

Anthropologist Fredrik Barth has made a valuable contribution towards this direction by "[shifting] the analytical centre of gravity away from this or that settled, bounded group – or 'society' – and towards complex universes of relationships between groups and their members" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 12). In his own words: "The critical focus of investigation (…) becomes the boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Barth, 1969, p. 15). What should interest us is not the cultural content, as there is not necessarily "simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences" (and even if there is at some point it does not mean that it will continuously exist) but rather the cultural differences "which the actors themselves regard as significant," since "some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored, and in some relationships radical differences are played down and denied" (p. 14). In other words, the cultural traits attached to a certain collectivity are of no analytical value if the members of the collectivity themselves do not present them as significant criteria for differentiation. By the same token, "the production and reproduction of difference vis-a-vis external others is what creates the image of similarity internally" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 13) and is rendered significant for investigation.

Therefore, despite an image of rigidness the notion of boundary might evoke, it does include a good amount of flux, something that would later also be suggested by Barth himself (Barth, 1994). As Wimmer (2008, p. 976) notes:

> *The concept of boundary does not necessarily imply that the world is composed of sharply bounded groups. (…) [E]thnic distinctions may be fuzzy and boundaries soft, with unclear demarcations and few social consequences, allowing individuals to maintain membership in several categories or switch identities situationally.*

Boundaries separating "us" from "them" can be "self-imposed, shallow, and mutable" (Bakalian, 1993, p. 7) rather than rigid, determining and comprehensive. That is because relationships and meaning production which constitute the basis of boundary making are necessarily variable.

My point is that the fluidity that can accompany the concept allows for its use in broader terms. The concept of boundary can be of great use not only as a means to describe ethnic difference or social organisation, as was initially used by Barth. Boundaries can be viewed in general as differentiation lines, along which comparisons between "us" and "them" are made. Boundary-making is, in other words, a systematisation of expression of difference by the actors, who are the ones to choose what features would function as markers of difference. One may ask: If we deprive the notion of boundary from its organisational or a possible behavioural dimension, as conceptualised by Wimmer (2008) for example, then what is the utility of the concept?

Its importance lies on the fact that the points of view of the actors acquire a central place and on helping thereby to provide a better understanding of the complexity of social relations. Boundaries are constructed by the actors, who identify with what they perceive to be included within the boundary and differentiate themselves from what remains outside. There are many factors that affect the processes of boundary-making and identity construction but what is definitely the case is that even if the outside of the boundary, the "other(s)" has or have a name, the comparisons might be abstract in nature. As Verkuyten (2005, p. 94) aptly notes: "'us' may be defined in relation to a more or less undefined 'them' or 'not-us' rather than in actual contrast to a specific [o]ther". The "other" might take many faces, as many faces as "we" give them, and carry specific characteristics and attributes that "we" choose to see as not applicable to "us" and therefore attach them to the "other".

The concept of identity then gives its place to the concepts of identification and differentiation viewed in dynamic, interactional terms, as an outcome of the bulk of perceptions of self and other and "determined by the individual's perception of its

meaning to different audiences, its salience in different social contexts, and its utility in different settings" (Nagel, 1994, p. 155). This view of identity, indeed, does not constitute any great theoretical breakthrough; after all, as Brubaker (2009, p. 28) has commented: "we are all constructivists now". However, it is imperative to incorporate it into the analysis in a systematic way. It does not suffice to argue that identities are dynamic, group making is relational or that identification and differentiation are processual. Instead, we should be attentive to the micro- and macro-level contexts in which the aforementioned processes take place and this is how I will try to conduct my analysis.

3.2 Processes

3.2.1 Instrumentalism reconsidered

In their commentary, Brubaker et al. (2004) observe and argue for a cognitive turn in the field of sociology of ethnicity. The study of categorisation and practices of categorisation – both official and everyday – implies, according to them, an incipient turn towards a cognitive approach in the study of ethnicity, race and nation by anthropologists and sociologists. At the same time, they call for the need for a systematic application of cognitive approaches. The processes of boundary making, categorisation, identification and the like have indeed a strong cognitive component. This component is twofold. It is first that these processes create "groups" and assign members to them internally and externally, publicly and privately. At a second level, the results of those processes are accompanied by "beliefs and expectations" (p. 38) about how the members of a certain category are or behave and eventually may also contain an evaluation of a certain category on the basis of those very beliefs or expectations. In other words, when an individual identifies themselves or categorises some other individual or collectivity in a specific way, they proceed to certain judgements and attach certain attributes to the individual or collectivity in question.

Brubaker et al. (2004, also Brubaker, 2004) point out that when talking about cognition they are not talking about the realm of the individual but rather about the realm of 'sociomental' (a term borrowed from Zerubavel, 1997). This view of the cognitive resonates with Cornell & Hartmann's (1998) constructionist approach and

their emphasis on processes that involve "how human beings come to see themselves and others in particular ways, how they come to act on those perceptions, and how their understandings and actions are shaped by social and historical forces" (p. 12). A common point is that identity construction involves the assertion or assignment of meaning. "Such meaning may take as simple a form as we (or they) are good (or evil) or we (or they) are inherently superior (or inferior). It may be far more complex, producing pride or exaltation or dismay or shame" (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 81). To summarise:

> *What cognitive perspectives suggest, in short, is that race, ethnicity, and nation are not things in the world but ways of seeing the world. They are ways of understanding and identifying oneself, making sense of one's problems and predicaments, identifying one's interests, and orienting one's action. They are ways of recognising, identifying, and classifying other people, of construing sameness and difference, and of "coding" and making sense of their actions. They are templates for representing and organising social knowledge, frames for articulating social comparisons and explanations, and filters that shape what is noticed or unnoticed, relevant or irrelevant, remembered or forgotten* (Brubaker et al., 2004, p. 47).

Differences play a part in identity construction "when a society or some group within it decides (…) to make [a difference] socially meaningful (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 196). Differences can be "real" or "invented", but even if it is something invented it is socially significant, if social actors perceive it as such, if it serves some goals. Perceptions and meaning are also closely related to the (perception of) power and to the values that are dominant in the society at a given time. As Eriksen (1999, p. 61) notes referring to the context of the dynamics of ethnicity and kinship in Africa, "the rationale behind subjective identification with a collective entity is simply (…) that it has something to offer which is deemed valuable, meaningful, or useful within a context of experience".

Nagata (1974) examines a polyethnic, plural society and the selection of ethnic identity or "reference groups" according to the situation. Based on her fieldwork in Malaysia, where ethnic is pervasive in all fields of life, she concludes that there might be situational preferences towards one group or another and individuals might identify with a different group on different occasions. The preferences are driven mainly by the desire to express either social distance or solidarity, by possible advantages to be

gained by a particular reference group selection on a particular occasion and consideration of social status and social mobility. In many cases individuals may select a different group, a comparative group to identify with, other than the one they identify with in most situations, depending upon the degree of affinity or dissociation they wish to express on a given occasion, or being influenced by considerations of expediency. In other cases, a specific choice might involve "a perception (albeit often unconscious) of the relative status of different ethnic groups, at least in connection with a given issue" (p. 341).

Waters (1990), in her work on how later-generation immigrants of white European Catholic origin in America relate to their ethnicity and origin, also touches upon factors of desirability, stereotypes and social ranking as factors that can influence which elements of one's ancestry one chooses to identify with. She argues that eventually ethnic identity becomes a matter of personal choice, informed by "stereotypes or concepts they have about the desirability or undesirability of one ancestry or another" (p. 81) and the perceived relative social acceptability of certain groups.

As the works cited above and others show, there might be many different reasons why actors proceed to certain choices in certain situations. Hereby, I propose a reconceptualisation of instrumentalism, not on the basis of interest but on the basis of gratifying moral gains. Instrumentalism entails that ethnic attachments develop and are organised as means to particular ends on the individual or the collective level and that ethnic actions involve calculations of political advantage and/or material interest (Jenkins, 2008; Fenton, 2010; Collins & Hartmann, 1998; Wimmer, 2008). Therefore, one aspect of this kind of instrumentalism pertains to the consideration of gains and advantages, which are not limited to the pursue of material or political ends. It also coincides with the "ethnicity as cognition" approach, due to the emphasis paid on perceptions and consequent evaluations.

This broader interpretation of instrumentalism allows for the consideration of affective ties, "emotional investments and desire for attachments" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202), traditionally seen as incompatible with reasoned goals associated with instrumentalism. It also argues against the traditional dualism of reason and emotion, rationality and irrationality and the split between "head and mind from heart and body"

(Clarke, Hoggett & Thompson, 2006, p. 8). To the contrary, emotional investments are not only of equal value as cognitive evaluations, but also greatly intertwined. As Forgas (2008, p. 96) argues, "affect plays a key role in determining how mental representations about the social world are created (...). Conversely, cognitive processes are also involved in the generation of affective responses". The incorporation of affect into the analysis can also be useful in explaining the oscillations among different identifications of the same ontological character or not, since "affective reactions may become separated from content" (Zajonc, 1980, p. 159).

The incorporation of theory and practice of emotions in the sociological and political inquiry during the last few decades has been accompanied by a focus on the social and cultural dimensions of emotions. Emotions are produced and organised in social relations and are the products of culture (Calhoun, 2001; Clarke et al., 2006). As Harré (2003, p. 147) explains, the study of emotion requires "careful attention to the details of local systems of rights and obligations, of criteria of value and so on". I understand the importance of such observations as twofold; first certain emotions might be granted or deprived of validity depending on the "local moral order" (Harré, 2003, p. 147). Second, emotions are cultivated parallel to the surrounding circumstances and the prevailing atmosphere. This might be the case both for the individual and the group-based emotions, the emotions that arise because of relations between members of a group and are based on group-level appraisals (see. Goldenberg et al, 2020; Barbalet, 2002).

3.2.2 The idiom of recognition

As already pointed out, identification and identity construction take place not in the void, but in active social relationships and among several processes implicated in one another. As Cornell & Hartmann (1998) clearly put it "the process of construction is an interactive one" (p. 80). The interaction takes place between external forces, that is material circumstances, the state, institutions and "the claims that other persons or groups make about the grouping in question" (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 80) on the one hand and the claims the actors in the grouping make about themselves on the other. In a similar logic, Jenkins (2008) distinguishes between internal and external definitions, between group identification and social categorisation. Internal

definition, the identification group members choose for themselves, leads to group identification. Parallel to that operate the processes of external definition, during which a set of persons is defined and consequently socially categorised by others.

It becomes, also, apparent that the claims people make about themselves do not involve only the celebration or certain traits within the boundary. The outside of the boundary, the claims "others" make about "us" are also to be taken into account and are valuable in the study of any collectivity. This is because a discrepancy between the claims others make about a grouping and the self-definitions affects the group in various ways. In other words, this is an issue of misrecognition or nonrecognition. The concept of recognition serves necessities arisen from the field through the narratives of the interlocutors themselves and holds an explicatory role for the present work. It can help us understand the different dynamics and itineraries regarding expressions of and attachment to Cretanness. The concept of recognition has been in the centre of a great deal of conceptual ambivalence, theoretical confusion and debates (Ikäheimo, 2017, p. 567).

Thomson (2006, p. 7-8) summarises the features that politics of recognition may take. There is often a focus on identity or difference. An individual, a group or an institution demands to be publicly acknowledged on the basis of its identity, on the basis of certain features that mark out a distinct identity. In many cases the quest for recognition lies on a quest for inclusion and equality, for a group may be ignored and excluded from citizenship rights and want its voice to be heard. A group may also hold a belief in its distinctive value, its "sense of collective worth" (Benhabib, 2002, p. 51) and seek appropriate acknowledgement of its uniqueness (Thomson, 2006, p. 15). In some cases, the quest for recognition may also take the form of a quest for power and political representation. Recognition may also have a socio-economic dimension and be accompanied by a claim to a more "fair share of society's assets" (Thomson, 2006, p. 8). Finally, the politics of recognition can be characterised by struggle, which may also lead to social conflict if another group (or groups) or the state resists a group's demand for recognition.

Taylor (1994) introduced the concept of recognition within the framework of multiculturalism, as a way to describe the claims raised by different minority groups

in society, that their particular cultural identity be recognised by the majority society. He summarised the importance of recognition as follows:

> *Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or* ***mis****recognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.* (p. 25, emphasis in the original)

In this respect, Taylor differentiates between two forms of recognition according to two different modes of politics of modernity, the politics of universal dignity and the politics of difference. The politics of universal dignity dictate that "all humans are equally worthy of respect" (p. 41) and involves the attribution of rights in a difference-blind fashion. For the politics of difference, we have to recognise particularity and "cherish distinctness" (p. 40) and uniqueness of individuals and groups, a uniqueness that has been ignored. In Taylor's words "the further demand we are looking at here is that we all *recognise* the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive, but acknowledge their *worth*" (p. 64, emphasis in the original).

Axel Honneth's concept of esteem complements Taylor's concept of worth. As Honneth (1995, p. 15) defines it, "esteem is the positive acknowledgement of a particular type of person in light of the distinct characteristics that they possess". He differentiates among three types of recognition: recognition as love, legal recognition and recognition as esteem. Recognition as love is pursued in relations that involve strong emotional attachments among a small number of people (p. 95). Legal recognition is mutual in character and is practiced by the acknowledgment that all persons are bearers of basic rights and thus are treated (and treat others) as subject to general laws. Therefore, persons enjoy legal recognition on the basis of "the general feature that makes them persons at all" (p. 113). On the contrary, social esteem is directed at the particular qualities that distinguish certain persons from the other and involves the "appraisal of concrete traits and abilities", beyond "the empirical application of general, intuitively known norms" (p. 113) that aim at the recognition of "universal features of human subjects (p. 122).

According to Honneth, every society has a system of reference, "a framework of orientation" comprised of certain "ethical values and goals" that make up the society's "cultural self-understanding" (1995, p. 122). As he puts it, "the cultural self-understanding of a society provides the criteria that orient the social esteem of persons, because their abilities and achievements are judged intersubjectively according to the degree to which they can help to realise culturally defined values" (p. 122). It follows that the qualities that are deserving of esteem may differ from time to time and from place to place (Thomson, 2006, p. 74). What characterises modern societies is a state of "value pluralism" (Honneth, 1995, p. 125), as there is no fixed set of values that everyone agrees upon and "relations of social esteem are subject to a permanent struggle, in which different groups attempt, by means of symbolic force and with reference to general goals, to raise the value of the abilities associated with their way of life" (p. 127).

The theoretical debate on recognition has been vigorous, several aspects of the above theorisations have been criticised,[41] but I shall confine myself specifically to the concepts of "worth" and "esteem". These concepts can also be analysed along the distinction between the "vertical" and the "horizontal" axis of recognition that Ikäheimo (2017) draws attention to. Vertical recognition involves individuals and groups, on the one hand, and "something 'higher' than them, on the other hand, such as the state, social institutions, social norms, the normative order of the society or (in religious imagination) God" (p. 569) and can be upwardly or downwardly directed. Horizontal recognition pertains to the level of groups or individuals and can be mutual or not.

Vertical recognition is the most obvious one, as what the concept of recognition first conjures up, no matter the exact form it takes, is the twosome of the state and a social group and claims for recognition voiced towards the state. Horizontal recognition, however, reminds us of the power struggles in society (in the question of "who is to recognise?"), everyday discrimination practices, as well as possible discrepancies between vertical and horizontal recognition, and it help us understand or explain certain social dynamics. Recognition, after all, is a process, in which "context,

[41] See for example Fraser (2000), Benhabib (2002), Sökefeld (2008).

relations and agents of recognition (or nonrecognition and misrecognition) interact and play an important role in shaping the claims for recognition" (Sökefeld, 2008, p. 33). One wants others to know them based on what they say they are, to acknowledge the particularities that they perceive for themselves as bearers of difference. It may be of moral importance, but can also have serious practical and political ramifications.

3.3 Context and circumstances

Up to this point, I have talked about processes of identification, differentiation, identity construction, recognition and meaning attribution. As I have emphasised before, all such processes are "fundamentally situational and contextual" (Brubaker & Cooper 2000, p. 14). Cornell & Hartmann (1998), whose constructionist framework I shall further borrow in my analysis, emphasise that,

> *we need to understand both how people interpret and negotiate their lives in ethnic and racial ways, and how larger historical and social forces organise the arenas and terms in which those people act, encouraging or discouraging the interpretations they make, facilitating some forms of organisation and action and hindering others* (p. 12-13).

Cornell & Hartmann (1998, p. 153ff) identify six "construction sites" in which identity construction takes place. Although not all of them are of use for our case, I think it is valuable to list them here in order to be reminded of the "multidimensionality of identity construction" (p. 154). One site is the political arena, and more specifically the political circumstances group face, the opportunities or constraints that potentially affect identity formation or the power relations that define and maintain group boundaries. Likewise, the categorical separations in the labour market, are among the factors that can enhance identity construction. The third circumstantial factor that has an impact on identity formation is residential concentrations. There are many examples where certain ethnic (mostly immigrant), racial or labour groups are concentrated in certain residential areas, something that consequently can play an important role in identity construction.

The complementary concepts of exhaustiveness and density, that pertain to the kinds of relationships produced in residential and labour market concentrations are relevant to the case of Cretans. As the writers define them, "exhaustiveness refers to

the extent to which a particular position is the only opportunity available to group members" and "density refers to the extent to which a given (…) residential opportunity facilitates interpersonal interactions among group members" (p. 167-168). The variety of settlement opportunities a migrant community or a minority for example has or has not, as well as the degree of interactions with other members of the group and with non-members are factors that affect both the formation and the persistence of an identity and consequently the extent to which an identity would have organisational and behavioural implications for the individuals. What the authors argue is that high exhaustiveness and density "support the formation or persistence of an ethnic or racial identity, [rendering] it more comprehensive or thick" (p. 168).

Conzen et al. (1992) also highlight the relation of the process of ethnicisation – in the sense of "evoking a symbolically constructed sense of peoplehood vis-a-vis outsiders" (p. 9) – of immigrant groups in America to assimilationist pressures and to varying patterns of physical settlement, specifically, to the proximity or absence of "others" in the immediate environment. They explain that the immigrants who settled in isolated areas and were therefore less subject to assimilation practices and encounters with other ethnic groups, had less need for the invention of ethnicity, compared to the immigrants who settled in industrial cities, because the need to be ethnic was met by the community and kin relationships they were experiencing. The role the "others" played was not limited to the degree of proximity but extended to the immigrant's reception as well, while "whether their alleged characteristics were weighted positively or negatively, affected their definition by 'others' as well as by themselves" (Conzen et al., 1992, p. 14).

A fourth area that can promote identity construction, according to Cornell & Hartmann (1998), is social institutions. Social institutions, such as schools, religion, marriage, social service organisations and all those institutions that organise people's lives and are instrumental in meeting their needs can influence group identity formation and salience. Exclusion of a group from certain institutions, which may also lead to the creation of or reaching to alternative institutions, can reinforce group boundaries and expand relationships within the group "via institutional participation and the common investments of energy and time" in distinct organisations (p. 169). I would like to broad their reasoning by arguing that among such social institutions one

might not necessarily list those who strongly contribute to the formation of "a distinct and exclusive community life" (p. 170). Social institutions may indeed reinforce attachment but may also luck an exclusive character or function complementarily, on the side stream along with the mainstream social institutions.

Culture is another domain where identity construction takes place. The authors explain:

> *The culture at issue (…) is the culture of the society at large, of the society of which a given ethnic or racial group forms a part. If, in the construction of an identity, people come to particular understanding or who they are, they do so in part by discovering how other people see them, by experiencing the constructions that other people make – that is, in an encounter with the assumptions of the encompassing culture of the society at large* (p. 174).

Wallman (1979, pp. 3-4) had made a similar argument two decades earlier by stating that:

> *Both the differences between "us" and "them", and the way "we" and "they" feel about those differences, vary with the circumstances in which "we" are using or perceiving "them"; the criteria of difference and the significance of those criteria are always, in some sense, functions of context or situation.*

Cornell & Hartman do note that what is meant by "society at large" is in fact the dominant and privileged ideas within the society; culture operates through the "dominant culture's assumptions about relevant differences among groups," exemplified in categories of ascription, classification schemes and status attribution (p. 174). In other words, each society has a dominant framework of kinds of identities or differentiators on the basis of which it conceptualises groups, classifies them and "flag[s] identities as attractive or unattractive" (p. 182), or even allowed or forbidden. Something that the authors fail to clearly emphasise is that dominant culture is not of a stable and continuous character; it may face ruptures or "lose its dominance" and conditions may become more favourable for certain action or encourage visibility.

It can be deduced that the configuration and hierarchies of power, endemic in any social terrain, are to be taken into consideration. In a process of identity construction, meaning attribution and identification, central is the perception of the "social worth" (Nagel, 1994, p. 154) of an identification. Individuals choose to associate with an identity that gives them -or they think that gives them- greater social

and cultural capital (Magliveras, 2009, p. 11). Belonging, therefore, is "not just about social locations and constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments but also about the ways these are valued and judged" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 203). In Bauman's (1992, p. 679) succinct words "'We' must be powerful, or it won't be gratifying".

Last but not least comes the daily experience, the day-to-day, banal interactions where "the boundaries between groups often are most clearly drawn or most subtly reinforced" (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 184). At the same time, as people move through daily life different identifications "are shuffled in and out of prominence depending on the situation" (Nagel, 1996, p. 21). In day-to-day interactions people assert, signify, or reinforce their identifications, activate an identity (Chandra, 2012) and convey the relevant messages to the different audiences. On many occasions, in their everyday interactions people can come across a variety of behaviours from supposedly an "innocent" stereotypical question to overt discrimination or even violence, something that might reinforce their need to assert an identification.

3.4 Symbolic ethnicity and feeling ethnic

Transformation is a key part of the dynamic character of the process in which identities are in. The world transformation, in this context, can have many different meanings and can take place at different levels. For example, it can refer to a change at "the nominal" or "the virtual" level (Jenkins, 2008). As Jenkins explains: "The latter is, in a sense, what the name means; this is primarily a matter of its consequences for those who bear it, and can change while the nominal identity remains the same (and vice versa)" (p. 76). Transformation can also be observed in relation to the mode or intensity of the attachment to a grouping on the part of those who identify with it.

Cornell (1996) emphasises the variability of the content of ethnic identity and intragroup ties and proposes three dimensions along which what people share within the boundary varies. According to his argument ethnic groups can be classified on the basis of the degree of shared interests, the existence or strength of an institutional structure or the lack thereof and of whether or not a distinct culture exists that defines the behaviour and the interpretation of the members. The position an ethnic group has on each of these dimensions, that is on the dimensions of interests, institutions and

culture, determines –in an ideal typical way– whether a given group is a community of interests, an institutional community or a community of culture. Cornell does not fail to note that there are groups, the symbolic communities, as he calls them, that might be attached to certain symbols but are "unattached to any set of substantial and distinctive interests, exclusive institutions, or more elaborate cultural constructions". In other words, individuals "claim or at least acknowledge their membership in the group (…) but it organises little of their daily life or thought" (p. 271).

The above-mentioned community types are not fixed and steady, and individual or collective movement is possible. Individuals may move in or out of these groups. In other words, their perception of interest may change, they may wish to or be obliged to opt for a different set of institutions that would meet their needs or respond to their problems, or in a more complex case they may adopt a different cultural system and system of interpretation. When one refers to a collective movement, it means that the group as a whole may move along these types. This means that one or another category of ties may become more or less salient than the others, leading to a change in the content of collective identities. In reality, in most groups "interests, institutions, and culture are found in varying degrees of combination with each other" (Cornell 1996, p. 271) and circumstances are always at work. Likewise, all these communities might be transformed to a symbolic community, in which interests, institutions or elaborate culture give their place to symbols and to the intragroup relations on the basis of a loose attachment to some identity; the reverse is also possible.

Large part of the literature on the trajectory of white ethnicity, that is the ethnicity of the immigrants of European origin, in the United States in the post-civil rights era is built to a great extent on the transformation of attachment that has been observed to have taken place. The renewed interest in ancestral language or folk music and dance was interpreted by some as a revival, as an intention to return culturally and behaviourally to the immigrant grandparents' lifestyle. Another large part of the literature makes a case against the revival argument and proposes that ethnicity has changed form. This literature can offer us important insights as many parallels can be drawn between the expressions of Cretanness among contemporary Cretan Muslims in Turkey and of ethnicity among later generations of white ethnic immigrants the US.

Herbert Gans (1979) examining the notably renewed interest in ethnicity coined the term "symbolic ethnicity" as a counter term to the argument of revival. According to Gans, the renewed ethnic involvement that was observed was in fact a resort to the use of ethnic symbols. Ethnicity has taken on "an expressive rather than instrumental form in people's lives, becoming more of a leisure-time activity and losing its relevance, say, to earning a living or regulating family life" (Gans, 1979, p. 9). He also suggests that, even symbolic ethnicity might have a limited importance among the descendants of the immigrants. The key in this approach is the "practice" of ethnicity and whether or not it is incorporated in everyday life, or if the renewed interest in cultural patterns is "confined to a sphere of personal curiosity" (Alba, 1990, p. 77). What Gans reminds us of is that there might be a gap between the phenomena, the surface, and the essence, and that "ethnic cultural commitments may be shallow, confined to a few ethnic symbols that do not intrude on a life that is otherwise nonethnic" (Alba, 1990, p. 77). Therefore, even when one observes the existence of cultural patterns such as cooking, music, language and so forth, one must grapple with the questions of the quality and the depth of those patterns.

Alba (1990) reformulates symbolic ethnicity and argues that community has given its place to identity as the basis of ethnicity among descendants of immigrants of European origin. He focuses on the lack of structures, such as intermarriage, friendship circles and membership in ethnic organisations, or to their independency from identity in case they exist. He argues that later-generation immigrants' social worlds "do not bear a deep imprint of ethnicity" (Alba, 1990, p. 301). To the contrary, what characterises their ethnicity is privatisation, individualisation, the major aspect of ethnic identity, and choice, even if there is a social background affecting that choice. Ethnic identity becomes a personal matter, delimited in the sphere of family ancestry, as the erosion of characteristics common to the members of a group deprives ethnicity of its communal aspect, leading to a further loss of the meaning of community. The individualisation of ethnicity relates to the latitude of choice:

> *It is not only that individuals can choose to identify or not, and choose also precisely which elements in an ancestry mixture to emphasise and how important an ethnic identity should be for them, but they also have a wide*

> *latitude of choice when it comes to the manifestations or expressions of ethnicity.* (Alba, 1990, p. 303)

Waters (1990), the work of whose I referred to above as well, bases her analysis on the concept of option. She argues that the information and knowledge one has about their family background is used in the construction of one's ethnic identification. The key point in her argument is that this knowledge is used selectively within the prevailing historical, structural, and personal constraints (p. 19). Since the relationship people create with their ancestors is selective, there is no direct line between ancestry and identification. In practice this means that people might not choose to identify with their known ancestral background or backgrounds, while in case they ancestors are from many different backgrounds, for one reason or another they may choose to identify with one or some of their ancestors. In addition to that, an individual's ethnic identification might vary from time to time and from context to context.

Anny Bakalian (1993), in her study on Armenian Americans in the United States, argues that Armenianness has changed in its form and function, acquiring at the same time an affective dimension. Armenianness becomes symbolic, in other words voluntary, deliberate, rationalistic, segmental and situational, in contrast to the traditional Armenianness of the immigrant generation, which is ascribed, unconscious, compulsive and taken for granted. Central in this form of Armenianness is its emotional constituent and convenience in its application, as it is accompanied with "few behavioural demands" (p. 6). One component of symbolic Armenianness deserves a special mention: "the sense peoplehood or we-ness", which, according to Bakalian (p. 336), "endures as the most popular expression of symbolic Armenian-Americans". This sense of peoplehood is a manifestation of the affective relationship of Armenian-Americans towards their roots and involves positive feelings of belongingness and group esteem. These feelings, have two characteristics: they are not translated into an intention to revitalise community and to return to old behavioural patterns and they are not stable and constant. "[The sense of peoplehood] increases with positive reinforcement, both explicit instruction and implicit feedback, as it decreases and withers away when it is not continuously nourished and propped with affirmative evaluations" (Bakalian, 1993, p. 338).

Therefore, symbolic ethnicity, or white ethnicity of the later generations, is characterised by choice (Waters, 1990), is located "in the spirit" (Bakalian, 1993, p. 432), is individualised, privatised and "limited to mundane experiences such as eating ethnic foods or attending an ethnic festival" (Alba, 1990, p. 80) and is more of a "leisure-time activity" (Gans, 1979, p. 9). Although there are differences among the authors cited above and their theories should not be conflated, the important point reiterated is that a possible visibility of ethnicity does not equal revival or revitalisation, and that what is being observed is the transformation of expression of ethnicity across generations. As mentioned above, I believe it is a very useful framework through which one can approach the renewed interest by Cretan Muslims towards their origins, exemplified by the organisation of festivals, the establishment of associations and by the opening of "Cretan" restaurants and cafes. The characteristics of the expressions of Cretanness in the two different loci of Ayvalik and Mersin, will be analysed within the specific contexts. I shall try to explore the purposes served by choices of identification and whether the importance of symbolic expressions is limited to the level of a leisure-time activity or holds a deeper meaning.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The methodological premises of the thesis go hand in hand with the theoretical premises. As explained in the theoretical framework, the narratives and the experience of the social actors is what will be taken as the basis for the analysis. However, the narratives of the actors will be viewed critically, and their experience will be positioned against the "objective" reality, but also against the variety of relationships which actors are part of. Neither methodological individualism nor methodological holism can be adequate on its own if we want to understand and explain social reality. A mere account of the representations of the actors would lead to an unfinished picture of a situation, as if a story of a character is told without any reference to the background that contributed to the forming of this character. On the other hand, studying only the social structures would lead to the obscuration of the lived experience, agency and the subjective perceptions which are also embedded in the whole.

Individuals, groups, larger social wholes, and larger social settings are interrelated, and analysis – at any level – requires that this interrelation is kept in mind. Actions and narratives must be studied as embedded in the context in which they take place and are articulated. Actions are performed and self- or collective narratives are produced by individuals and groups that are part of a network of social relations and have certain constraints and opportunities. Social actors are shaped by circumstances, and these circumstances and structures are constantly created and reproduced through interactions with the actors. The task of the researcher is to proceed to research and to analysis against the backdrop of a complex reality or realities.

The task of the researcher in a sociological or anthropological research should also involve the objectivation of their own universe and of their relation to the object of research, what Bourdieu (2003) calls "participant objectivation". It is a challenging aspect of the research as it necessitates a sincere reflective looking inward and a deconstruction of oneself. The researcher carries their standpoint, their dispositions,

their interests and should objectivise themselves in order to be aware of (and to disclose if necessary) the relation they form with the field and the relations formed in the field. Needless to say, this is not a process relevant only to fieldwork; it is an ongoing process that should be applied at all stages of the study: at the stage of the research design, at the fieldwork stage, as well as at the stage of analysing and writing. This is how I tried to proceed in this thesis, being constantly aware and critical of my own cultural and ideological load and my "historical unconscious" (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 285).

4.1 The field: Why Ayvalik and Mersin

Hannerz (2003, p. 207) questions whether the combination of sites for a study always corresponds to a research design that focuses on particular issues or opportunities for comparison. The author suggests that sometimes the selection of research sites may happen gradually and cumulatively, as new insights develop, opportunities come into sight, and to some extent, by chance. I believe this may not only apply to multi-sited research but also to research conducted in a single location. In the present research, I had decided from the outset to conduct fieldwork in more than one location. Nevertheless, the specific sites were selected in the course of the research design.

The rationale for choosing of two sites is directly related with the object of the study itself. The Cretan Muslims were resettled in dispersed locations throughout Turkey, with "Cretan communities" now found in many different cities, towns, and villages, mainly along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts of Turkey. To understand how second- and third-generation Cretans relate to their Cretan identity, conducting research in a single location would provide only a partial picture of the state of affairs. One could argue that even two locations provide only a partial image, that the variety of experience would not be able to be grasped in any case and that studying one site in greater depth would be more preferable than studying two sites. However, given the variety of the sizes of the places in which Cretans reside, there is the risk that each location would elicit different results. To balance this risk and to gain a more comprehensive understanding, two different locations have been selected for the study.

The two different locations chosen should be different enough, so that there is a point in "moving around" (Falzon, 2009, p. 13). My main criteria of difference were geographical and demographic; I wanted to study an urban environment and a smaller unit (village or town), one in western and one in southern Turkey. Mersin, a large port city in the Mediterranean, on the south coast of Turkey, was my initial choice because of the contacts I had at the village of Melemez and its multicultural character. My choice was solidified after I attended the festival in Kusadasi, where I met a lot of Mersinians who seemed eager to assist me with my research. Ayvalik was a relatively easy second choice, as along with Izmir, is maybe the first location that comes to mind when one refers to the Cretan population in Turkey.

The differences that Mersin and Ayvalik present from a demographic point of view will be considered in the analysis. In the Ottoman period, Ayvalik, a small coastal town on the north Aegean, connected with the island of Cunda (Alibey) before the Exchange of the Populations had a Greek Orthodox majority; in fact, it could properly be described as a Greek town (Çomu, 2016b, p. 55). After the Turkish-Greek Exchange, it was transformed to a primary area of migrant settlement and was selected as such due to the existence of a large number of houses left behind by Greek owners. 16,530 exchangees from the islands of Lesvos and Crete, as well as other areas that constitute Greece were settled in the town (Çomu, 2016b, pp. 163-164). As a matter of fact, in 1935 62% of the population of Ayvalik had not been born in Turkey. 92% of the ones who had been born outside Turkey had been born in Greece, 5% in Yugoslavia, 1.4% in Bulgaria and the rest in other countries (Balcı Akova, 2011).

Tourism, agricultural and trading activities as well as Ayvalik's being preferred as a destination for a calm life after retirement has attracted a number of people from the metropolises of Izmir and Istanbul followed by Ankara and the south-eastern city of Mardin (Balcı Akova, 2011, Table 11). Despite the migration waves, Ayvalik has remained a small coastal town, the population of which was 72,371 in 2021. It also seems that to some extent the character of the town settled by exchangees still remains alive, at least in the consciousness of the locals. Ayvalik is different from Mersin in one more important aspect: proximity to Greece. This proximity is translated to greater contact with Greeks and more opportunities to speak Greek. Greeks from Lesvos visit

the island on a weekly basis and many Ayvaliots work in the tourism industry and take advantage of the knowledge of Greek, that comes from the family.

Table 1- Population of Ayvalik throughout the years

Year	Population
1935	22.539
1955	28.561
1975	33.104
1990	46.827
2021	72,371

Note: The data of 2021 are from "[Population of province/district centres, towns/villages and annual growth rate of population by provinces and districts, 2021]", by Turkish Statistical Institute, 2021. The data for the years 1935-1990 are from "Şehir coğrafyası açısından bir inceleme: Ayvalık" [An Investigation in terms of Urban Geography: Ayvalık], by A. Yaman-Kocadağlı, 2011, *Istanbul University Journal of Sociology*, 3 (22), p. 103 (https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/iusosyoloji/issue/512/4656)

The Cretan migrants who settled in Mersin did not find an almost emptied place as was the case with Ayvalik, and the forced population transfer did not deeply challenge the existing social structure (Çomu, 2016b, p. 167). Mersin was founded in the nineteenth century and developed mainly after 1860 (Yenişehirlioğlu & Özveren, 2019). It became home to a number of Cretans who fled Crete due to the outbreak of violence in the island towards the Muslim population at the end of the nineteenth century. Apart from the Muslim population[42], due to the growth of trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, Mersin had attracted Greeks (mainly from the Aegean Islands, Cappadocia and Cyprus), Armenians, as well as Maronite families from Lebanon and Orthodox Christians from Syria, especially from Lattakia. During the last

[42] Although Muslims is not a homogenous group, the population censuses in the Ottoman empire, being accorded with the *millet* system do not include any differentiation between various ethnic groups or religious sects.

years of the nineteenth century fellahins, Arab agricultural laborers, also migrated to Mersin (Özdemir, 2009; Develi, 1990).

Table 2- The population increase of Muslims and non-Muslims in the Sanjak of Mersin

Year	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
1891	20,161	1,415	21,576
1900	72,513	4,229	76,742
1906-7	83,386	9,426	92,812

Note: Reprinted from Özdemir, E. (2009). Kültürel farklılıkların kentsel siyasete yansıması: Mersin örneği [Reflections of cultural differences on urban politics: The case of Mersin] [Doctoral dissertation, Istanbul University]. YÖK Ulusal Tez Merkezi, p. 132.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the Armenians of the wider area of Cilicia (Çukorova) fell victim to violence and massacres, which escalated to a genocidal deportation in 1915 (Çomu, 2016b, pp. 71-77). Under French occupation in 1918–1919, Cilicia became a destination for large numbers of Armenian refugees. The withdrawal of French forces from the area in 1921 led to the final exodus of the Armenians (White, 2009). The application of the Exchange of Population meant the deportation of the Greek Orthodox population. The new inhabitants of Mersin, the Muslims from Greece, were allocated the properties that had belonged mainly to the Armenians and the Greeks.

Mersin has been a place with a multicultural past, a city with a growing population and a multicultural present, as it is currently home of several ethnic and religious communities (these include Yörüks, Circassians, Kurds, Arabs, Roma, Alevis, Christians). The neighbourhood of Ihsaniye in central Mersin, where Cretans had been settled has changed hands and now accommodates migrants from all over Turkey, mainly from the Southeast. The economic and industrial development of the city through the second half of the 1960s and particularly the 1970s, which has been called the “golden era” of Mersin, attracted large waves of migration (Doğan & Yılmaz, 2015). The Kurdish population, in particular, has engendered a rapid and large-scale demographic growth in the city during the 1980s and 1990s (Doğan &

Yılmaz, 2015). Recently Mersin has become densely populated by Syrians; the province of Mersin accommodates 236,522 refugees, a number that accounts for 10.99% of the total population of the province as of 25.05.2023 (Presidency of Migration Management, 2023).

Table 3- Population of Mersin (urban areas)

Year	Population
1935	27,620
1955	50,104
1975	152,236
1990	422,357
2012	1,327,870

Note: The data of 2012 are from "[Population of province/district centres and towns/villages by province and sex, population density by province, 2007-2021]", by Turkish Statistical Institute, 2021. The data for the years 1935-1990 are from Sandal, K. E. & Gürbüz, M. (2003). Mersin şehrinin mekansal gelişimi ve çevresindeki tarım alanlarının amaç dişi kullanımı [The Examination of Spatial Expansion of the City of Mersin and Misuse of Agricultural Lands]. *Coğrafi Bilimler Dergisi*, 1(1), p.124 (doi: 10.1501/Cogbil_0000000024)

Table 3 ends in 2012 because there was no available data by the Turkish Statistical Institute for the urban and rural areas for later years. Nevertheless, it is very telling regarding the population increase and depicts the transformation of a port town to a metropolitan city.

Currently the "Cretan element" in Ayvalik is still somehow present, especially in the little world of the island of Cunda, where one can still notice gatherings of elderly Cretans at the coffee houses. In the urban environment of Mersin –but also in whole province –, Cretans are a part of a multicultural mosaic, yet their presence is often overlooked even by residents of Mersin, as I also have come to realise when I mention my research and Mersin as one of my fieldwork locations to people not particularly relevant with the Cretan Muslims. In the aforementioned differences lies

the importance of considering two different sites, two different contexts and examining processes of self-identification and meaning construction.

4.2 The fieldwork

I had my first encounter with the field at the 9th International Cretan Festival in May 2018 in Kusadasi, a city in the Aegean coast of Turkey. Prior to the festival, I had made contact with a Cretan Muslim, through a friend of my father's, who had come to Turkey before as a journalist, in order to report on a previous festival. This contact[43] proved to be very helpful, as he was a well-known and active figure among the Cretan Muslims. Therefore, being with him during the festival offered me a great advantage, as I was able to meet and interact with many participants and it helped me gain their trust. In the festival I had the chance to meet Cretans from all over Turkey. I was struck by the enthusiasm of many of the participants, who were eager to meet me or invited me from table to table to have a talk with elderly Cretans, who wanted to practice their Cretan Greek. Same amount of enthusiasm was extended to the dancing team and some journalists who had travelled from Crete.

Among the attendees there was a group from Mersin, who had come by bus in an organised manner. At the same time, I was surprised to see no participants from Ayvalik, although it is quite close to Kusadasi, at least closer than Mersin, Adana, Hatay or Bursa, where many participants at the festival came from. When I asked about the absence of people from Ayvalik, the humorous answer I got was: "They are from Chania, what would you expect?" as a reference to a continuing rivalry between the Cretan cities of Chania and Heraklion.[44] As I learnt later, there are personal and political disagreements between the association in Ayvalik and some people in the Federation of Cretans.[45]

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[43] His ancestors were from Viannos, my father's village and emigrated from Crete at the end of the nineteenth century. Refugees from Viannos were resettled in the village of Turunçlu in Erzin, Hatay.

[44] Heraklion, the largest city on the island of Crete, is located in the eastern part of the island, has a long-standing rivalry with Chania, the second largest city on the island, which is located in the west. The rivalry has been historically centred mostly around issues of division of power on the island. I came across a similar situation in the western Cretan-majority Ayvalik, where I was sitting at a café with one of my interlocutors. He introduced me to a fellow Cretan friend of his, whose ancestors had come from Heraklion, adding that although he was from Heraklion, he was a nice person.

[45] The Federation of Cretans (*Giritliler Federasyonu*) was founded in 2017 with the coming together of 10 associations. Currently it numbers 15 associations.

I visited Ayvalik directly after Kusadasi. My new acquaintances at the festival provided me with some valuable contacts for my future work in the field. During the festival in question, I had the chance to connect with people from Mersin as well, who would later be my informants or gatekeepers, or both. Overall, the festival constituted a crucial starting point as facilitated to a great extent my next steps in the field.

From May 2018 to March 2020, I made several trips to Mersin and Ayvalik. I conducted 18 in-depth interviews in Ayvalik and 18 in-depth interviews in Mersin. Over this period, I also attended two festivals in Kusadasi and two festivals/remembrance events in Mersin[46]. My findings are supplemented with participant observation at these festivals and visits to associations, as well as informal meetings and conversations over coffee or dinner, which were as fruitful as the interviews, if not more. Moreover, I actively followed the Facebook pages of the Mersin and Ayvalik associations, as well as other groups and pages related to Cretans in Turkey. I planned my research trips in such a way that I visited the two research sites alternately. By doing that, I aimed to keep my research in the two sites in interaction, as I tried to use insights gained from one place to inform my work in the other. Moreover, this approach also allowed me to reflect on the material I collected and the fieldwork experience during times in between, as I had the opportunity to step back from the fieldwork, and potentially to refine my approaches for the subsequent stages of the research.

Some of the interviews were scheduled in advance and some occurred spontaneously. To the degree it was possible, I suggested an one-to-one format, at a comfortable and non-disturbing environment. However, actual fieldwork circumstances do not always allow for privacy and quietness (Mikėnė, Gaižauskaitė & Valavičienė, 2013). Some of the interviews were conducted at the informants' workplaces or at cafés and were therefore at risk of being interrupted by outsiders or passers-by. Even when interviews were conducted at home it was often practically impossible to avoid interruptions and interventions by family members. In one interview in Ayvalik, for example, the main interviewee was the mother of the family,

[46] I attended the 9th and 10th International Cretan Festival in Kusadasi, in May 2018 and September 2019 and the festivals or remembrance events in Mersin, in 2019 and 2020, which are held at the end of February with the purpose of commemorating the arrival of their ancestors to Mersin.

but there was active participation by her two daughters as well. One interview in Mersin was conducted with the participation of two sisters, while in another interview in Mersin, the husband of the interviewee was present and actively commenting during a large portion of the conversation.

All interviews were recorded, apart from one in Mersin, in which the participant did not consent to being recorded.[47] The interviews were semi-structured, and the duration ranged from one hour to two hours. I used the prepared questions as a guide, and I made sure that all the necessary points were covered in terms of content. However, in terms of structure I was adaptive to the flow of the conversation. Especially when there was more than one participant it was harder to follow a more specific structure. In general, I opted for a less intrusive role, as I thought that, even if it was not always fully relevant to my questions or the topic under discussion, what participants chose to tell me was valuable and could also lead to further questions or considerations. I conducted the interviews in Turkish apart from two interviews in Ayvalik (Cunda) in which the respondents chose to speak in Cretan Greek or both in Turkish and Cretan Greek. The interviews held in Turkish were often interspersed with Greek or Cretan words and expressions.

The vast majority of my informants are second- and third-generation Cretans. My initial plan was to conduct interviews from different generations, so as to have a more comprehensive image of the field. However, soon I realised that it was hard to find many young people interested, even if they had grown up in an environment with elements of the Cretan culture or with engaged parents. In spite of some exceptions of younger people who were familiar with the story of the Cretan Muslims, curious about the family background, knowledgeable of Greek and in general interested in their origins, the general trend demonstrates a decline in interest and importance. With regard to the gender of the respondents, I aimed at an equal number of female and male respondents. However, the fact that most of my initial contacts were male and the fact that more men had their own workplaces, and therefore were more easily reachable,

[47] It is interesting to note that the person in question is the only one I contacted directly by myself. I was aware that my gatekeepers did not have a good relationship with him, but since his workplace was easily accessible, I decided to try to meet him. As expected, he was surprised and hesitant, but agreed to a recorded interview. Later he called me to request that the interview not be recorded. On the day of the interview, he also invited his wife to be present.

resulted to slightly unbalanced numbers in terms of gender, at least as far as formal interviews are concerned.

4.3 The interview questions

Through the interview questions I endeavoured to explore the environment in which they grew up in order to assess my informants' degree of familiarity and knowledge of Cretan culture (I let my respondents fill in the term) and the history of their forebearers. My objective was to discover whether aspects of Cretan culture were practiced in the family and whether the elders inflicted any feelings of attachment to the ancestral homeland (Aydıngün & Yıldırım, 2010, p. 29). I also tried to discover what my informants have transmitted or are transmitting to their own children. Additionally, I aimed to determine whether and how individuals contribute to the preservation of Cretan culture, as well as how they view its overall preservation.

I asked them to disclose how they identify themselves, to describe Cretanness and explain what it means for them to be Cretan.[48] I sought to explore their values and the extent to which those values are associated with Cretanness. Furthermore, I aimed to investigate whether they perceive any changes in the way Cretanness has been experienced, whether there have been changes in their relationship with Cretanness over time and if there was a defining moment that influenced those changes. I also discussed recent public expressions of Cretanness with them, such as the associations, the restaurants, the festivals, either they were active parts of it, or not. Moreover, I tried to explore the interactions between my informants and the "others" in the respective sites studied, focusing also on how the perceive themselves and the "others" (the full list of questions can be found in Appendix B).

At the end of each interview, I asked the interviewees to give themselves a pseudonym, which I would use to refer to them in the thesis. It is interesting to see the choices they made for themselves, although some of the names might have been difficult to be incorporated into the text. I have decided to keep the names untranslated within the text, but I have translated and explained them in the table in appendix A,

[48] I would like to make clear that I did not impose the identification "Cretan" on them. They self-identified in various ways, but the Cretan aspect was always present in different combinations and degrees.

which includes the full list of the persons I conducted formal interviews with. Some chose to use the name of a family member, others a name related to their childhood, or one related to Crete or their values. Some of the interviewees insisted on not giving a name arguing that they had no problem with being referred to with their real name. In these cases, as well as in some other cases in which they could not think of a pseudonym I chose one myself. In the table I have marked the names that were my choice.

4.3 Some methodological considerations

This section will address specific methodological considerations that are relevant to the current research and also have broader implications.

As already mentioned, Mersin is one of the regions where Cretans were settled at different stages. During the research I was attentive to possible differences in the narratives between old and new Cretans. Suda Güler (2012) in her study on Cretans in Çanakkale, a city in northern Aegean draws attention to the differences in oral history accounts between old and new Cretans. Suda Güler finds that there are differences in the way they perceive the immigration process. She also draws attention to the differentiation between the labels of refugee and exchangee.[49] It is true that there were differences regarding the concrete conditions of resettlement and the legal process that applied to those who came before the exchange and the exchangees.

In Mersin, as well, there were references to the difficulties of the migration process on the part of the old Cretans, who point out that their ancestors did not come in an organised way and had to flee violence and suffering. As Yasemin said:

> *They didn't come with the exchange. They had come before. They couldn't stand the torture and the treatment as second-class citizens. They had to flee. They were also under some pressure from the government of that time. Because when the Ottomans withdrew, they were compelled. Because they were not given the opportunity to live there anymore.*

There are also references to Cretans who manage to get rich because their coming to Anatolia was better planned and therefore they could bring more property

[49] Suda Güler (2012, p. 49) shares some of the complaints: "They were given land, olive groves, houses, we didn't get anything", "They got their properties' worth here, we only came with what we could bring".

with them. As far as adaptation to the new homeland is concerned, it was also argued that the old Cretans essentially laid the groundwork, so as the new Cretans were eventually more easily accepted.[50] Despite such comments, the phase of arrival to Anatolia has not emerged as a differentiating factor in terms of the way they relate to their roots and to their expressions of identification, or to the degree they practice Cretan culture.[51] Although many preserve the separation "old" and "new" Cretan when referring to themselves or to others, they are ultimately united under the label "Cretan". Consequently, methodologically, the two groups will not be separated as units of analysis.

As far as reaching out to participants for research is concerned, I realised the important role that gatekeepers and the people with whom the researcher initially gets in touch may play in the course of the fieldwork. Besides the obvious role gatekeepers play in terms of building trust in the field, I have also observed that in a way they can potentially influence the direction of the research. I noticed early in the fieldwork that political affiliation as well as personal likes and dislikes could be determining of the people I would eventually be introduced to. One of my strategies to minimise the possible implications this would have on the results of the research was to build an as diversified network of contacts as possible. It is noteworthy that some participants, particularly those with whom I had a closer relationship, in some cases exhibited a patronising attitude toward my research, taking initiatives and expressing disapproving comments regarding my choices to speak with certain people. Regrettably, I am quite certain that such attitudes are also related to my status as a student, my gender, and my age.

At this point, I would also like to spare a few words about some difficulties I faced in the field regarding reaching to people for an interview. As already implied, entering the field was relatively easy (I will touch upon that in more detail in the

[50] It should be reminded here that a large number of old Cretans were settled in the village. Although some of my informants originate in the village, it is possible that if I had done research at the village as well the findings could have been different in this respect. I remember that during my very first visit in 2015 people in Melemez (Ihsaniye) did complain about the conditions in the village and about the fact that it is far from the sea and has less opportunities for development.

[51] Again, here we can make a differentiation between the rural and the urban environment as far as cuisine and language is concerned. It can be said that these parts of culture have been maintained better in the villages.

following section). However, this does not mean that reaching the stage of an interview was always a smooth process. I had to face many cancellations, many "unkept promises" and unanswered calls. I can imagine that this is part of the fieldwork experience, – indeed part of the human interaction in general. However, apart from some possible general reasons (such as lack of time) of why someone may not stick to a plan or be initially ostensibly eager to share their experiences with me but then uninterested in accepting my invitation for an interview, I think it is also possible to do a reading of the situation at a second layer and this very reluctancy to participate in the research can be also considered a finding from the field.

I believe that deeper reasons for the refusal by some actors to be interviewed lie in the way they relate to their Cretanness. In other words, they may not have had a genuine interest in discussing their experiences, their thoughts and their family stories. Some of these individuals are active members of various Cretan associations, which raises questions about the purpose of the associations and reinforces the argument about the symbolic character of Cretanness. Additionally, their reluctance to participate in the interview may stem from insecurity about their knowledge of Crete and the fear of being tested or examined.

I would also like to connect this issue with the process of the (recorded) interview and highlight how it was experienced by some of the informants. While some were comfortable with being recorded and the overall interview process, for others it signified a stressful, and less easy and "natural" process. Some participants who would typically speak to me in an informal manner would switch to a more formal tone during the interview. In several instances, I had to reassure them that the interview was meant to be a relaxed conversation focused on their personal experiences and views, rather than an examination of their knowledge. Denizali, for instance, admitted that she had felt quite anxious the previous night in anticipation of the interview.

Questions about religious beliefs and political views were probably the most sensitive topics during the interviews. Although there were many who would proudly disclose their religious beliefs and political views, others opted for more general responses. To ease their concerns, I frequently reminded interviewees that their responses would be shared anonymously, though several individuals were comfortable with me using their real names. Talking about family and ancestors proved another

sensitive issue for some participants. The interview with Maria was quite an emotional one. At some point, while talking about her family, she started crying. For the first few seconds, I did not know what the best and most appropriate reaction would be on my side. Eventually, I decided that the best I could do was to give her time to express her emotions fully until she was ready to continue with the interview.

Interviewing is a relational work, which involves the active participation of at least two parts in a give-and-take interaction (Lillrank, 2012, p. 282). Throughout fieldwork I reflected a lot on my positioning in the process of interviewing, trying to balance my subjectivity between the "knowing subject" and the "learning subject". I also reflected on the possible power dynamics developed in the context of the social interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer is often perceived as the most powerful actor in the process. Indeed, the interviewer manages the process, asks certain questions according to their research design and has a theoretical background that the interviewee may lack. These can summarise the interviewer's dominant position. However, this is the one side of the coin, as I often felt that the actual power is in the hands of the interviewees who share their valuable – for my research – experiences and views with me (Lillrank, 2012). The respondents also hold the power to reply, to opt for silence or to choose the extent of what they would share, thus also having the capacity to potentially affect the outcome of the research. There were also instances, in which I became the interviewee, and I felt that my "powerful" position became subordinate when they turned my own questions or other questions to me. It was not always easy for me to answer questions about my own religious or political beliefs, about my opinion on the political situation in Turkey, or about my thoughts on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, and an adored historical figure among the Cretans.

On the part of the interviewees, interview is a process in which they are invited to share their experiences, to express their views, to talk about their realities. Interviews are spaces where participants disclose themselves but at the same time "negotiate how they want to be known by the stories they perform for the immediate audience – a particular listener/questioner" (Kohler Riessman, 2012, p. 373). Respondents frequently refrained from telling something that may be deemed inappropriate. I am aware that respondents may also have told me what they thought I

wanted to hear, what they believed would be well-received or what they wanted to be heard. Additionally, I recognise that people's responses and comments may be affected by the setting in which they were made. For example, what they say in a public environment may be more guarded or politically correct, while they may be more relaxed and informal among friends and family members, or at the presence of only the interviewer. Likewise, during a formal interview, people may be more conscious about what they share, whereas during an informal discussion, it is more probable that they express themselves more freely.

Erotokritos is a case in point. Erotokritos is a Cretan with whom I spent a considerable amount of time. He had expressed multiple times very strong opinions about those who claim to be Cretans despite not knowing the Cretan language or culture. However, during the interview when I asked him about the relationship between language and culture, he took a completely different stance and preferred to depict those Cretans as "people burning with the love for Crete" (*Girit sevdası ile yanan insanlar*), regardless of the fact that they do not speak the Cretan dialect. Such a discrepancy was revealed to me because I had associated with him a lot. Lokum is another example: she wanted to make sure that the recorder was turned off when she described the discrimination Cretans from Cunda experienced at school in Ayvalik because they could not speak proper Turkish, most probably because she wished to refrain from sharing something negative or inappropriate.

The setting of the interview may affect the narratives as well, as the perspective a person chooses to present is not independent of their audience. As previously stated, I tried to conduct the interviews in a private setting. In Yasemin's case it was necessary to meet her at her workplace, as she has a very busy schedule, which made it difficult to find a suitable time and place for the interview. Although we managed to conduct the largest part of the interview privately, towards the end of our discussion outsiders entered the place and started listening to us. The audience changed and so did Yasemin's approach, as she started interacting with the people who were present and adopted a narrative that could appeal to them as well.

Interviewing and the whole fieldwork is a process in which the participants (including the researcher) summon, consciously or unconsciously, certain subject positions and activate certain identities. At the interviews there is always "a range of

subject positions that could underpin the accounts [one] offers in response to interview questions" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2012, p. 37). This pertains to the relational and interactional nature of the interview, involving the performance of one's "preferred self" (Kohler Riessman, 2012, p. 373), or the standpoint one adopts. A "we" or an "I" can mean many different things alternately or simultaneously. The same person might speak at times as a Cretan Turk, as a woman, as a Mersinian, as an Ayvaliot, as the voter of a certain party and so on.

In such recordings of personal accounts, as in interviews, it is easier to grasp the paradoxical elements in people's narratives, which might also not be that paradoxical if we keep in mind the fluidity, the fragmentation and the momentary character of identities, boundaries, histories, ascribed and endorsed categories. This is how one can make sense of inconsistencies, such as when the same person who considers the characterisation "*Rum*" (Greek) as a curse, can, a few minutes later, speak of her goal to promote friendship with Greeks. Similarly, the same persons who recount the difficulties of refugeeness may later express, without any empathy, racist comments about the Syrian refugees. Or, an individual who views all Cretans (Greeks and Turks) as categorically the same, simultaneously argues for the pure Turkish lineage of the Cretan Turks.

4.4 Positionality in the field

In this section I will discuss my positionality in the field and how I have understood it to have affected the research participants' stance towards me.

As mentioned, my first encounter with the field was at the Cretan Festival in Kuşadası, where Cretanness was *de facto* in the foreground. I also joined the festival emphasising the Cretan part of my identity. It was to a great extent a strategic choice, as I assumed it would help me build rapport with the participants of the festival and potential informants. Throughout my fieldwork, I generally continued to emphasise the Cretan part of my identity, although it did not always prove as useful as I would expect. When I say that I was "emphasising the Cretan part of my identity", I mean that I was highlighting my local roots over my nationality. Additionally, I tried to use the Cretan dialect as much as possible, a dialect that I do not normally use but I am accustomed to because I grew up in rural Crete. Using the Cretan dialect was almost a

folklore experience for me, but also something that I often felt brought me closer to my origins.[52] I must also admit that I do carry myself some of the Cretan localist sentiment that Herzfeld (2003) describes (though without the patriotic dimension). With that in mind, I constantly tried to question myself, so as not to lose my "scholarly detachment" (Delamont, 1995, p. 14).

It can be said that my Cretan origins facilitated my entering the field as immediately a common ground was established between the participants of the research and me. This common ground was translated by Denizali as "a feeling that we are sisters" (*kardeş duygusu geldi içimden*), that there is "blood connection" (*kan bağımız vardır*) between us. For others, it was translated as commonality in external characteristics and physical traits, summarised by Erotokritos in the observation that "we (the Cretans) are from a different race" (*imaste apo alli ratsa*). It also meant an exclusive Cretan capacity of understanding certain things, such as Arnavut's comment that only we, as Cretans, can understand Cretan culture, which "an outsider cannot understand" (*başka dışarıdan biri anlayamaz*). Murtaza made a similar comment as a response to the question about whether he would want his son to marry a Cretan woman. He brought me as an example of someone with common culture. Note that although he speaks Turkish, he lists the names of the dishes in Greek.

> *Now, we bring you vrouves (wild radish), we put askolibrous (golden thistle) on the table. You don't ask "What's this?" In fact, you like it. These are our common ground. We eat sfouggato (scrambled eggs with potatoes and zucchini), we can sit and eat hohlious (snails) together. We have a common culture; we have a common lifestyle.*

My "Cretan credentials" also functioned positively in persuading Arfano for an interview. He was initially hesitant but warmed up and agreed on an interview after he had a short exchange in the Cretan dialect.

[52] My engagement with Cretan Turks raised questions about my own family past, of which I have very limited knowledge, about local history, about the importance of including narratives of lived experience in historical narratives. Frequently, I found myself reflecting on the fact that the forebears of those people had lived on the same land, shared the same local customs, and sang the same songs with my ancestors, but at the same time their realities have been presented in a very disconnected way from each other; the general Cretan Greek mind perceives the Cretan Muslims (*Tourkokritikoi*) as some foreign body that had to be dispelled. See also Herzfeld (2003) for an account of the coexistence of localism and nationalism in the case of Crete and the exclusion of the "Turkish" element from the Cretan folklore.

At the same time, I was often treated as a kind of authority on Crete, as a "real/genuine Cretan" (*harbi Giritli*) whom they would ask, in order, either to "verify" their Cretanness or to acquire information about Crete (at times about Greece as well). At the first festival I attended, I was invited on the stage, in order to "confirm" that the dialect Cretan Turks speak is the original language of the island and is becoming extinct because it is not being used by younger generations in Crete. This is actually a question that came up several times throughout the fieldwork. Some were curious to know about how Cretan Turks are viewed by their former compatriots. They would also ask about the correct version of certain words or about certain dishes. I must confess that my knowledge was not in all topics as extensive as they presumed. My Cretanness was questioned by Denizali, for example, when during a discussion I had with her, her sister, and her mother, I failed to meet their standards of knowledge when it came to Cretan cuisine. Denizali concluded, laughing, that my family must have migrated to Crete from somewhere else.

Although my Cretan origins positioned me to a great extent as an insider in the field, and my knowledge of Turkish let me reach out easily to everyone, my non-Turkish origins made me an outsider. My Greek origins hold additional significance for my positionality in the field. Turkey and Greece share a long history (and present) of periods and moments of wars, crises, and rapprochements. For Greeks, Turks are the primary national "other", and mainstream historiography, media and lack of contact maintain stereotypes and at least a suspicious view of Turkey and Turks. Turkey has always held a central position in public and private discourses in Greece. For people in Turkey, Greece has a more peripheral position in the academic and public spheres (Lytra, 2014, p. 6), moving a bit closer to the centre in periods of crisis in the bilateral relations. While Greece was one of the countries that Turkey fought against during its War of Independence, Greeks do not significantly preoccupy the average Turk on a constant basis.

It would not be inappropriate to argue that Cretans in Turkey constitute a special case (perhaps along with other groups who have found themselves in-between

the two countries)[53] for several – obvious – reasons. Their past is directly intertwined with the historical relations between Greece and Turkey. Beyond the geographic origins and aspects of cultural commonality in the present, they have a familiarity with Crete, developed through the stories (mostly positive but also negative) passed down by their ancestors. Some have developed a further familiarity by visiting Crete and maintaining connections with people there. Yetimaki's feelings towards Crete echo many Cretans' views:

> *We have a culture that comes from there. There are incidents our family narrated. We have Greek Orthodox (Rum) neighbours there. Of course, they are not mine; they are my ancestors'. They have relationships; they always narrated. Of course, we look at those people with more sympathy now, compared to a normal, ordinary Turkish citizen. Because we grew up in that culture.*

The lack of any profound patriotic feelings towards Greece on my part and my critical stance towards the official Greek narrative initially led me to overlook the Greek (and assumed Christian) aspect of my identity. However, during my time in the field, I was often indirectly reminded of it. Many Cretans I interacted with were conscious of my Greekness and were cautious not to say anything inappropriate or anti-Greek that might offend me. For instance, I noticed that Lokum and others in Ayvalik were quite conscious about using the label "*gavur*", which is considered an offensive characterisation for the non-Muslims, when they described the discrimination they or their forebearers experienced. Zeruş asked me whether I am comfortable with her using the word "*Rum*" because she was not sure whether Greeks would use it. After the interview, Bayram Cemali openly acknowledged that he had been careful with his words "so as not to hurt my feelings as a Greek". Bayram Cemali also made clear that Cretans' interest in Crete is a nostalgic interest and that they have no other agenda: "Each Cretan's nostalgia is to see Crete. It is not to go and live there or lay claim to it (*oraya sahip çıkmak*)".

[53] Hirschon (2006) for example presents the differentiated perceptions held by the Orthodox Christians, who had emigrated from Asia Minor as per the Lausanne Convention. Their perceptions are formed based on their relations and experiences with their Muslim neighbours in Anatolia and vary from the conventional ones cultivated by official history.

When I asked Denizali about what her forebears narrated to her, she hesitantly mentioned the hardships they must have faced, but soon switched to the positive memories they carried.

> *Now… how shall I put it? Because they came with the exchange, of course, they suffered a lot. But they had never narrated bad things to us. Ehhh well, beatings, how shall I tell you, I don't want to make you feel uneasy. They raided the houses. "There is a raid tonight". They hide. Or they had Greek neighbours. Very close [neighbours], they would let them in, they would hide them. Well, massacres, fights, beatings, etc. They didn't narrate these things to us. Always good stuff: the things that grew in our gardens. "We had friendships in the village, we used to play in the streets". They always told us the good side. But, of course, bad things happened as well. But I've never heard of them.*

In general, my respondents emphasised that their parents or grandparents presented life in Crete and relations with their Christian neighbours in a positive light, while negative narratives of the past and incidents of violence were put in the framework of state policies or imperialist involvement, that spoiled the peaceful conditions of coexistence on the island. Bayram Cemali thinks that both Crete and Greece were used by English, Germans and Americans in line with their own interests. Sardunya distinguishes the Christian compatriots of her Muslim ancestors from the elements sent from Greece, who were, according to her, the ones "who did the atrocities" on the island. Her husband was quick to interrupt her and to point out that "it is not right to attribute this issue only to Greece" but also to the Great Powers who aimed at "ousting Turkey from Europe". Those who have visited Crete, or some other part of Greece commented positively on their experience. Zeruş, who had earlier mentioned her multiple travels to Greece, chose to conclude the interview with a statement of friendship, when asked if she had anything else to share:

> *I am sincere, I love all Greek citizens. Why shouldn't I? When we go abroad, I feel the same respect and love for the Greeks as for the citizens of the other countries. Because both peoples faced serious problems. Was it because they wanted to? No. They faced [them] because of the administrations above us.*

It is impossible to determine how different accounts would have varied if someone with a different profile had conducted the research instead of me. While I believe my informants shared only what they genuinely believed, it is possible that they adjusted the "plot" to some degree based on my identity. Given that fieldwork

and interviewing are interactional processes, it is difficult to disconnect the accounts produced by participants in the research from the identity and background of the researcher. In short, in my view, the emphasis on our commonalities, the expression of friendly sentiments towards Greeks, and the attempt to downplay the violent past cannot be detached from the fact that the audience for their narratives was a Greek person.

While the cases described above were prominent, it is noteworthy that the Cretans may not have always "filtered" their behaviour and words, as exemplified by Sedat[54] (pseudonym) from Mersin. Sedat – in a well-intended gesture – handed me a Turkish flag, so that I wave it along with the Izmir March (*İzmir Marşı*), a song about the liberation of the city of Izmir from the Greek Army in 1922.[55] Osman is another case: At a gathering, Osman, told me half-joking half-serious that three fourth of the island of Crete belong to Turkey and only one fourth is Greek territory. This claim has, in fact, been circulating for the past few years and has gained some footing among nationalist circles and among some Cretan Turks, as I have noticed in relevant discussions on Facebook. The following day another Cretan, who had been present at the gathering apologised for Osman's behaviour.

My positionality as an outsider to Turkey's society is one of the issues that have preoccupied me a lot both throughout my research and in the process of compiling my findings. As an outsider, I am aware of the potential limitations in my understanding and interpretation of certain cultural practices and social phenomena. I can recall discussing my research with friends from Turkey and experiencing "moments of revelation" upon comments that might have been obvious to them but had escaped my notice. It is a fact that I do not share the same cultural load as the participants of the study. Despite my lengthy stay in Turkey, my academic work on the country, my substantial integration into society, and my coexistence and interaction with various segments of it, I still lack an inherent connection to the country and its people. This connection can only be acquired through socialisation from a young age,

[54] Sedat is not included in the list of informants. Although I spent a lot of time with him and his family, we were unable to arrange a formal interview.

[55] From another point of view, this incident can be interpreted as a welcoming gesture, implying that he perceived me as "one of them".

something that an outsider to the society cannot attain despite developing close relationships. This cannot but affect the process of message receiving and decoding, as subtle nuances might not be fully grasped.

I have constantly reflected on the possible limitations that 'outsiderness' may bring along, throughout the present study (but also beyond it). However, I also firmly believe that a perspective of the outsider can be valuable in its own right and advantageous in different respects. One such advantage pertains to the relationship that the research participants form with the researcher, as it remains unaffected by preconceptions that may arise when a researcher approaches the field from a more familiar position. This "distance" can create a safer ground for the discussion of sensitive issues. Moreover, in several instances, the view of the outsider can grant a fresh eye and offer new perspectives. Common socialisation might also result in a limited perspective, as an insider may often have strongly pre-formed viewpoints regarding the community of which one is a member.

Having said that, it should also be kept in mind that insider and outsider positions are not static, and they shift throughout the course of the research, as I also attempted to illustrate within the context of my positionality in the field. Furthermore, the methodological issues researchers must contemplate upon are similar in essence, whether they are insiders or outsiders. All individuals have necessarily a limited perspective as it arises from their experience, their ideological biases, the amount of knowledge one possesses, the ways of knowing, the cultural load one carries and so on. In each setting studied,

> *it is not the case that there is just "one truth" that the observer or interviewer either does or does not "see" or "hear". Rather, each researcher implicitly draws on his or her commonsense cultural knowledge (...) and creates or constructs a truth or interpretation – meaning – that will work for all practical (intellectual) purposes.* (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012, p. 101)

One of the researcher's tasks is to reflect on their positionality, so as to be as much aware as possible of the conditions under which the truth or interpretation is constructed and to do justice to the people whom they study.

4.5 Limitations of the study

A first limitation of the study pertains to the units of analysis. At the phase of research design, the units of analysis were defined as the district of Ayvalik, including the island of Cunda, and as the urban areas of Mersin, excluding the villages of Melemez (Ihsaniye) and Hebilli, where Cretans had been resettled and still reside. The aim was to limit the focus of analysis to a town (Ayvalik) and a city (urban Mersin), keeping in mind their demographic particularities. However, it became apparent that fully separating the centre of Mersin from the villages is not entirely possible, as the present and the past of many residents of Mersin are closely intertwined with them. It also became obvious that Ayvalik, which administratively includes the island of Cunda, is not a "bounded whole" and that Cunda, in some respects, is viewed as distinct from Ayvalik. Koufopoulou (2003, p. 210) also notes that "the inhabitants of the island have created a strong sense of *Cundalı* (meaning from Cunda, emphasis added) identity, the expression of which is frequently apparent in their confrontations with the neighbouring people of Ayvalik".

A relevant limitation concerns the heterogeneity of the Cretan population in Mersin and Ayvalik. I base my analysis on "Cretans in Mersin" and "Cretans in Ayvalik", however among them there are people with very different life courses: there are the ones who never left Mersin or Ayvalik, the ones who spent most of their lives on Cunda, the ones who grew up in the village and moved to Mersin as teenagers or as adults and those who left for education and professional reasons and returned to their hometown at a later age. Nevertheless, I have tried to be mindful of possible particularities and to incorporate pertinent details, if necessary for the analysis. Similarly, although significant social categories, such as gender, socioeconomic status, education level, political affiliation and so on, have not been systematically included as differentiating factors in the analysis, I again tried to interpret and analyse the findings keeping those social categories into consideration.

Another limitation of this study (and most probably of all similar studies) relates to the inclusivity of the narratives, views and perspectives shared in the thesis. It is inevitable that "different insiders may tell radically different versions of their own story" (Cornell, 2000, p. 47) and that different people attach different meanings to the

same thing and “assimilate it to the idiosyncrasies of their own experiences and personalities” (Cohen, 1985, p. 74). It is impossible to account for all such differences. The presentation and the analysis of the findings is primarily based on the recurrent patterns that came up during the fieldwork. It is also important to acknowledge that there may be versions that do not precisely align with the ones presented in this thesis, and that there are stories that I have failed to grasp.

One final limitation relates to the language spoken in the field and used in the interviews. It should be noted that Turkish is not my mother tongue, and although I am fluent in Turkish, and I did not have any difficulties in understanding my interlocutor and maintaining a conversation, there were moments in which I would like to have been able to demonstrate more flexibility in the formulation and reformulation of some questions.

CHAPTER 5

SYMBOLIC CRETANNESS

Nothing remains. And if they tell you the opposite, they lie.
(Murat)

The same culture continues.
(Hüseyin)

We preserve [the identity]. By not denying it in any way. How else could we preserve it?
(Kara Kartal)

The first quote above presents an absolute view that Cretan culture has completely faded away. Murat (pseudonym)[56] has named his business in Ayvalik "Cretan" (*Giritli*). I approached him with the help of Erotokritos, and the three of us had a conversation over tea. From what I understood, he has a relatively active connection with his roots, and declares himself a "pure Cretan" (*katkısız Giritli*). He has also travelled and met Cretans in other regions of Turkey, and is disappointed because Cretans are not bound (*bağlı*) to one another. The second quote, on the other hand, is more optimistic, albeit somewhat utopian. Hüseyin is one of the Cretans in Cunda, who speaks Cretan Greek, is married to a Cretan woman and has a network of Cretans within his immediate family, as his siblings also have Cretan spouses. He encounters fellow Cretans in Cunda, which provides more opportunities for regular interactions and for the preservation of some degree of "the communal basis" (Alba, 1990) of Cretanness. According to the third quote by Kara Kartal, the non-denial of Cretan identity is considered equal to its preservation. In fact, it is viewed as currently the only way to account for the maintenance of Cretanness.

Fieldwork has clearly demonstrated that cultural markers among second, third and later generations of Cretans have been fading away as a result of a long process of adaptation to Turkey and assimilation. Language is no longer a means of

[56] Murat was not eager to participate in a formal interview.

communication, although some individuals maintain knowledge of it. Certain aspects of cultural expression, such as dances, have completely disappeared, while music tradition[57], including *mantinades*[58], remains in the memory of some second-generation Cretans. Moreover, there is limited knowledge about family history, but also the history of the Cretans as a whole. Scarce are the narratives relevant to Crete that have been passed down through generations, and that could potentially establish and transfer the link between land and people to the next generations (Aydıngün & Yıldırım, 2010, p. 28). The preserved narratives predominantly centre around life after relocation. There are still some Cretans who adhere to the Bektashi faith in the region of Çukurova; however, there has been a significant decline in its practice (Şenesen, 2011, p. 62).[59] In Mersin I encountered a few who identified themselves as Bektashi[60], while the issue did not hold great prominence in the narratives of my informants in general.

[57] Cretan Muslims by and large shared dances, music, and musical instruments with the Christians (Fournarakis, 1929, p. 4; Williams, 2003, p. 219). Cretans in Cunda recall some dances and musical instruments (Williams, 2003). Some of my informants also recall celebrations with Cretan dances and music. With the ageing of the musicians among the first generation "the call for Cretan music faded; the tradition of singing, dancing and playing Cretan musical instruments was not passed on, nor was recorded music used as substitute for the musicians' skills" (Williams, 2003, p. 209).

[58] *Mantinades* (sing. *mantinada*) are rhyming couplets, part of the Cretan folk literature or "placed literature" as Ball (2002) calls it. The recitation of *mantinades* is also a social practice that involves improvisation and dialogical exchange through singing (Zaimakis, 2019). Currently, they remain a popular verse form in Crete, sung to the musical form known as *kondylies* (Ball, 2002; Williams, 2003). According to Herzfeld (2003, p. 305) "it was the *mantinada* that especially confirmed the common ground between two religious groups sepafrated not only by their beliefs and ritual practices but also by a powerfully differentiated relationship to the locus of political authority under Ottoman rule". Cretans in Turkey brought this cultural practice with them, but it has weakened over the years along with the language.
Let me cite two *mantinades* produced by the Cretans in Turkey. The first one is documented by Erkal (2008, p. 74) and refers to the experience of refugeeness: Crete my beautiful island, crown of the Levant / Your soil is precious, your stone is a diamond / Even if the soil of the East becomes gold / It cannot find again Crete's nobility (*Kriti mou omorfo nisi, korona tou Levante / To choma sou einai malama, i petra sou diamante/ Ts'Anatolis ta chomata chrisafi na genoune / Tsi Kritis thn evgenia den ti xanathoroune*). The second one, which I was told by Hüseyin, is a comment on the political developments in Turkey after 1950: The passage of time and unfortunate years brought us to this point / The Republicans are paddling, while the Democrats are steering the ship (*Ekia to 'feran oi kairoi, ki oi voulismenoi chronoi/ Na'nai oi Halktsides sta koupia ki oi Dimokrates sto timoni*). The latter is a paraphrase from another *mantinada*, also known in Crete.

[59] See also Sepetçioğlu (2011) about Bektashis in Kusadasi

[60] All of them grew up in the two villages in the area of Mersin. I met no one who grew up in urban Mersin and self-labelled as Bektashi.

Additionally, many non-Bektashi Cretans have an unclear picture about their ancestors' religious affiliation.[61]

Being Cretan is no longer considered an important criterion in marriage strategies. According to many informants, the first generation opted to marry, or to marry their children off to fellow Cretans, preferably someone from the extended family or someone known and approved by the family. However, in the last 40-50 years, endogamy has ceased to be practiced. Intermarriage has also had a negative impact on the preservation of a distinct culture. Furthermore, solidarity ties have weakened, as noted by Arfano with a sense of bitterness:

> *Cretans are very nice; they are very relaxed people. They are very good with people, with guests. But they are not very attached to each other; they are a bit weak when it comes to attachment and getting together (A işte tutkunları yok, tutkunluk ve bir araya gelmeler biraz zayıf). Is it because of life conditions, I don't know, but they have weak attachments. (…) Look, for example, the Easterners, the Kurds, for example. They are more attached to each other than us. If something happens, they come together immediately, they do something.*

One of the questions I asked my informants was a question on how they identify themselves. Although direct questions about identification may not fully capture "the complexity of the oscillation of an individual in social interaction" (Nagata, 1974, p. 10), the answers provided to that question, along with the totality of the narratives and my overall experience in the field, suggest that Cretanness holds some importance in self-identification. However, it does not constitute a central consideration, even when individuals express vocal identification with it at times. It should be noted that "an individual's self-identification does not necessarily have to be the same at all times and places" (Waters, 1990, p. 19). Nevertheless, this question provided valuable insights, allowing the informants to express their various self-identifications. It can also be argued that identification with Cretanness is more closely related to one's origins and the associations it evokes, rather than stemming from a sense of belonging. The response from Giritliyim Farklıyım exemplifies the complexity of self-identification among Cretans: "Cretan… it does not come to my mind at all… I'm

[61] It is a plausible scenario that some of the Bektashi believers had to abandon their faith after their resettlement to Anatolia, because of the pressure by Sunni Islam or as an effort to adapt to the new society, as Koufopoulou (2003) argues. They might have also been directly affected by the 1925 law for the suppression of the dervish orders (see Zürcher, 2010, pp. 191-193).

Cretan but I was born in Mersin". This statement was followed immediately by an emphatic addition, "I'm pure (literally pure-blooded, *safkan*) Cretan" highlighting that all her ancestors came from Crete and evoking a primordial connection to her Cretanness.

At the same time, as mentioned in the introduction there is an increased activity, visibility, and embracement of origin by the ancestors of the Cretan Muslims. These two types of patterns might seem contradictory, and this discrepancy calls for answers. At a first level, one may interpret it as an attempt by the current generations to revitalise their Cretan identity or aspects of it, along the lines of Hansen's "law of the third-generation return" (1938), which describes a process in which third generation immigrants will automatically "strive to remember and to recover what has been lost" by the second generation in its rush to adapt to and to integrate in the new country (Jacobson, 2006, p. 3). What Hansen predicted in a teleological fashion some decades ago is that:

> *Whenever any immigrant group reaches the third-generation stage in its development a spontaneous and almost irresistible impulse arises which forces the thoughts of many people of different professions, different positions in life and different points of view to interest themselves in that one factor which they have in common: heritage – the heritage of blood* (p. 12).

Some research participants have also connected the recent interest with the role of the third generation and have interpreted the developments within in a framework similar to Hansen's. Resmolu is among those who view the recent increased interest as an attempt by the third generation to preserve some of the "cultural stuff" that remains:

> *(…) the third generation felt the need to search its roots and there is also the need to pass the things that come from the Cretan culture down to the next generations. I mean the materials we can find, things in the house that come from Crete, clothes from Crete, phrases (deyişler), folk songs (maniler) and especially the culinary culture; two administrators of the association will prepare a book.*

An important component of the current expressions of Cretanness is that they are not limited solely to the third generation but to the second generation as well. Moreover, it is difficult to view Mary, born in 1990 and is a third-generation Cretan, and Sardunya, for example, born in 1959 and also a third-generation Cretan, in the

same light, as they demonstrate different degree of involvement. These indicate that the trend taking place is not merely a generational matter, and that it should be explored in its detail and within a broader context. [62]

One of the sites for the construction of identity that Cornell & Hartmann (1998) analyse is the site of culture. Culture, first and foremost, is the categories of ascription, that form the basis on which the dominant culture groups people. Despite Turkey's ethnic diversity, the dominant culture tends to encompass this diversity under a unifying Turkishness, which may at best allow for a limited cultural diversity, as long as it does not challenge the dominant "Turkish" category and the singular Turkish identity performed in the public sphere (Neyzi, 2002). The homogeneity of the Turkish nation was for decades not something to be questioned and therefore "different self-identifications had little public space for overt articulation (with the exception of non-Muslims) until very recently" (Iğsız, 2008, p. 459). Bayram Cemali, who during one of our previous discussions had characterised the Cretans as "dishonest" because they did not openly identify as Cretans until the 1970s and began expressing it more openly after the 2000s, made the following observation in response to my question:

> *EN: It seems to me that the Cretan identity is more often claimed lately. Is it true?*
>
> *Bayram Cemali: Of course, yes. Why? In the past there was the understanding of nation-state (ulus-devlet anlayışı) in Turkey, you know. (...) Maybe people saw that the state is not such a taboo. Now, you can easily say "I'm Cretan", "I'm Laz". In the past there were some discourses, one could not digress from these discourses. (Eskiden bazı söylemler vardı, o söylemlerin dışına çıkılamıyordu).*

In Ayata's formulation (1997, p. 60), "the 1990s in Turkey [were] years during which identity politics became a means of expressing protest against both increasing inequalities and social, political and cultural domination". During those years Turkey also witnessed the "mushrooming of (…) civil societal elements" (Kadioğlu, 1996, p. 190) that had been previously absent from the political arena. Beyond the

[62] Paköz Türkeli (2016) who studied the second and third generation of exchangees in Çatalca, a small town near Istanbul, also notes an increased interest in their origins and identities. She locates this interest in the third generation. She also parallels it to the momentum that issues of identity and culture acquired globally, but also in Turkey, towards the end of the twentieth century, and connects it to the availability of resources, that allow individuals to access information about their origins.

particularities of the Turkish context, in which different actors emerged and organised in the social and political sphere towards the end of the twentieth century (e.g. the Kurdish and the Islamist movements), the past decades we have been witnessing in different corners of the world the emergence of different voices under the umbrella of identity politics or politics of difference. Bauman, seeing the world through postmodern eyes, argues that we live in an era in which "difference comes at a premium" (1997/2015, p. 55). I would argue that the expression of a different origin has, in any case, been more accustomed to and often for the one that express it, it may be a colourful touch against homogenising tendencies of modernity or an anchor within an unstable reality.

At a regional level, of great importance is the rapprochement between Turkey and Greece in the 2000s. This development has provided more opportunities for interactions between the people of the two countries, has also facilitated a more comfortable engagement with previously taboo issues. "They had been afraid of the state (*devletten çekınıyorlardı*). The state, eeeh there was the Cyprus issue, there were problems with Greece, eeeh and there was strong nationalism, and they were worried that they wouldn't get positive reactions" (*hoş karşılamazlar diye endişe ediliyordu*).[63] This is the response given by Cesur, one of the founders of the Cretan association in Mersin, when asked why it took long for such associations to be established. This response is indicative of how bilateral relations have affected or have the possibility to affect the Cretans' (and possibly other groups' with the similar background) participation in the public sphere and the way others perceive them.

Karpat (2000) draws attention to the population of Turkey with roots in the former Ottoman territories of the Balkans and Caucasus, who, in the 1990s, formed regional ethnic associations that were previously prohibited by the government. Karpat (2000, p. xvi) connects the disintegration of the USSR and Yugoslavia, and the

[63] The rescue aid that Greece offered to Turkey after the catastrophic earthquake in the Izmit area in August 1999, and the reciprocation by Turkey after the September 1999 earthquake in Athens, led to a change in "popular perceptions of the 'other'" in both countries (Karakatsanis, 2014, p. 198). This change set the stage for several significant shifts in the official positions of both states (see Karakatsanis, 2014, pp. 197-205) triggering a climate of "Greek-Turkish friendship" at both the state and civil society levels. The association in Mersin had been founded before 1999, during a period when Turkish-Greek relations had reached a new low. However, it was able to benefit from, and simultaneously participate in the climate of rapprochement between the two countries. This is generally applicable for similar initiatives, the most characteristic being the Lausanne Treaty Emigrants Foundation.

consequent “reawaken[ing] of (…) old identities and memories”, with the founding of organisations bearing the names of the “Crimean Turks”, “Caucasus”, “Balkan Turks”, etc. in Turkey. An important characteristic of these identifications is that the Turkish identity and their ancestral and regional identities are unified under a historical and cultural identity. Indeed, as the Cretan case also reveals, the regional identity shaped during the Ottoman era serves as a guarantee of Turkishness for the present generations.

Moreover, as Iğsız (2018) argues, the 1990s and early 2000s marked a renewed interest in familial past and memory works, while tracing family histories and origins became a practice of self-identification. It is also within this framework that engagement with the exchange of populations gained momentum in that period. The recent expressions of Cretanness can be placed against this backdrop, as a more fertile ground has been provided for open articulations of it. However, this does not disclose the relationship that Cretans form with their Cretanness and what these visible expressions, the activity and the engagement observed, in combination with the decline of the cultural traits, and the weakening of the communal ties, account for. In this regard, we cannot simply claim that the Cretan culture is being eroded and that Cretanness has been lost to assimilation. Neither can we conclude that we are witnessing an inversion of this assimilation.

Symbolic ethnicity is a concept that can provide valuable insights into the contradiction described above, as it “was intended to account for both indicators of the persistence of various aspects of ethnicity and their simultaneous more pervasive gradual decline” (Kivisto, 2017, p. 1). Symbolic ethnicity describes a situation in which ethnicity has become “increasingly peripheral to the lives of the ethnics” (Alba, 1981, p. 95) but still maintains some significance, even in an intermittent manner. According to Gans, who coined the term, symbolic ethnicity describes a condition in which “cultural patterns are transformed into symbols” (1979, p. 9). Symbolic ethnicity can manifest itself in many forms, but at its core, it involves a nostalgic attachment to the culture of one’s ancestors or that of the old country. Symbolic ethnicity is also demonstrated through a love for and pride in cultural traditions. These feelings can be directed towards specific traditions or to the cultural heritage in general.

Symbolic ethnicity satisfies the need to be "from somewhere" (Waters, 1990, p. 150). It comes from the family but at the same time it involves a personal choice. It allows individuals to construct personal identities that contain some ethnic "spice" (Alba, 1981, p. 96). At the same time, as Alba's (1990) findings suggest, individuals who identify in ethnic terms are more likely to seek out cultural expressions to express their emotions, while those who are exposed to or participate in cultural activities have more opportunities to view themselves through an ethnic lens and self-identify accordingly (p. 121). Waters (1990, pp. 144-145) points to the "lack of an ethnic image", which means that having a pronounced ethnic identification does not necessarily indicate a clear understanding of what that ethnicity entails. Bakalian (1993, p. 13) corroborates to that by describing symbolic Armenianness as follows:

> *One can say he or she is an Armenian without speaking Armenian, marrying an Armenian, doing business with Armenians, belonging to an Armenian church, joining Armenian voluntary associations, or participating in the events and activities sponsored by such organisations.*

Hence, the articulation of a certain self-identification can be accompanied by an occasional involvement in some cultural activities or consumption of cultural goods, it can be expressed as pride in heritage or as curiosity towards the past, or may not extend further that a mere identification articulated in the side stream. Symbolic ethnicity becomes tailored to the individual needs and preferences of those who express a certain identification and can mean different things to different people. The relation of Cretans to Cretanness is characterised by these patterns as well. For Giritli, for instance, Cretanness equals a desire to visit Crete, the island where his ancestors lived as well as an attempt to search his family history. For Lokum it is practiced through the continuation of the cuisine. For others, Cretanness might be enacted at a festival now and then.

An important aspect of symbolic ethnicity – and of symbolic Cretanness, as it will be shown in this chapter – is the aspect of visibility. Symbolic Cretanness gains visibility through associations, festivals, or through online Crete-related groups. Symbolic Cretanness is what comes to the fore, often in a loud way. Symbols, such as food, and arenas, where symbolic Cretanness is practiced, allow for the construction of a tangible version of Cretanness, while the culture is in disarray. It is given a specific

content and specific space, reachable by anyone who wants to be part of it. Visibility is also intended for the outsiders. It is important to demonstrate and to share what the culture has to offer and to manifest the different heritage.

Symbolic expressions, though, are not what remains; they signify what Cretanness has become. Moreover, the disarray of the communal basis and much of the cultural stuff implies that symbolic Cretanness is not an "automatic" result of socialisation. It rather requires agency; it is to a great extent an intentional and conscious process. Besides the overt manifestations, values and affect come to complete the picture of symbolic Cretanness. These will be analysed in the next chapter. In the present chapter I will try to analyse the pillars of symbolic Cretanness as they emerged from the fieldwork. The following sections are in fact interrelated with each other. Food and language come out as symbols while festivals, associations, the internet and trips to Crete are arenas where symbolic Cretanness is organised, enacted, and showcased.

5.1 Food

> *[Cretan culture] is not preserved anymore. Especially now, those old people who only knew Greek are dead. The others have focused to their own everyday life efforts. What's left behind? Well, only food*.[64] (Arnavut)
>
> *We don't have many differences from the rest of the society; the only thing left is food.* (Murat)

The above two quotes are similar but denote two different aspects of the relation between Cretanness and food. Arnavut says that food culture is the only thing that remains from the Cretan culture. Here food takes the status of the single cultural aspect to be preserved. Murat assigns food a relational value depicting it as the only marker of difference between Cretans and the others. For second- and third-generation Cretans, then, food is both a symbol and a boundary. As Caplan (1997, p.3) notes "food is never 'just food' and its significance can never be purely nutritional". Food is a symbol, a metaphor and is "intimately bound up with social relations, including those of power, of inclusion and exclusion, as well as with cultural ideas about classification

[64] *Artık kalmadı. Hele artık o eski, sadece Rumca bilen insanlar öldü zaten. Diğerleri de kendi yaşam gayretlerine döndüler. Ne kaldı geri? İşte, bir yemek.*

(including food and non-food, the edible and the inedible), the human body and the meaning of health." Studies have demonstrated that food serves as a fundamental aspect of groupness and belonging and that it remains a significant marker of cultural diversity, reflecting differences in communities, ethnic groups, regions, social classes and so on.

During the first years after the Cretans' resettlement to Anatolia the differences in food culture was a source of distress and intercultural tension. Several accounts produced by the second- and third-generation Cretans revolve around the existent differences between the Cretans and the locals in Mersin and between the Cretans and the Lesviots in Ayvalik in respect to food habits. Yetimaki summarises the eating habits of the past and how they differed from those of the locals:

> *If we compare the Cretans of the past [with other communities] there are many differences. For example, they drank wine. They ate snails. It was a part of their lives. And wild green leaves culture. They consumed wild green leaves a lot. Well, goat meat, they used to consume a lot of goat meat in the past. These are some of our differences from the other locals. Apart from these [there is also] eftazimo bread.*[65] *We like eftazimo bread a lot.*

Giritliyim Farklıyım remembers that her mother used to close the curtains when she cooked snails. She wanted to avoid being seen from outside, because the consumption of snails is considered forbidden in Islam. This eating habit, as well as the consumption of wine, were frequently brought up by Cretans, both as a source of disapproval by their co-religionists and as a source of differentiation from the latter.

Nisi in Mersin associates the adaptation problems Cretans faced with the use of olive oil instead of animal fats in the preparation of the meals: "They were laughing at us. What do they use in their food, for example? Tail fat, tallow. We don't use them at all. All our dishes are with olive oil". Kemale makes a similar comment:

> *When Cretans came, when they first came, they were humiliated (aşağılanmışlardı) because they prepared everything with olive oil, because they cooked with olive oil. When I say they were humiliated…well let's say they [the locals] spoke against them (yermişler), they criticised them (tenkit etmişler).*

[65] *Eftazimo* (or *ftazimo*) is a Cretan traditional bread made with chickpea flour.

It seems that the ingredients used for the preparation of food were more than just a cooking preference; they were rather a reflection of the inevitable tension that arises upon the encounter between the locals and the newcomers. Köker & Keskiner (2003, p. 201) also depict such a tension through the experience of the exchangees from the region of Macedonia to Izmir, who found the food the locals cooked "almost inedible" because it was cooked with olive oil, while the former were used to cooking with butter.

In Ayvalik, the Lesviots are the Cretans' "significant other". The demarcation line between the Cretans and the Lesviots, from the Cretans' point of view, was the use of butter instead of olive oil and the consumption of bulgur wheat by the latter. Mehmet mentioned that Cretan men in the past would not marry Lesviot women and would mockingly call them "*bulgures*". The word is a Cretan coinage formed with the Turkish word *bulgur* and the Greek feminine plural ending *-es* (*-ες*). The significance of food as a cultural boundary is illustrated in an anecdote, shared by Asiye, about a Lesviot-Cretan couple in Cunda. The couple had a disagreement over whether onions should be added to a specific dish, which eventually led to a fight and their breakup. While it is impossible to know whether this was the actual reason for the breakup, the reproduction of the story is itself indicative of the value attributed to food as a cultural category.

For today's Cretan generations, food is the cultural aspect that has been preserved to some degree. Surely, the emotional dimension of food as a family practice and as a carrier of memory is one of the reasons for its resistance to be relinquished as a marker of cultural and ethnic identity (Williams-Forson, 2018, p. 207). Lokum regrets that she has not recorded her ancestors' stories, but she is content that she has managed to maintain the food culture:

> *They worked a lot here in order to obtain some stuff. Actually, their minds were always on the other shore [of the Aegean]. They were constantly narrating this. Well, 'Crete was this way', 'Rethymno was that way'. But I wish I had recorded what they narrated, their stories, their songs (manilerini); to be honest, I feel sorry for not doing this. The only thing I could do was to protect (sahip çıkmak) the food culture. To be honest, I feel good that I managed to do it.*

When I asked Melike in Mersin whether and how she keeps Cretan culture alive she answered the following:

> *How do I keep it alive? Actually, it cannot be said that I really keep it alive. But I always try to cook our foods, again mainly leaf vegetables, as I learned from my mother. Because we grew up with them, our taste is according to this (zaten zevklerimiz de ona göre), or rather our preferences are in this direction; never without greens. Greens will definitely be on the table. Either cooked or raw, greens are a must (yeşil olmadan olmaz).*

Melike equates the Cretan cuisine with the consumption of leaf vegetables, and she can preserve it thanks to her being taught how to cook them by her mother. Moreover, they are part of her childhood and a taste she is used to. Food appears as a convenient method "of satisfying one's urge to belong in one's ancestral world" (Bakalian, 1993, p.388). Food is one of the aspects of culture that are easily transferable across generations and relatively easily "learnable" if one wishes to acquire the knowledge of it. Furthermore, the perpetuation of it is also welcomed even if not facilitated by a Cretan hand, as it is the case with some non-Cretan wives who learned the proper way of preparing Cretan dishes.

Sepetçioğlu (2011, p. 297) observes the centrality of food for Cretan culture in Kusadasi and argues that food culture was preserved because it has not been affected by the politics of nation state, as was the case with language or the Bektashi faith. There are surely grounds for such an interpretation, as although differences in food culture can lead to cultural estrangement among different communities,[66] food has a less "threatening" status in comparison to other aspects of culture and can in general be incorporated in projects of cultural diversity. A similar argument is made by Alba (1990, p. 299) according to whom one of the reasons for the prominence of the culinary experience among third-generation white ethnics in the US is that "food is very unlikely to arouse controversy or conflict and is capable of being shared across ethnic lines".

[66] Here, I am using the term "community". Elsewhere, I have also used the term "group" and "identity". My use of such terms is not incompatible with the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis and my preference of the term "identification" over "identity" or "groupness" over "groups". After all, as Brubaker & Cooper (2000, p. 5) point out the problem "is not *that* a particular term is used, but *how* it is used" (emphasis in the original). See Brubaker & Cooper (2000) also for the differentiation they make between "categories of practice" and "categories of analysis".

Food has emerged as the most potent aspect of Cretanness. Cooking and eating "Cretan food" are maintained as a practice, as a cultural activity among Cretans. However, as it will be illustrated in the accounts of the respondents, food, has transgressed its mundane dimension and has turned into a symbol which serves to maintain the continuation of symbolic Cretanness. In symbolic ethnicity,

> *All of the cultural patterns which are transformed into symbols are themselves guided by a common pragmatic imperative: they must be visible and clear in meaning to large numbers of third generation ethnics and they must be easily expressed and felt without requiring undue interference in other aspects of life.* (Gans, 1979, p. 9)

Food serves this "pragmatic imperative" of symbolic ethnicity and can function as a "ready source for ethnic symbols" (Gans, 1979, p. 10). For Cretans, this transformation of food into a symbol is also implied by the selective emphasis put on certain foodstuffs, which also function as a source of differentiation from the others and eventually as a marker of distinctiveness and superiority, as it will be shown in the next chapter.

The particularity of the Cretan cuisine was widely cited in both Ayvalik and Mersin. Hirschon (1989, p. 30-31) observes that cuisine was among the areas where difference was perceived by Greek refugees from Asia Minor settled in Kokkinia. She notes that those differences were mostly stressed by women. An interesting aspect among Cretans is that, although the preservation of food culture rested mostly on female hands, men also claim credit for that, as mentions of food were equally present in accounts by both genders. I interpret this observation as a testament to the significance and strong appeal that food holds as a symbol among the Cretans. However, the importance of women's role and women's activities in this regard should not be underestimated, keeping also in mind "the different experiences men and women have in living out their identities" (di Leonardo, 1984, p. 220).

> *The most fundamental characteristic that differentiates the Cretan cuisine from other Anatolian cuisines are the dishes and the salads prepared with wild green vegetables. The wild green vegetables, to which many people do not even give a second look (dönüp bakmadığı) because they do not know their benefits, are the king (baş tacı) of the Cretan table, while olive oil is a must (olmazsa olmazıdır) for the Cretan dishes and salads (…) The Cretans consume wild green vegetables as stuffing for pastries, as salads, and in meat or vegetable*

> *dishes. But wild vegetables are more than just wild vegetables! (Ama lütfen ot deyip gecmeyin!) The preparation of a wild vegetable salad for them is not at all an insignificant matter. The wild green vegetables should not lose their vitamins, while the meal is being prepared and they should still be as green (yemyeşil) as they were when they were picked.*

So reads part of the introduction of a cookbook entitled *Cretan Dishes: A taste of the Aegean* (Uraz & Burgucuk, 2007, pp. 7-8) which includes the collection of more than hundred recipes under the label "Cretan cuisine", although many of the recipes are shared across Turkey. In the remaining part of the introduction the editor delineates the fundamental principles of Cretan cuisine and key ingredients used (and not used) in the preparation of Cretan dishes.

The wild leaf vegetables and olive oil have been transferred in the centre of symbolic Cretanness and are viewed as directly associated with the Cretans. Denizali describes how wild greens are eventually recognised by others as "what Cretans eat": "What are these wild greens? Oh, you buy wild greens! What are these? And so on. Now everyone knows. Oh, Cretans eat those wild greens. They are really good; we can eat them too". Osman appropriates the green leaves as "Cretan cuisine" and demands that they should stand next to regionally recognised cuisines in Turkey:

> *Hold on! Vrouves (wild radish) belong to me, maratha (fennel) are mine. (…) A person from Adana says kebap is mine. A person from Gaziantep says baklava is mine. Well, I have more than them. I am aware of that.*

Wild green vegetables acquire an exclusively Cretan character. Along with olive oil they emerge as cultural diacritics that contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of Cretanness. Within the context of the sociohistorical reality of the first years in Anatolia, Cretans existed as a "significant unit" (Barth, 1969, p. 15) and the differences in food culture were among the marked differences that produced the boundaries across the line of interaction. Currently, the difference constructed upon "what we (do not) eat" and "what they (do not) eat" continues to be one of the cultural features that signal the boundary of symbolic Cretanness, the boundary that allows for the differentiation of Cretans from the "others".

Let me share an excerpt from my interview with Isparoz:

Isparoz: We always eat greens, wild vegetables, (at this point he switches to the Cretan dialect) maratho (fennel), radikio (chicory), these wild vegetables… If my wife cooks Cretan food for you, you will lose your mind" (Na sou psisei i gynaika mou fai kritiko na bountaliaseis!)
EN: Is it that good?
Isparoz: Ohh, let her cook white beans, meat... The Lesviots' food… (he makes a scornful nod)
EN: What do they eat?
Isparoz: Eh, they eat white beans, potatoes, and everything, but they don't add olive oil. They spare it and don't use it. (E, aftoi trone fasoules, patates, to'na t'allo, kai ladi de vanoune. To ladi to lypountai kai de vanoune)

Isparoz grasps the opportunity to belittle the Lesviots' cooking culture, while talking about Cretan food culture and praising his wife's food skills. In Isparoz's words we see the continuation of the Cretan-Lesviot cultural divide as it revolves around food.

Kara Kartal expresses his dissatisfaction with the newcomers to Ayvalik from other parts of Anatolia due to differences in eating habits. He labels the demographic changes that have occurred in the town during recent years as a negative development, because "it is one thing to live together with people from your own culture, it is a different thing to live like that" (meaning with people from different cultures)[67]. When I asked him to elaborate on what he means, he continued as follows:

For once, food culture is totally opposite to each another. We say fish, meat, wild vegetables, olive oil; the people who come from Anatolia say dough, meat, animal fat. This is their diet: pastries, meat, and animal fats. Ours is the complete opposite: wild vegetables, olive oil, fish. Don't we like meat? We do. But we cook the meat with vegetables. Only when we do barbeque, we eat meat separately.

When I asked him if he could think of any other cultural differences, he commented that he could not think of anything else to add. As was the case with many respondents, eating habits and food culture is the first thing that comes to mind when one talks about culture.

It is worth noting that references to diet may also intertwine with references to other aspects of culture. For instance, Maria, drew attention to the cultural distinctions between the Cretans and the Lesviots, when they first came to Ayvalik, mentioning the fact that Lesviot women wore veils and that they use to consume a lot of bulgur

[67] *Kendi kültüründen olan insanlarla bir arada yaşamak başka, böyle yaşamak başka.*

wheat in the same sentence. The practice of veiling, which is in general disapproved by Cretans (I will delve into more detail in Chapter 6), is associated to a culinary preference that is not shared by them. Similarly, Hüseyin praised the Cretans for their cleanliness, drawing a comparison to the Lesviots. By adding that "they don't even use olive oil in their food", it is as if the lack of a certain food signalises the lack of other positive properties and behaviours as well (Barthes, 1961/2018).

Wild vegetables serve as a common thread that connects Cretans who are strangers to each other. Murtaza shared a story about meeting another person from Crete in Antalya. They bonded over Murtaza's recognition of a particular vegetable, which helped the other person realise that Murtaza was also Cretan. According to Sardunya, purchasing greens and vegetables from the market is a criterium of Cretanness, and she believes that Cretans can identify each other while shopping:

> *For example, while we buy groceries at the market, two Cretans recognise each other. They are either in front of the stand with the broad beans, or in front of the stand with the artichokes, or in front of the stand with the fennel. "Are you Cretan?" It's a matter of blood (Kan çeker). "Are you Cretan too?" "Yes, I am Cretan too". I mean, it's a matter of blood. Even if we don't know each other at all, we understand that the other is Cretan.*

The special relation that Cretans have with wild greens is epitomised in a joke, which I heard several times during fieldwork. The joke goes as follows: A Cretan and a cow enter a field. The son of the owner of the field notices them, and hurries to inform his father. The owner of the field panics and tells his son to chase away the Cretan first. It should be said that this joke consistently elicited the same amount of amusement every time it was told in public.

The consumption of wild greens and vegetables and the use of olive oil acquire a cultural exclusivity and are chosen to be pointed out as symbols that reinforce the sense of cultural commonality, as the salience of other cultural markers of Cretanness is diminishing. Bakalian (1993, p. 46) maintains that "family, food, and rituals are cornerstones upon which symbolic ethnicity is built, whether or not the food, the rituals, or even the family members are ethnic in actual content or composition; the important thing is that they are perceived as such". The most high-profile aspects of Cretan food culture are in fact associated with the Mediterranean diet in general.

However, the important thing is that they are perceived as Cretan, as markers of Cretanness.

Cretans also pursue –what I shall call– the "publicisation" of this part of their culture, something that relates to the visibility that accompanies symbolic Cretanness. Magliveras' (2009) ethnographic fieldwork in the village of Gogofis (pseudonym) in North-eastern Attica, demonstrates how Arvanites in Gogofis refrain from public consumption of Arvanite food. They prefer to "publicly express themselves as part of a homogeneous Greece, demonstrating their Greek-ness through 'Greek' food" (p. 184). In the private realm, though, they maintain this aspect of their different culture. In the case of Cretans, their relationship with Cretan food goes beyond the private realm; public articulations of Cretanness through food are pursued to a great extent. Such public articulations are the celebration of Cretan cuisine through the opening of food stands at local festivals. In both Ayvalik and Mersin, the project of "publicisation" of Cretan food culture and its presentation to a broader public has been a part of the activities of the associations. "Cretan restaurants" are another means of introducing Cretan food culture to the public.

5.1.1 Commercialisation

The "Cretan restaurants" were, primarily in Mersin, an important part of the expressions of symbolic Cretanness. The emergence of Cretan restaurants should be viewed as part of the effort to "publicise" Cretanness, but the factor of economic development of the two villages with Cretan element in the region of Mersin should not be ignored.[68] Two new "Cretan restaurants" and a "Cretan café" had recently opened in the village of Melemez, adding to one existing restaurant in the village. The houses at the village had been painted in white and blue colours, evoking the style of the Aegean's tourist region and a guesthouse was being constructed in order to accommodate prospective visitors of the village.[69] The village has been marketed as a

[68] The villages were beyond the scope of my research, as I focused on the urban environment of Mersin. Therefore, I did not conduct formal interviews with the residents of the villages or with the individuals involved in the running of the restaurants. Nevertheless, I visited Melemez several times and Hebilli one time throughout the period of the fieldwork.

[69] The coronavirus pandemic negatively affected the tourist prospects of the village, and to my knowledge, some of the newly opened restaurants and cafes have not reopened.

"Cretan village" with the aim of attracting both local and foreign tourists. Similar endeavours were also beginning to take shape in the mixed village of Hebilli, as well. However, such initiatives were at a very preliminary stage at the period of my field research.

For Cretans in Mersin the restaurants in the villages have provided a great opportunity to amplify the public facet of Cretanness, serving as "a vehicle of self-representation before an external public" (Cohen, 1988 cited in Grünewald, 2002, p. 1015). As evident from the fieldwork, these restaurants primarily target non-Cretans. Murtaza speculates that the villages may attract people who would want to try "a different taste" in a nostalgic setting. Giritliyim Farklıyım evaluates the situation of Cretans in Mersin and thinks that in the future Cretans will be more well-known, partly due to the villages:

> *Well, we are growing more and more. We (meaning the association) make sure that we get together anyway. Let's get together, let's not get lost. We make an effort so that we don't distant from each other. We are growing. Well, one of our villages is quite well-known, the village of Melemez. It has made a name for itself (İsim yaptı). Our second village, the village of Hebilli. We are slowly introducing it as well. We've built a kitchen there. A breakfast place is ready. Last year we took a group or two there as well. Hopefully this year, in spring, it will be revived. We are trying to organise many events there, we are trying to promote those places and unite those people with the public.*

In general, the restaurants are viewed in positive colours, even by those who question their authenticity. According to Elif the quality of the restaurants in the villages has been improved and now she can proudly take her guests there and introduce her culture to them:

> *(…) at first, I was very critical. Because their breakfasts… the breakfast at my house was more of a village breakfast. Their eggs are not village eggs, their olives are not village olives, their bread is not village bread. But now they have changed it. It's pretty good right now, in fact very tasty. I should admit it. For example, I am proud to take guests there from here. I enjoy it. People always ask me to take them to the village. There has been something going on, they want to get to know that culture. So, these are all things to be proud of. It makes me happy.*

Such developments are not particular to Mersin. Psaradaki (2021) observes the commercialisation of Cretan identity in Bodrum, in the form of dishes labelled as

"Cretan". In Ayvalik it is also possible to come across the label "Cretan" on restaurants, cafes, or dishes. However, in contrast to Mersin, Cretans in Ayvalik do not view such commercialisation favourably, and question the Cretanness of such initiatives. Arnavut characterised Cretan restaurants in Ayvalik as "nonsense" (*palavra*) and Hüseyin believes that those who use the label Cretan aim at taking advantage of Crete's name: "Look, all those who write 'Cretan cuisine,' no one is Cretan. It's all a lie. They make a dish, and they call it 'Cretan ice cream'. Did Crete have ice cream?! (…) They take advantage of Crete's name. Do you understand?". The label "Cretan" has turned into a kind of a trade name and adds a touch of spice on the menus or on the names of some restaurants. Matzourana, as well, believes that Cretan culture is being marketed and distanced from the authentic expression of her childhood culture:

> *Well, of course, it has started to become fashionable. Really! People, of course, smell the money. I mean, it's a bit of an imperialist game. They smell the money. The wild vegetables that my grandmother collected to feed us…she collects the wild vegetables, we boil those vegetables on the fire, we pour olive oil and lemon on them. One of the best foods in the world! Now, this man, a man, who is not Cretan, pours yogurt on the warm wild vegetables –it has nothing to do with Cretan food– and sells it to you for 40 liras. (Şimdi sana bu adam, Giritli olmayan bir adam, sıcak otun üzerine yoğurdu boca eder –alakasız– 40 liraya satar.)*

While in Mersin, then, the commercialisation of Cretan food, and the Cretan experience in general, is welcomed as part of efforts by the Cretans to introduce themselves to a wider public, in Ayvalik it is mostly interpreted as an act of economic exploitation of Cretanness. This difference in attitude lies in the need of recognition expressed by Cretans in Mersin, as it will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

5.2 The Cretan dialect

As already mentioned, after the resettlement of the Cretan Muslims in Anatolia, during the last years of the Ottoman Empire and the first years of the Republic of Turkey, the use of the Cretan dialect served as one of the markers of a distinct culture. This linguistic difference further exacerbated the challenges they confronted due to their uprooting and displacement, having a negative impact on the interactions with the locals or other refugee and immigrant groups. Those who migrated at an older age,

especially women, never fully acquired knowledge of Turkish. Second-generation Cretans often recounted their experiences of discrimination and hardships, particularly during their early years in primary school, stemming from their limited proficiency in Turkish.[70] The centrality of the language in the process of adaptation, in combination with the association of the Cretan dialect with Greekness and Christianity discouraged its use and transmission to later generations, as I was told during my fieldwork and as other studies have shown.

It is worth noting that the informants often made the differentiation between modern Greek (*Yunanca* / *Ellinika*) and the Cretan dialect (*Giritlice* / *Giritçe* / *Rumca* / *Kritika*), attributing the latter a special status.[71] It is a dialect richer than Greek richer than Greek due to its historical influence from the various languages spoken in Crete over time. It is "a special language"; a language spoken nowhere else in the world, apart from Crete and by the Cretans who emigrated from Crete, as Melike comments. It is also a dialect understood solely by Cretans, as someone from mainland Greece is unable to comprehend it. . Moreover, as highlighted by multiple informants, the dialect spoken the Cretans who migrated to Anatolia and their descendants is the "original language" of Crete, something that is often confirmed during their trips to Crete or when it happens to meet a visitor from Crete.

The fact that the Cretan dialect is in danger of being lost in Crete because the younger generations no longer use it, and because tourism has negatively impacted the Cretan culture, which is only preserved in small villages, enhances its value. Additionally, the Cretans in Turkey should be appreciated by the Cretans in Greece, since their elders "lived", in Iskender's words "without ruining the natural Cretanness" (*doğal Giritliliği bozmadan yaşadı*). Bayram Cemali believes that the Cretan dialect is one of the cultural contributions of the Cretan Muslims and it will attract the interest

[70] When I asked Mehmet, one of the few Cretans that currently command the Cretan dialect, about his education level during an informal discussion, he replied that he could not progress at school because he had difficulties with the language. While there are no studies to prove the generality of this, it is likely that the loss of "linguistic capital" affected the socio-economic status of the Cretans. (See for instance Smits & Gündüz-Hoşgör's (2003) study on the relation between "linguistic capital" and socio-economic outcomes for non-Turkish speaking women in Turkey.

[71] Bilgehan (2019, p. 228) emphatically states that "the language of the Cretans is not Greek", but rather a language which includes Greek words.

of the scientific community in the future, as a language that is being extinct. The village of Melemez in particular may be a research topic for universities from the island of Crete or elsewhere.[72] The previous accounts reveal that the Cretan dialect is valued by many Cretans, however they do not disclose the relationship that Cretans have currently with this aspect of their culture.

Within the framework of my research, I aimed to find answers to two questions: to what extent has the Cretan dialect been preserved, and what is its significance for culture and as a marker of Cretanness? Several studies in different contexts have focused on the relationship between language and minority or immigrant identity (e.g. Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977; Khemlani-David, 1998; Fought, 2006). Generally, language is considered an important component for the expression of distinct ethnic or cultural identity and affiliation, and it is often seen as "one important criterion to evaluate the extent to which community boundaries are resolving" (Örs, 2018, p. 214). Efforts to revitalise language and increase usage can be important parts of cultural revivals (Nagel, 1994, p. 163). It has also been argued that language shift might be encouraged because of structural reasons without affecting other cultural aspects (Khemlani-David, 1998).

The current levels of knowledge and usage of Cretan Greek vary significantly. As a general comment, based on my interactions with Cretans from different parts of Turkey, it can be said that in more isolated areas, such as villages, the knowledge of the language has been better preserved. This is also the case for Mersin and Ayvalik as the knowledge of the dialect has weakened more in urban Mersin in comparison to Ayvalik. I also found that even among second- and third-generation Cretans who grew up in Greek-speaking environments, many did not maintain knowledge of the language, or had only a passive understanding of it.[73] This discrepancy between

[72] *Sonra, bizim Girit'ten gelirken getirdiğimiz dil dahi, bugün kara Yunanistan'dan Giritlice farklı olduğu için, eski Giritlice olduğu için, araştırma konusu olacağına inanıyorum ileride. Şimdi, nasıl biz Osmanlıcayı bilmiyoruz ve hatta tekrar Osmanlıca ders kondu. Yarın bir gün üniversitelerde bunlar araştırma konusu olacağına inanıyorum. Ve Melemez de yarın bir Hanya Üniversitesi ve hatta buna benzer üniversitelerde araştırma ve tez konusu olabilir ileride.*

[73] Mansur's (1972) research conducted in Bodrum at the end of the 1960s reveals that "middle-aged and elderly Cretans speak the Cretan dialect among themselves, using many Turkish words as well. Adolescents understand when they are addressed in Cretan by their parents, but do no speak the dialect and they answer in Turkish" (p. 11).

exposure and knowledge is not surprising considering that the usage of languages other than Turkish was not encouraged in the public sphere and that the Cretan dialect has no practical use in Turkey. Turkish naturally became the dominant language of communication through education, and even before formal schooling through interactions with Turkish-speaking children. In Cunda and Ayvalik, many of the speakers of the dialect have also intentionally cultivated their Greek language skills for professional purposes.

It is essential to recognise that knowing a language does not necessarily equal a cultural practice, an activity of daily life "that survive[s] through some combination of utility, inertia, and embeddedness in social relationships" to use Cornell & Hartmann's (1998, p. 226) definition of cultural practices. Apart from a handful of second-generation Cretans, who seem to continue using the Cretan dialect along with Turkish, even if it happens in "a contextual and fragmented manner" (Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos, 2001, p. 411) within the family and in their social life, for others it survives in bits and pieces (sometimes transmitted in an incorrect fashion), is of mostly emotional significance, or may not be any more different than any other foreign language. For the third generation and maybe later generations the use of the language is limited into "a thrill of exchanging a few brief comments" (Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos, 2001, p. 410).

At the time of the research, the Association of Cretan Turks in Mersin organised a weekly Cretan dialect course, which was conducted voluntarily by a second-generation Cretan from the neighbouring Tarsus. This course had been ongoing for approximately two years until the global coronavirus pandemic necessitated its cessation. The instructor was teaching words and expressions in the Cretan dialect and the lessons mainly attracted second-generation Cretans who were familiar with the dialect and sought to rejuvenate their knowledge. Iskender mentioned to me that a similar initiative had been proposed in Ayvalik,[74] with the goal of teaching Greek, but also providing an introductory demonstration of the Cretan dialect and the Cretan *mantinades*. The aim was to prevent the Cretan dialect from fading into history,

[74] According to my knowledge there is no such a course provided by the association in Ayvalik. However, similar initiatives were realised in Antalya, Adana and Gemlik.

as has happened with dozens of languages.[75] Similar voluntary efforts have been made by Cretan Turks, knowledgeable of Greek and/or Cretan Greek, who share words and expressions with their Turkish equivalent in Crete-related Facebook groups or blogs.

The fact that the dialect is not a standardised language, and it has been orally transmitted from generation to generation, renders its teaching and learning difficult, as Ekrem also pointed out. Even if it were easier to be taught, language teaching and learning is something that requires a serious investment and resources. The courses in Mersin aimed to refresh knowledge of the Cretan dialect, so that it is not completely forgotten. While these efforts signify active engagement with the language, their limited application, the scant attendance and the lack of interest by later generations suggest a confined impact and scope. In this respect, such initiatives should be understood within the realm of symbolic Cretanness: they offer a pleasant break, an opportunity to socialise, and a chance to practice the Cretan dialect. The dialect is one of the things inherited from the ancestors and is "now cherished [mainly] because [it] evoke[s] memories of family" (Waters, 1990, p. 118).

One question I asked in order to evaluate the importance of the dialect, irrespective of its usage or knowledge, was whether Cretans considered it a crucial aspect of their culture and whether the ability to speak the language affects their sense of being Cretan. For some, the lack of knowledge was a disadvantage, both when talking about others or themselves. Yetimaki believes that the Cretan language is an essential part of being Cretan, and considers the absence of it as "a great flaw" of his generation: "What happens now? We organise dinners. We gather at these dinners. A few words in the Cretan dialect (*ufak tefek Rumca*), *mantinades*, food, memories left from the past. That's all!" Kemale also wishes she knew the Cretan dialect: "If I knew, I would feel more Cretan. I would feel closer to that culture, more a part of it" (*O kültüre daha yakın, daha içinde hissederdim*). Yasemin made a general comment acknowledging the significance of language as part of culture: "Well, of course, language has importance, cuisine has importance, like in every culture. Lifestyle

[75] *Girit derneğinde bir Yunanca ders vermek, önümüzdeki sene için düşünüyoruz. (…) Hatta biraz daha böyle ağız, yani Giritçe dediğimiz, mantinades denilen, onları da göstermek. (…) Çünkü günümüz dünyasında hemen hemen her gün onlarca dil, tarihe karışıyor. Bunlardan Giritçe olmasın diye.*

matters too. Of course, we must consider them as a whole. Language matters as well, of course".

Contrary to the aforementioned accounts, for the majority of the informants the importance of knowing Greek seems to be no different from the importance of knowing any other (foreign) language. This perspective was also reflected in the Turkish saying "One language, one person; two languages, two persons" which was recalled quite frequently. As Cesur remarked, "Every language is important. I mean, the more languages you know, the more you gain". He went on to cite the advantages of knowing "a foreign language". Similarly, Kara Kartal expressed a desire to improve his foreign language skills to communicate with members of other cultures; he would like to develop his Greek, as well as to learn German and English. Ekrem, on the other hand, declared an aspiration to learn all the languages of the region, while interviewees in Ayvalik emphasised the economic and professional opportunities that knowledge of Greek can provide.

Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos (2001) note that for the second-generation Mishiotes, refugees from a village in Cappadocia, who resettled in Volos, a town in mainland Greece, as part of the Exchange, the use of Mishiotika dialect was what distinguished them from their compatriots. Alba (1990, p. 84-85) argues that being fluent in an ethnic language may not be essential for boundary demarcation, and that the use of words and phrases from a mother tongue can be adequate in order to denote a different cultural background. Therefore, language, whether it is a means of communication or not, has the potential to function as a marker of difference. While language for the Cretans was a potent marker of cultural difference and some from the second generation still practice it, it seems that language for Cretans has been transforming into a collection of words and phrases that serve as reminders of their parents' and their grandparents' language.

It is in this respect that it has been transformed into a symbol. Nevertheless, compared to food, language is a less visible symbol, and it is also less widely shared and less applicable to everyday life, making it less central as an identifier of Cretanness and as an emblem of difference. Moreover, as the next chapter will demonstrate, "feeling Cretan" is more important than practicing cultural aspects.

5.3 Associations

Over the past two to three decades, there has been a proliferation of Cretan cultural associations, which has intensified in the last decade. The first association, founded in 1997, is the Culture Friendship and Solidarity Association of Cretan Turks in Mersin. The association in Ayvalik was founded much later, in 2014. Currently, there are more than 20 associations in all provinces where Cretans were resettled, throughout western and southwestern Turkey. Kritikos, one of the founders of the association in Mersin, mentioned that its establishment was initiated by the realisation that Cretans had a vague idea of their roots and the experience of migration. One of the main motivations was to "shed light on their roots" and to function as a point of reference for the next generations. Murtaza presented one more motivation: the need to tell the world "We exist! We are here!".

Voutira (1997, p. 120) states that in various contexts, forced migrant groups frequently resort to the survival strategy of forming cultural associations that serve as a foundation for group membership, loyalty, and mutual support. These associations are also crucial in fostering the group's sense of uniqueness and reinforcing its identity in relation to the host society. The Asia Minor exchangees in Greece proceeded to the establishment of such organisations soon after the resettlement in their new homeland, which served as means to promote collective interests (Voutira, 1997). In Turkey what was aimed at after 1923 was the creation of "a nation without nostalgia for the past". This led to the banning of "organisations based on common ethnicity, regionalism, or other 'divisive' ties" (Karpat, 2000, p. xvi). Moreover, the fact that "the resettlement pattern of refugees (…) could not mirror their communal ties" (Yıldırım, 2006a, p. 186) led to the loss of social ties and forms of organisation existed before, and hindered possible mobilisation (Köker & Keskiner, 2003; Yıldırım, 2006a). It was not until the late twentieth century that initiatives of institutionalisation were actualised.

This task was undertaken by second- and third-generation exchangees, while participation of the first generation in such activities was naturally almost non-existent (Bayındır Goularas, 2012, p. 138). The second and third generations are both a product and creators of a different discourse which started developing in the 1990s in the public sphere (Alpan, 2012) and which allowed for different expressions of culture and origin,

as also mentioned above. The associations emerged from within this environment and served different goals and functions. The association in Mersin, in particular,[76] has been an important means in the efforts of Cretans to dispel misconceptions about their origins and (re)introduce themselves to society. At the same time, it has contributed to making Cretans more aware of their past and their roots (Chapter 7 delves into more detail).

The associations can be regarded as social institutions (within Cornell & Hartmann's framework) that function as points of reference for Cretanness. Several Cretans have told me that the involvement with the association increased their interest in their roots. To be sure, these associations are not necessarily relevant to all, often not even to their members. Sometimes, engagement with the associations is simply a pretext for socialisation or a way to spend free time. For some, it may be a stepping stone to entering politics, and there are also those who can be called "joiners" (Alba, 1990, p. 240). However, through meetings and events the associations contribute to the maintenance of the sense of "we-ness" (Bakalian, 1993) and to "keeping the spirit alive". For Kemale, the association operates as a repository of knowledge and experience, and has replaced the knowledgeable family members who have passed away:

> *As long as there are relatives around you, you don't feel the need. Now I feel like I am left alone. My cousin died last year. His death also took traces of my past, because I used to ask him about certain things. I had met my grandmother, lived with her. I talked about some topics related to Cretans, food etc. with her. When she died, I felt incomplete.*

Now Kemale goes to the association in order to fill the gap and learn from the older women who join as well. Similarly, Lokum believes that the number of Cretan cultural associations has increased because the Cretan culture is slowly disappearing. She acknowledges that the only way to learn about the traditions and practices not recorded when her family members were alive is by consulting the elderly people who are still alive. However, individual efforts to collect information can be inadequate, and that is where cultural associations come into play. They can reach out to those people and

[76] Possibly, associations in other places as well have operated in a similar way.

collect the information in an organised manner, reaching a larger number of Cretans in different parts of Turkey.

The organisational and institutional dimension of the associations is highly emphasised. According to Cesur, one of the most significant contributions of the association in Mersin was to gather together dozens of Cretans for the first time after years, at the dinners it organised, and to introduce them to one another. One of the frequently cited advantages of such associations is that they provide a platform for relatives who have been resettled in different parts of Turkey to reunite. The associations "unite separated families" who have not known each other for hundred years and serve as channels to facilitate contact from different parts of the country. The establishment of the Federation of Cretans in 2017 was expected to facilitate even more such contacts. As the president of the federation stated in a relevant column at the newspaper *Giritliler*, "the Cretans who have been dispersed for more than hundred years in different parts of Turkey are now together" (Çengel, 2017, p. 3).

The associations have taken steps to increase contact with Crete and Greece in general. The Mersin association, for instance, has invited musicians from Greece and organised two visits to Crete. Among their goals is to foster friendship between the two parts of the Aegean and encourage visits from Turkey to Crete and vice versa. Iskender highlights another relevant positive contribution of the associations: People might hesitate to visit Greece or Crete alone due to the violent history shared between the two countries. However, under the umbrella of an association people might feel safer to travel to the place their ancestors had been born.

Bakalian (1993) would characterise the Cretan associations as "knowledge banks" and would see them as "analogous to a dying sage in his urgency to codify his wealth of knowledge before his demise" (p. 439). Yetimaki interprets the emergence of the associations as a sign that the Cretan culture has weakened, and that "essence and knowledge" have been lost. Denizali refers to the process of the establishment of the association in Ayvalik as a move to bring Cretanness to the fore. Giritliyim Farklıyım argues that the associations organise events and activities so that Cretans "do not forget [their] language and [their] culture". These views are different articulations congruent with the symbolic character of Cretanness. The associations are a central component of symbolic Cretanness; they are actors that contribute to the

presence of Cretanness in the public sphere, to the conservation of "the remains" (Iğsız, 2018) and to the cherishing of the past and the cultural heritage. The language courses, coffee meetings, and the display of objects from Crete at the offices of the associations ought to be seen in this framework. Festivals and stands featuring Cretan food organised by the associations are what complement the aspect of visibility.

5.4 Festivals

The International Cretan Festival has been held in Aydin since 2010. It was interrupted for three years due to the global coronavirus pandemic.[77] I attended the 2018 and 2019 festivals. The 2018 festival began with a photograph exhibition featuring old photographs of Cretan families. This was followed by the screening of the film *Dedemin İnsanları* (My grandfather's people)[78] and of a documentary about the village of Turunçlu [79] in the province of Hatay, where Cretan Muslims were settled at the end of the nineteenth century. The documentary was in the Cretan dialect and was prepared by a young Cretan from the village. In the evening, the festival moved to a central square in Kusadasi, where participants had the chance to listen to some Cretan *mantinades* by a second-generation Cretan from Davutlar, and to enjoy Cretan dances and live music in Greek and Turkish. The Cretan dances were performed by a dance group who had come from Crete, while the Greek and Turkish songs were performed by Café Aman Istanbul, an Istanbul-based group consisting of Istanbul Greeks and Turkish musicians.

The second day of the festival took place at a beach in Davutlar, an area with a large Cretan population. The day started with a Cretan cuisine workshop, in which guests from Crete prepared typical Cretan dishes using ingredients they had brought from Crete. The festival area featured different stands selling food (both Cretan and non-Cretan), crafts, clothing, etc. Tables and chairs were also set up, as well as a stage for speakers, singers, musicians, and dancers. After some short speeches by heads of

[77] The festival took place again at the end of June 2023.
[78] *Dedemin insanları* s a 2011 Turkish drama, directed by Çağan Irmak, that narrates the longing and nostalgia of a Cretan exchangee towards the land he was forced to abandon.

[79] Turunçlu village, in Erzin, Hatay is one of the places in Turkey where the knowledge of the Cretan dialect is preserved to a great extent.

different Cretan associations, and the mayor of Kusadasi Municipality, the principal sponsor of the event[80], the floor was given to the dance group from Crete, who performed in traditional Cretan attire, accompanied by Cretan Greek musicians. Their performance was followed by local dance clubs performing Turkish dances from the Aegean region. The festival concluded with live music by Café Aman Istanbul.

The next year, women from the village of Turunçlu had prepared a short theatrical play presented in Cretan Greek. This time the Cretan food was prepared by local professional cooks, and the Cretan Greek dancers were from the Association of Cretans of Thessaloniki, in Northern Greece. This diversification aligned with the broader purpose of the festival, which is to unite Cretans from different parts of the world. As its name implies, it aims to be international, bringing together not only the descendants of the Cretan Muslims who live in Turkey but also Cretans from different parts of Greece and, if possible, other countries where Cretan Muslims have migrated (namely Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Libya). In fact, there have been a small number of individual attendees from Lebanon and Jordan.

Since its inception in 1997, the association in Mersin has been organising an annual commemoration event on February 24th, which marks the arrival of the Cretan exchangees in Mersin. The event is held to honour the ancestors and remember the hardships they faced. The commemoration event includes a wreath laying ceremony to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's monument at a central square, as a sign of respect to the memory of the person who "brought them to the motherland" and the throwing of carnations into the sea as an expression of respect for their ancestors who lost their lives during the journey. Traditionally a dinner for the Cretan community, is organised, which is open also for anyone who would like to participate. The commemoration events may also include talks by academics whose work is relevant to Crete and Cretans, as well as visits to the village of Melemez. The first event I participated in

[80] The festival started as a small local event but has since grown significantly in recent years, in part due to financial support from the Kusadasi Municipality and personal contributions from the previous mayor. The election of a new mayor in 2019 affected the relations between the municipality and the organisers and consequently the sponsorship for the 2019 festival. The 2023 festival, planned for the end of June, is once again being sponsored by the municipality under the new administration.

Mersin was in February 2019, and it was a large-scale organisation that included the participation of Cretans from all over Turkey[81].

Figure 1- Carnations in the sea of Mersin

Large banners and posters were hanging at central places in Mersin, inviting the people of Mersin to the commemoration events for the 96th anniversary of the arrival of the "Cretan Turks" to Turkey. It was a two-day event; the first day started with a disagreement and some tension among the organisers and other Cretans from Mersin over whether the guests would be shown around the Cretan villages or the city of Mersin. In the end it was decided to start the day with having breakfast at the restaurants in the village of Melemez. On the evening of the first day, some of the participants were invited to a small dinner. A bigger and more official dinner was planned for the next day, featuring Turkish and Greek songs by the Izmir branch of the Lausanne Emigrants Foundation choir, as well as a variety of dances by a local dance club. The Republic Square, a central square in Mersin had been transformed into a festival site with several stands and performances of Cretan and other dances by local dance groups. In Mersin there were no guests from Greece, however local dance

[81] To my knowledge, the event in 2019 was the largest-scale event to date. This was in part due to the fact that some of the Cretans requested and received support from the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality.

groups had learned some Cretan dances and performed in traditional Cretan dresses that were ordered and made especially for the festival. The day had begun with the wreath-laying ceremony and the throwing of carnations into the sea.

The following year, the commemoration events were less flamboyant, with fewer participants from other places of Turkey. The events began with a talk on Cretan Turks, and the two-day event concluded with a dinner accompanied by live Greek songs, performed by a duet of a *Rum* musician from Izmir and his wife. Some female members of the association had prepared a dish with wild green vegetables, which added a Cretan touch to the menu of the restaurant. The head of the Mersin association played the mandolin and sang the *Samiotissa*[82] song, an old Greek folk song that has acquired an integral place in the collective cultural memory of the Cretan Turks and other exchangees (Pahöz Türkeli, 2016).

Figure 2- Festival at the central square of Mersin. The sign reads: Everyone says, "You're different". I'M CRETAN. You're right my friend...

[82] *Samiotissa* is a love song about a woman from the island of Samos. It is a Greek folk song, which has been very popular around Greece, since the beginning of the twentieth century and especially since Samos' unification with Greece in 1912. It has been widely performed at school celebrations, military bands and all kinds of events of national and non-national character (Kounadis Archive, 2019). It is unclear why this song retained such popularity among exchangees and came to be a symbol of Cretanness in Turkey, but it may have been due to their ancestors' significant exposure to the song while they were in Greece and its easy melody that facilitated its survival among after resettlement in Turkey.

Similar events have been organised by other Cretan associations around Turkey.[83] For many, festivals are mere "social gatherings where people enjoy themselves and have a break from daily routine" (Ekman, 1999, p. 281). Attendance at such festivals is also "a reminder of group culture and an occasion for its celebration" (Alba, 1990, p.103) The symbolic consumption of Cretan food, music and the dance performances offer participants the opportunity to "live their culture", as Kemale commented. She complained because of the people who come "from outside" (*dışarıdan*) and take the best tables in front of the stage or eat the food intended to be consumed by the Cretan participants. Festival sites are spaces where "commonality" that is "the sharing of some common attributes" and "connectedness" that is "the relational ties that link people" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 20) are enacted par excellence. They serve as a reminder of the common cultural attributes among Cretans and can strengthen bonds between them, especially those from different places, by providing a platform for people to meet and create personal relationships. Even relatives who have been settled in dispersed locations in Turkey have the opportunity to get to know each other and meet.

The participation of guests from Crete at the festival in Kuşadası holds particular significance; it establishes a connection to the "mythical land" (Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos, 2001, p. 410) of Crete and provides Cretan Turks, who have never been to Crete or who may not have the chance to visit, an opportunity to get closer to their roots and meet people who now live in the land of their ancestors. I witnessed the excitement with which many Cretan Turks welcomed the guests from Crete and their eagerness to speak their language with them, since those who know it have a small chance to use it anymore. Nahya (2019, p. 262) characterises the festival site an "artificial area" where individuals can freely experience their identity, and the symbolic transformation of the space into the island of Crete. This is, after all, what the organisers of the Kusadasi Festival imply with the phrase on the poster that reads: "Let's experience Crete" (*Girit'i yaşamaya bekliyoruz*).

[83] The organisation of such events is not something peculiar to Cretans. There are events organised by Cretan associations, labelled as "Cretan" festivals, but similar events have been organised by other exchangee associations. Besides festivals, similar events also include historical talks, commemoration events and concerts.

Festivals are the epitome of visibility. They provide a platform for Cretans to showcase some parts of the Cretan culture and to demonstrate this part of their self. Such festive articulations of identity are meant not exclusively for internal consumption. Since the festivals are organised at open spaces, they also invite the curious eye of the passer-by. Cretans have the chance to assert their presence and to introduce themselves to new audiences or to celebrate their Cretanness along with friends and neighbours. Kemale, for example, mentioned the case of a friend of hers, who joined her at the Kusadasi Festival and wondered whether Cretans are Christians because they eat snails. The consumption of snails at the festival, then, both created some confusion to the outsider, but at the same time provided Kemale an excellent opportunity to dissolve this confusion and to introduce a friend to the Cretan culinary culture. Moreover, coverage by local and national media outlets can offer more opportunities of visibility in a wider scale and allows Cretans to reach a larger audience.

Such festivals are sporadic experiences that do not require knowledge of the language, the culture, or the history. They are fields of celebration, and everyone can participate. This is what symbolic Cretanness represents. Matzourana from Cunda labelled in a demeaning way the Cretans who participate in such events as "festival Cretans". She compared them with the Cretans in Cunda, who she considered to be "genuine Cretans" (*Biz halis muhlis Giritliyiz*): "I think that in Cunda, in Ayvalik, but especially in Cunda [the culture] has been preserved very well (…) We are not fashion [Cretans], festival Cretans. We are not festival Cretans. I dread the festivals".[84] As I tried to present a different argument, focusing on positive aspects of such initiatives, she interrupted, clearly annoyed: "They try to make [the culture] known, but it's become a trend, it's become a trend. (…) Everyone hangs a Crete on their signboard. (…) Cretanness cannot be traded. There is such a thing. Because Cretanness is something that is shared".[85]

[84] *Biz moda, festival Giritlisi değiliz. Festival Giritlisi değiliz biz. Ben festivallerden ve şenliklerden çok ürkerim.*

[85] *Tanıtmaya çalışıyorlar, ama çok moda, çok moda. Ben son yıllarda çok ürküyorum. Herkes tabelasının başına bir Girit asıyor! Yok, bir Girit butik yapıyor! Bu çok… bana son derece… Giritlilik tacir edilemez! Yani böyle bir şey var. Giritlilik paylaşılır çünkü.*

Matzourana is a second-generation Cretan, who grew up with her grandparents and her mother within Cretan culture, which she thinks she still preserves. She started showing an interest in language since a young age, has lived in Athens, has visited Crete several times, has friends in Crete, a knowledge of both the Cretan dialect and Greek and was active at the first years of the Lausanne Emigrants Foundation. She has gradually managed to "connect the culture of [her] childhood with the culture in Crete and to enhance it".[86] Her family "made [her] feel that being Cretan is a very special component within the Turkish nation. [Cretanness] is not something [she was] endued with later on".[87] Matzourana's profile provides insights into the standpoint from which she is speaking. She is a Cretan who has "lived" in the Cretan culture, has preserved some continuity for herself and is dissatisfied with the way Cretanness is currently experienced. Her discontent is reflected in her questioning the genuineness of the newly mushroomed performances of Cretanness.

What Matzourana actually expresses discontent with is symbolic Cretanness. The festivals and other similar articulations of Cretanness are part of a context in which the "cultural stuff" continues to wither. The Cretan festivals and events, as briefly described above, combine Cretan, Greek, and Turkish elements, offering a tailor-made experience for the Cretans in Turkey. All of them serve their function and harmonise well within the symbolic character of Cretanness. Cretans have the chance to consume symbols of Cretanness (Gans, 1992) and experience aspects of their culture such as food, language, or music that may not be practiced in general. The Cretan traditional dances are mostly a performance to be watched, as the majority lack familiarity with this aspect of Cretan culture. Academic talks on history are generally welcomed with interest as they provide answers about the past and the question "who are we?". The Greek element, in the form of Greek songs, is a symbol of friendship between Greece and Turkey. After all, as mentioned above, one of the goals of the associations and the federation is to facilitate the promotion of contact between the two countries. The Turkish element (more prominent at the events in Mersin), in the form of Turkish

[86] *Giderek Girit yazarlarını, Girit'teki kültürü çocukluğumdaki ile bağdaştırıp, daha büyüttüm.*

[87] *Yani Giritli olmanın Türk ulusu içinde çok özel bir unsur olduğunu hissettirdiler bize yani. Sonradan bize giydirilen bir şey değildir.*

songs, Turkish flags, traditional Turkish dances, posters of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and so on, is both something that participants feel familiar with, as well as something that provides the necessary reaffirmation of Turkishness.

5.5 The internet

> *I am a member of all [pages]. Well, if someone looks at my profile, they will say "He must definitely be Cretan*"
> (Yetimaki)

Ege Denizi believes that the widespread use of the internet is the most significant factor contributing to the mobilisation that has taken place in recent years among the Cretans. In his opinion, the internet provides a platform where people can gather, organise, and maintain contacts with one another over long distances. Yetimaki highlights the role of the social media in the proliferation of the associations as "people are influenced by each other". Bayındır Goularas (2012) in her study on exchangees settled in the Marmara region, cites the internet among the spaces where identities and cultures of the exchangees are kept alive. Unlike the other spaces she cites, namely the village coffee houses and the voluntary associations and foundations, the internet has the power to bring together a great number of individuals (Bayındır Goularas, 2012). It is accessible to everyone and does not require any particular knowledge or effort to use, making it a no-cost platform where people can connect with each other.

A common response to the question of whether they have contact with other Cretans in different parts of Turkey was something along the lines of "We are friends on Facebook", or "I follow other associations on Facebook", or "I keep up with posts in this or that group on Facebook". Arfano is content that he can connect with fellow Cretans in other cities through Facebook:

> *We see [them] on Facebook. They add me as a friend, they see me as Cretan. From Izmir, Manisa, Turgutlu, from Trabzon. There are lots of Cretans everywhere. In any case I like it. It feels as if it is someone from the family, I like it. It's like your own family, like a member of the family. It's a nice feeling.*[88]

[88] *Facebook'ta görüyoruz. Arkadaşlık teklif ederler, Giritli olarak bakıyor. İzmir'den, Manisa'dan, Turgutlu'dan, efendim Trabzon'dan. Her tarafta Giritli çok. Nereden baksan insanın hoşuna gidiyor.*

Giritli also thinks that it is positive to be in touch on Facebook even if they do not meet in person. The advancement of communication technology provides, therefore, an opportunity to establish connections with people who would be difficult to meet otherwise. Social media has become an integral part of daily life, and maintaining basic contact requires only a limited amount of effort and investment. It is worth noting that there are also those who are quite active on various Facebook groups but have never participated in an event in person.

An equally important, and perhaps even more important, function of the internet and the social media is the dissemination and the consumption of imaginings and representations (Sökefeld, 2002, p. 108). The "flow of information is the best aspect of social media", according to Murtaza. In the Facebook groups one can come across posts about the lives of first-generation Cretans, pictures of Crete, invitations to relevant events, historical information, advertisements of books about Crete or the exchange, lists of Cretan or Greek words, Cretan *mantinades*, videos featuring traditional Cretan music and dances, as well as pictures of Cretan dishes, some of which accompanied by recipes. The latter often prompt disagreements in the comments session about what constitutes Cretan food, how a Cretan food should be prepared, or congratulatory messages that reaffirm of the Cretanness of the group's members through confirmation of the Cretan origins of the dish.

The democratic nature of such groups allows anyone to share what they wish. Although many posts are informative, not all content is relevant to Crete. Facebook groups are also a space for members to make personal contributions and socialise with each other. One can also find personal accounts about what Cretanness means or what kind of people Cretans are. As an example, let me cite a recent post from one of the administrators of the group with the largest number of members. The group, which was founded in 2014, is entitled "Everything about Cretans" (*Giritlilere dair her şey*). The post is a short literary passage that summarises the meaning of Cretanness and is also representative of other similar contributions.

Sanki kendi bir sülalesi gibi geliyor, insanlara hoş geliyor. Kendi ailen gibi, bir ailenin parçasıymış gibi. Güzel oluyor.

CRETANNESS

means love for people, for life; it is love for the nature, the sun, the olives, the oil, the grapes... Cretanness means love for the sea, the raki, the fish, and for everything that comes out of the sea...

Cretanness is gathering wild green vegetable from nature in the spring months. Because the Cretans' love for greens never ends... Cretans call the golden thistle askolymproi, the fennel maratha, the wild radish vrouves, the chicory radikia, the leaf mustard siniavri, the peas araka... The Cretans are tolerant, polite, modern, noble...

They want to go to the places where their ancestors were born and grew up, at every opportunity... (Heraklion, Rethymno, Chania)... Cretanness is a state of mind... One of their most beautiful features is their great love for Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk... (H. Yorulmaz, personal communication, May 12, 2023)

The global coronavirus pandemic brought festivals and gatherings to a halt. Although I have no data to evaluate its impact on the internet usage of Cretans, it can be argued that the internet and social media provided a space of continuity for symbolic expressions of Cretanness. A YouTube channel was established by the head of the Cretan federation during the pandemic. It hosted talks with heads of Cretan associations, conversations with academics, videos featuring Cretan recipes and lessons on the Cretan dialect. Although the channel did not gain a wide appeal, it added to the archive where information about the Cretans can be retrieved. In general, the YouTube channel, the Facebook groups and blogs can be viewed as a "permanent archive of collective memory" (Diamandaki, 2003, p. 6). In Yetimaki's view one of their positive aspects is this archival character, as they can serve as a reference point if new generations develop an interest in their ancestors' history.

Electronic pages, discussion groups, and communities of an ethnic or national character are prevalent throughout the internet (Diamandaki, 2003). In our era, the internet, social media, and communication technologies offer opportunities for mobilisation, information sharing and can facilitate awareness raising. As such they should be seen as sites (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998) where identities are constructed, reconstructed, and maintained. In the case of Cretans, the widespread use of the internet and social media is undoubtedly a contextual factor that, with its "dimension of immediacy and interactivity" (Dahan & Sheffer, 2001, p. 100), has contributed to the increased visibility of Cretanness.

At the same time, this online presence of the Cretans is one of the enactments of symbolic Cretanness. Engagement with social media in this respect is exactly how symbolic Cretanness is practiced, as it requires little effort and time, and is pursued in the periphery. Being member of Crete-related groups and following their online activity is something that confirms Cretanness. This is after all what Yetimaki's quote cited in the beginning of the section implies. In such spaces the insiders can reaffirm their distinctiveness and can reach a wide audience that includes outsiders as well. As Cahit Arseven, the administrator of another Facebook group named "Cretan green vegetables and mezes" (*Girit otları ve mezeleri*) has mentioned, the motivation behind creating the group was to "inform communities that are unaware of how nice and beautiful [the Cretan] culture is" (Kriti-K TV, 2020).

5.6 Trips to Crete

Several trips have been organised and continue being organised by the Lausanne Emigrants' Foundation to different regions of Greece, allowing the descendants of the exchangees to visit the birthplaces of their ancestors. The association in Mersin has organised two visits to Crete. Many of my informants have visited Crete either individually or as part of an organised trip. Trips to the land of the ancestors represent the later generations' "search for [their] roots" as Bilgehan (2019, p. 90), a second-generation Cretan, puts it in his book on Cretan Turks. This growing interest has coincided with facilitation of travelling, although Turkish citizens may be deterred from visiting or revisiting due to visa requirements and the high cost involved.

Kara Kartal grew up within a Cretan environment, but his interest in his roots intensified after retirement, when he had more time and a better financial situation that allowed him to travel to Crete. For Ege Denizi a visit to Crete "was one of [his] biggest dreams" while growing up. He was curious about the place where his grandparents lived, and his interest developed during childhood as the Cretan dialect was spoken in his household. He travelled to Crete for the first time in 2009 and has been there several times since. Erotokritos, who has visited Crete multiple times, went to Crete for the first time to "see with [his] own eyes the things that were narrated to him".

For some, the trip to Crete has served as an opportunity to "practice" Cretanness. The most commonly expressed comment among the speakers of the Cretan

dialect was that they felt excited to speak the language of their ancestors, often met with surprise from the locals or admiration for preserving a dialect that is on the verge of extinction. These trips have also served as a means to "test" and confirm their Cretanness. This confirmation arises from the realisation that people in Crete share similar habits with them or bear physical resemblance to them. For instance, Asiye confirmed the preservation of the same culture and cuisine among Cretans in Turkey when she overheard a woman in Crete mentioning that she had prepared fish and chicory for lunch. Similarly, Giritliyim Farklıyım found a sense of continuity and cultural preservation when she encountered a well-dressed elderly man in a suit. Erotokritos also concluded, based on the acquaintances and friends made in Crete that "there is no difference between [the Cretans in Crete and the Cretans in Turkey]".

All of the informants who had visited Crete spoke positively and often emotionally about their ancestral land, although there were also limited mentions of unfortunate encounters with the locals. When possible, they made an effort to locate the exact homes of their ancestors in an attempt to visualise the narrations by their forebears. Such trips are likely to strengthen the connection felt towards one's heritage, to intensify "one's sense of roots" (Bakalian, 1993, p. 388), primarily because they provide a tangible link to the past. For those who maintain a more consistent connection with Crete these visits may also deepen their sense of Cretanness. However, they also represent an intermittent form of relationship, which is reinvigorated by revisiting or by recalling memories from the visit.

This intermittent form of the Cretans' relationship to their origins has become a central aspect of contemporary Cretanness, which, in my argument, has undergone a symbolic transformation. In this chapter I have discussed the pillars of the transformed Cretanness. I have also argued that the recent public expressions and activities represent the essence of this transformation and have been facilitated by developments in the public sphere in Turkey and by the romanticisation of origin, at a stage in which assimilation has detached it from its threatening aspects for homogeneity. Cultural aspects such as food, and to a lesser extent, language, which were previously continuously practiced, have now been transformed into "badges" (Alba, 1990, p. 120) of Cretanness that also guarantee a degree of affiliation. Food, in the form of restaurants and food stands during fairs, serves the purpose of visibility, which has

emerged as a central element of symbolic Cretanness. This visibility also characterises the festivals, which provide a space for Cretans to celebrate their origins and connect with one another. Associations and the internet are platforms that exemplify symbolic Cretanness, as they require limited participation, and at the same time contribute to the preservation of a sense of Cretanness, while trips to Crete, allow Cretans to reconnect with their roots.

The symbolic nature of Cretanness does not deprive it of its significance as a system of representations, and even as a basis upon which groupness may evolve. It also involves considerable emotion and opinion, and is laden with meaning. In the subsequent chapter I will delve into the meaning(s) that actors attach to Cretanness.

CHAPTER 6

MEANINGS OF CRETANNESS

As shown in previous chapters, first-generation Cretans were caught between two homelands: the old homeland they had lived in but had to abandon in mixed feelings, and the new homeland where they had to adopt and establish a life from scratch. Current generations identify with Cretanness and have built a narrative about their origins that supports the historical continuity of their Turkishness, asserting their place in the Turkish "community of descent" (Pratsinakis, 2021, p. 186). I would like to share a story told to me by Sardunya's Cretan husband –whom I shall call Hasan[89]– who interjected in my discussion with his wife. He recounted an encounter he had with a resident of a village in Mersin:

> *Even now in the upper villages, 5-6 years ago…They say there is a village of infidels (gavur köyü) there [the "village of infidels" is his village]. I say: "Muhtar,[90] do you know what you're talking about, or do you speak without knowing?" "I know," he says, "it has always been narrated that way." Am I an infidel? They originally are from Efrenk, their origins go back to Armenians. I know the history of the villages very well. I tell him: "Look, you are from Efrenk." They don't accept it because they don't know. They have been fully assimilated. I tell him the history of their ancestors, their relatives. There is also a teacher in their village, also from the same village. We called the teacher to join us. He came and confirmed what I said. This time it became clear (oturdu). I told him: "Now, who is the infidel? You or me? Do you know what infidelity (gavurluk) means? You know, I guess. My roots actually go back to the Kipchak Turks of the Oghuz tribe. They also go back to the Kayi tribe of the Kipchak Turks. We are from the Karamanids. From the Central Asia. We came from the Kipchak branch of the Oghuz tribe. Our coming from there lasted for hundreds of ages. But you were here as Armenians. Before the Turks came to Anatolia, here it was full of Greek Orthodox Christians (Rum), Greeks,*

[89] Hasan is not in the lists of interlocutors because I did not conduct a full formal interview with him. However, he joined part of the interview I conducted with his wife.

[90] *Muhtar* is an administrative post in Turkey, here it refers to the headman of the village.

Byzantines, Armenians". The man fell silent. "You might be a Muslim because you pray (namaz kılıyorsun), because you fast, but you are not a Turk".

Hasan traces the roots of the Cretans in the Karamanid principality (*beylic*)[91] passing through several Turkic nomadic people of central Asia. The Anatolian Turkish principalities such as the Karamanids, had also attracted the interest of the ideology of Turkish nationalism and its endeavour to create a Turkish identity based on Anatolian roots (Yıldız, 2012). The belief that Cretans actually originate from the region of Karaman and the Karamanid principality is the bridge that connects them to the assumed – by the nationalist history – pre-Ottoman Central Asian origins of the Turks (Altunışık & Tür, 2005). What Hasan is doing here, is not only to prove his own Turkishness, but also to question the Turkishness of the ones who question him; he lessens his own ethnic ambiguity by emphasising his interlocutor's "otherness" and making the identity of the "other" more ambiguous than his own (Magliveras, 2009, p. 193).

The narrative produced by Hasan is not an exception. Although there are indeed those who (sometimes hesitantly) question it, there is a general belief among the Cretans that their ancestors were sent by the Ottoman state from dissident Karaman[92] to Crete, in order to Turkify it.[93] According to this belief, as years went by, they were integrated into society, learned the language spoken on the island, and eventually forgot their Turkish. Within this framework their Cretan origin is what actually reinforces their Turkish identity and comes also as a defence in case someone questions their Turkishness. In Arfano's words:

Our parents, then, spoke Greek. They (the others) used to say, "These are Greek seeds", "These are Greeks", "These are enemies". You know, there were Turkish-Greek wars at that time. Because of that, there was, well, there

[91] The Karamanid principality was one of the most powerful dynasties in Anatolia and "the Ottomans' most bitter rival" (Yıldız, 2012, p. 153). After a series of wars with the Ottomans, it was finally defeated and annexed the Ottoman Empire in 1474 (İnalcik, 1973).

[92] It was pointed out by a couple of Cretans that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's ancestors were among those exiled from the Karaman region. Apparently, this belief is also widely held among the locals in Karaman (Yıldız, 2012)

[93] There are those who locate their ancestors' exile to Crete upon the succession of Karaman to the Ottoman Empire, as it was the case for the exiled populations to the Balkans. Crete was conquered around two hundred years after the conquest of the Karaman region.

was exclusion. Alhamdulillah, thank Allah, we knew our origin, our roots; we had gone from Karaman, our ancestors had left in Ottoman times. We, on our side, were defending this (Biz de öyle savunuyorduk).

The above introduction (which should be seen as an introduction to the next chapter, as well) demonstrates how many Cretans form and perceive their relation to Turkishness. I do not suggest that all Cretans form the same relation to Turkishness, as for many their Turkishness stems not from a primordial connection to the Central Asian Turks, but from a sense of civic nationhood. However, I have chosen to introduce the present chapter in this manner because I reckon that we cannot study the meanings attributed to Cretanness without considering the central place that Turkishness holds in the total of self-identifications of second and third-generation Cretans. One of the reasons for this is that we cannot fully comprehend the relationship between Cretans and their Cretanness without also keeping in mind the connection between Cretanness and Turkishness, and how, at times, the Cretan's Turkishness has been a subject of scrutiny by others, while concurrently has been deployed by Cretans as a means to reinforce their Turkishness.

In this chapter, I will explore the meanings that my informants attribute to their Cretanness. Self-identification with Cretanness encompasses a perception of distinctiveness which leads to a sense of superiority. I discuss the most commonly reiterated references under the categories of lifestyle and values, gender relations and dietary choices. It should be noted here that the subsections on lifestyle and values, and gender relations do overlap to some extent, as viewpoints on gender relations are parts of the values held by the individuals, and the issue of veiling, which is central to women's lifestyles, is a gender issue. There are two reasons why I have chosen to discuss and analyse relevant references separately. Firstly, I have considered this specific aspect of women's lifestyle as a part of the religious values. Secondly, gender relations, which also include family dynamics, have been emphasised significantly by both men and women. The second part of the chapter delves into the affective aspect of Cretanness, along the axis of "feeling" versus "being", highlighting the emotion of pride as a strong component of self-identification among the current generations of Cretans.

6.1 Distinctiveness

As Wallman (1978, p. 201) aptly puts it, "when we try to analyse 'ethnic' or 'race' relations we are, in effect, trying to understand the perception of difference – or perhaps, the perception of significant difference".

> *Thus: it is genetically significant that two batches of people differ in respect of colour, stature or nose form; structurally significant that they marry according to different rules and culturally significant that they eat different food and/or with different utensils (...). But these differences only become "racial" or "ethnic" when participants on at least one side of any of these boundaries use the difference to identify themselves as a group –to enhance the sense of "us" by distinguishing "them" more narrowly.* (Wallman, 1978, p. 207)

Wallman focuses on the process of managing differences and on boundary construction on the basis of such differences. Differences people apply to can be "objective differences" that are deemed meaningful for boundary construction. It is often the case though, that people apply to differences that are themselves constructed. The perception of difference can be a "subjective" matter. Waters (1990, p. 134), for instance, observes that people from different ethnic backgrounds were citing the same values –most often love of family, hard-work, and belief in education– but each respondent attributed them to their own ethnic background. In the same vein, Keefe (1992) in her study on Chicanos and Anglos in the US claims that obvious differences, such as language and physical features were not brought up by her informants as differences among ethnic groups. Instead, informants tended to mention behavioural styles, emotional expression, and cultural values.

Cultural attributes and values, often amplified, and character traits generalised come to signify something distinctive about the group. These attributes, values and social differences are summarised under an explicit or implicit story: "We are the people who…..," or "They are the people who…" (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 251). In Cornell & Hartmann's (1998, p. 251) words: "What follows is a narrative – a selection and arrangement of events and interpretations that indicated what separates us from them, that gives significance to that separation, and that attaches a meaning or a value to the resulting category". We should then explore the cultural differences that

the individuals themselves regard as noteworthy, and the cultural traits that are employed as "emblems of differences" (Barth, 1969, p. 14).

In the same way that categories are constructed, it is also possible that individuals choose the category they identify with. Waters (1990), who has studied White ethnics with multiple ancestral backgrounds in America, observes that a key factor influencing the elements of one's ancestry that individuals choose to identify with is their perception of the relative status of the different ethnic groups in society. People tend to associate more with ethnic groups they perceive as having higher status, while undervaluing or ignoring those they consider having lower status. This perception is shaped by social prejudices, cultural norms, and personal experiences, and can be temporal and fluid. Nagata (1974) points out that ethnic stereotypes sometimes call for differentiation when they become relevant and may temporarily lead to a different identification.[94]

The case of Melahrini, a woman in Mersin whose mother was Cretan, and father was Arab, exemplifies the above. She told me clearly that she always identifies with her mother's origin and refrains from mentioning her father's origin, although she repeatedly spoke very positively of him:

> *Well, I'm always Cretan. I am proud to be a Cretan. My father... I said [it] now because you asked. They don't know my father. I say he is from here. But I say that my mother is Cretan. Gladly. And I'm proud. Because they have very nice customs, habits, food…*[95]

Melahrini's preference can of course be based on her fondness of Cretan customs, habits, and food, but can also be linked to an effort to evade the negative stereotypes that accompany Arabs in Turkey.

Whether individuals make an "option" between available groups to identify with or they point out or attach to their "group" certain cultural characteristics and

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[94] She shares a telling relevant example from her fieldwork: (…) a lady who had repeatedly stressed that she, along with all the neighbours in her kampong, were Malay (…), was vigorously cleaning her house in preparation for Hari Raya Puasa, the festival which celebrates the end of the fasting month. When I commented on her energy and industry, she remarked proudly that she is an Arab, and that "Arabs are not lazy like Malays" (Nagata (1974, p. 340).

[95] *Valla, ben her zaman Giritliyim. Giritli olmaktan gurur duyuyorum. Babamı... Şimdi dediğiniz için dedim. Babamı bilmezler. "Buralı" diyorum. Ama "annem Giritli" diyorum. Sevinçle yani. Ve gurur duyuyorum. Çünkü çok güzel adetleri, huyları, yemekleri…*

values is in accordance with the relational nature of group demarcation. Perceptions about "us" and the "other", as well as values and traits attributed to "us" and the "other" "do not float in the air" but are tied to specific dynamics of power (Malesevic, 2004, p. 74). They are also influenced by what might be deemed attractive in a specific context and era. Therefore, difference is more than mere difference, and statements of distinctiveness also imply the assertion of superiority.

Differences are used by one or the other "to identify the right way, 'our' way, in contrast or opposition to what 'they', the others, do" (Wallman, 1979, pp. 2-3). In this context "our" way is also rendered a better way. The Cretans can cite a long list of traits that make them distinct from the others. These traits include character traits, values, habits, and ways of seeing the world. This constructed distinction forms the basis for the development of a sense of distinctiveness and superiority, which is articulated as opposed to a variety of others. It can be expressed in relation to other groups within society, be them the "experienced other" (Saraçoğlu, 2011, p. 67, citing Miles, 1989), or a generalised other that possesses traits they do not consider relevant to themselves.

Voutira, in her study on Asia Minor refugees in the Greek region of Macedonia, evaluates expressions of cultural superiority in the context of interaction between refugees and their hosts. She argues that such expressions are not "ethnocentric" per se, but rather located in the nature of interaction and the experience of refugeeness:

> *As a psycho-social response to the experience of status deprivation, segregation and discrimination that follows forced displacement, these types of statements seek to reaffirm the position of dispossessed newcomers by asserting each group's self-esteem vis-a-vis the "other", and have been documented in a variety of settings.* (Voutira, 1997, p. 120)

Hirschon describes how the exchangees from Asia Minor to Kokkinia negotiated the experience of refugeeness and the contact with the local population:

> *Their initial impressions of mainland Greek life were disappointing. By contrast with the towns and villages of their homeland, metropolitan Greece could not be viewed in a favourable light. This small country was backward, and parochial, and its people unsophisticated. This disappointment promoted a curious replication of social position. Although the mass of urban refugees in the large settlements soon became entrenched at the bottom of the social and economic scale, they re-established their claims to cultural superiority, based*

> *now on the minutiae of conduct. Whereas before in the homeland claims to superiority were rooted in religious and cultural differences, now they were defined by minute distinctions in life-style. Religion continued to play a part in this even though they were settled in an official Orthodox country: now the refugees proudly noted that they were more observant, more devout than the locals. Their perception of difference also included manners, comportment, and especially cuisine (…).* (Hirschon, 1989, p. 31)

In a different context, Žmegač (2005), touches upon the sociological conditions that emerged from the encounter of the Croats, who, in the aftermath of the dissolution of former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, migrated from Serbia to Croatia, with their compatriots in their "ethnic homeland". These "ethnically privileged migrants" discovered that integrating was not straightforward, since they were seen as outsiders, and on their part, they viewed the local people as strangers. As a result, a new discourse of identification was initiated, which constructed a series of differences that differentiated them from the local population.

The contexts upon which Voutira, Hirschon and Žmegač draw present similarities to the circumstances the first generation of Cretans found themselves. They encountered either the local population or other migrant groups. Yılmaz (2011) in her study on Ayvalik presents the dynamics of interaction between the two main exchangee groups at the time, documenting some of the perceptions they had of each other. Referring to the first generation, she noted that Cretans asserted that Lesviots lacked culinary skills, lived in untidy homes, and possessed a rural identity. In contrast, Lesviots argued that Cretans upheld Greek traditions and had a lower cultural level due to the absence of a high school in Crete. Additionally, the more democratic structure within Cretan families was viewed with scepticism by the Lesviot exchangees in Ayvalik. Therefore, what is observed is a mutual construction of difference, in which the sense of superiority is involved.

Although the Cretans this thesis is about have not experienced refugeeness and migrancy themselves, we cannot dissociate them from this historical reality. Appropriating the Cretan category is also appropriating the difference that has been created through the narratives of the ancestors, reproduced from generation to generation, often in a selective way (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). Narratives, by being told and retold, remind group members of their own peoplehood, of what sets them apart (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 224) and boundaries are redrawn by "picking and

choosing items from the shelves of the past and the present" (Nagel, 1994, p. 162). The past is often interwoven with the present and utilised in a way that fits the current circumstances.

An indicative example of how the past appears in the present is the use of the word *yerli*, which means "local" and was used by first-generation Cretans to signify the separation between them and the local population. I noticed that the word *yerli* (also used in Cretan as *yerlis* (fem. *yerlina*) is still used in the field, especially in Mersin, in order to denote difference. I was puzzled when, during a visit to the village of Hebilli in Mersin, a Cretan old lady asked me in Cretan whether in Crete there are many Cretan or mostly local women (*yerlines*). Then, I came to realise that the term "local" has acquired a more general meaning and it is often used to mean the "non-Cretan". Like a floating signifier it is also used by the Cretans when they want to juxtapose themselves to migrant groups who came after them.

6.1.1 Lifestyle and values

I enter a place, and everyone asks:
-Are you from here? Because you have something European.
-It's possible. I'm Cretan!
- It's obvious…
(Giritliyim Farkliyim)

As mentioned earlier, the sense of distinctiveness arises from attributing meaning to certain practices, values, or traits. While these practices, values or traits may be shared by others, they are utilised in a way that emphasises their specific significance. In the case of food, one of the pillars of distinctiveness for Cretans, its centrality as a symbol in constructing Cretanness nowadays renders it a more inherent marker of distinctiveness, although further exploration is needed to understand its specific meaning. Other markers of distinctiveness may be less tangible, but their importance can be discerned when viewed within a broader context. In any case, what matters is the necessity of displaying some form of distinctiveness (Cohen, 1985). At this juncture, it is worth reminding ourselves that the sense of distinctiveness leading communities and groups to reaffirm and reassert their boundaries often aligns with the

way Anthony Cohen (1985, p. 40) summarises it: an "ubiquitous adolescent outburst to all-knowing parents, 'You don't know me at all- I'm not the same as you!'"

Central place in their narratives hold references to their "Western" and "European" origin from which stems their "civilised" and "modern" mentality and lifestyle. Cesur encapsulates what Cretanness means according to him: "Being Cretan means being Western, that is being European. [It means] having more viewpoints (*daha çok fikirli olmak*), looking positively at the world". The terms "West" and "Europe" carry more than just a geographic connotation; they do not simply imply that Crete is located at the west of Turkey. The terms "West" and "Europe" and the adjectives "Western" and "European" are intertwined with the history of the country and have accompanied it (at least) throughout the century-long lifespan of the Republic of Turkey. The use of those terms as an articulation of distinctiveness has specific undertones that relate to a particular value system, to "a hierarchy of worth" (Kandiyoti, 1997, p. 119).

The principle of westernisation[96] was central to both the policies and discourse of the founding elite of the Republic of Turkey. The Turkish society had to adopt Western technology and techniques, ideas, and ways of life which had already penetrated the culture in the late Ottoman period (Ahıska, 2000, p. 20). After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 its founder, Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk), put his modernisation project[97] into practice in a systematic way in order "to bring Turkey to the level of contemporary civilisation" which was represented by Europe (Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 16). Hence, Turkey experienced modernisation as Westernisation; legal, institutional, and administrative reforms were introduced following the path of European countries, while the official discourse encouraged a shift in lifestyles, manners, behaviour, and daily customs of the people.

> *Everything that is alafranka (the European way) is deemed proper and valuable; anything alaturka (the Turkish way) acquires a negative connotation and is somehow inferior. (…) Wearing neckties, eating with forks, shaving,*

[96] For Tukey's ambivalent relation with the "West" historically and more recently and the oscillation between "Western-orientedness" and "anti-Westernism" see Çapan & Zarakol, 2017; Zarakol, 2011; Ahıska, 2000, 2003.

[97] See Altunışık & Tür, 2005, p. 16-27; Zürcher, 2010, pp.186-200 for a brief overview of the changes and Heper, 2012 for Atatürk's discourse.

> *attending the theatre, shaking hands, dancing and wearing hats in public, and writing from left to right are some of the behaviours that characterise a progressive and civilised person.* (Göle, 1997, pp. 85-86)

My informants often chose to emphasise certain practices and habits they or their ancestors followed and to place them along the axis of civilised-uncivilised or progressive-conservative. Table manners, as part of their Western culture, are a recurrent topic; the first-generation Cretans had adopted "civilised" manners and ate at the table, using cutlery. They were distinct from the Lesviots and villagers in Ayvalik or the locals and, again, villagers in Mersin who ate with their hands and on the floor. Some informants shared the culture shock they experienced when they were invited for lunch or dinner and had to abide by their host's culinary traditions. Giritliyim Farklıyım, apparently sees the year of the establishment of the republic as a milestone and was surprised to encounter people eating on the floor even in the 1960s, "after so many years had passed". The Cretans, to the contrary "used forks and spoons as soon as they [migrated to Turkey] in 1924".

Okan's[98] comment that Cretans "are from Paris", while Lesviots are "villagers" can be viewed through the same lens. In this case, the term "villager" is employed as "a means of otherisation" (Örs, 2018, p. 8), not to describe the non-urban, but rather as a somewhat derogatory term to portray the other's uncivilised way of life. The selection of the city of Paris as a point of reference comes to symbolise the Westernness in the Cretans' manners and lifestyle. Melike believes that the Cretans' Westernness is apparent in their "way of thinking" (*düşünce tarzı*). According to her, they are "open-minded" and "open to the West", which is why she does not feel a connection to the "Eastern culture". Lokum could "feel the difference" between Cunda, where the "culture [that their ancestors] brought from Crete was prominent, and nearby areas, where "Anatolian culture" held dominance.

In all the above accounts – and in many others – the participants of the research draw a direct or indirect distinction between "the West" and "the East", and they locate themselves, who are "cultured" (*kültürlü/görgülü*), "civilised" (*medeni*), "progressive"

[98] Okan (pseudonym), one of the youngest Cretans I had the chance to interact with (around 40-45 years old), is not included in the list of interlocutors because I did not conduct a formal interview with him. However, he was one of the Cretans with whom I spent a considerable amount of time during my visits to Ayvalik.

(*ilerici*), "gentle" (*zarif*) "open-minded" (*açık fikirli*) in the former and "the others", who are "conservative" (*muhafazakar*/*tutucu*), uncivilised, "reactionary" (*gerici*) and "religious bigot" (*yobaz*)[99] in the latter. In the framework of this internal orientalism[100] exercised by the Cretans, the West and the East do not correspond solely to geographical locations, as the non-Western is not necessarily someone from the East; it is someone who lacks the qualities required to join the modern and civilised culture. The West and the East are cultural signifiers, loaded with meaning derived from a value system rooted in history.

I see this emphasis on "Westernness" and "Europeanness" on the side of the Cretans as a reproduction of the republican ideals. This interpretation is corroborated by their strong ideological attachment to Kemalism,[101] not only as a state ideology but also as a secular, Westernised lifestyle particular to Turkey (Özyürek, 2006). In Erotokritos' words: "We, all Cretans, are supporters of Atatürk. We are people who try to keep Atatürk's principles and revolutions alive. And we depend on them. Because that's the right thing". In the current context in Turkey, that is the crisis of Kemalism, its paradigm of nationalism and modernisation and its tenet of secularism in Turkey since the late 1980s, Cretanness takes on a particular significance providing a basis on which a sense of distinctiveness can be cultivated. Cretans feel distinct and often superior because they remain "Western" in an environment that approximates "the East". Cretanness offers the credentials for it.

[99] *Yobaz* is a culturally specific term that poses challenges in translation, as a single-word equivalent can only capture a portion of its original meaning. According to the Turkish Language Association's dictionary, it can refer to an individual who is an extreme religious bigot and tends to enforce their beliefs onto others. Additionally, it can encompass someone who displays an excessive attachment to a particular thought or belief, as well as someone who is vulgar or lacking sensitivity (TDK, n.d.).

[100] I encountered the same term used by Schein (1997) in the context of China. In her work Schein defines "internal orientalism" as "a set of practices that occur *within* China, and that, in this case, refers to the fascination of more cosmopolitan Chinese with "exotic" minority cultures in an array of polychromatic and titillating forms" (p. 70, emphasis in the original). Here, I employ the term to denote the perception of cultural superiority on the part of the self and cultural inferiority of the "other". In the context of Turkey see also Ahıska's (2000, 2003) concept of "Occidentalism" and Zarakol's (2011) concept of "auto-orientalism", which, however, encompass different notions from what I am describing.

[101] Kemalism or Atatürkism, as a set of ideas, emerged in the 1930s, through putting together the basic principles of the new Republic. However, it never became a coherent, well-defined and detailed ideology (see Zürcher, 2010, pp. 181-182).

The late 1980s and, especially, the 1990s in Turkey marked the emergence of movements challenging the status quo, as part of the global crisis of modernism (Gülalp, 1995). The Kurdish movement in the form of a political and armed struggle challenged the understanding of the concepts of "nation" and "state" that "[remained] firmly rooted in the normative ideals of the 1920s" (Zarakol, 2011, p. 157) and the political Islam has produced a counterdiscourse to the hegemonic discourse of Turkish modernity and its principle of secularism. For Kemalists and many secular Turks this questioning created great anxiety (Zarakol, 2011). At the same time, in the eyes of its proponents, and especially for the first-generation Republicans, Kemalism was transformed into a "fragile ideology in need of citizens' protection" (Özyürek, 2006, p. 16). As Özyürek (2006) explains, citizens transferred the founding principles of the Turkish Republic in everyday life and the private realm. This novel form of relationship was characterised by a feeling of "nostalgia for the lost values, commitments, and lifestyles of the early Turkish Republic" (Özyürek, 2006, p. 48).

In early 2000s the Justice and Development Party (AKP) entered the political scene as a conservative Muslim party. Gradually, it developed into an all-powerful apparatus, which currently controls the levers of state power, targeting "the erstwhile guardians of the republic—the military, the high judiciary, the secular elites" (Bâli, 2021, p. 639) and reversing the dominant ideological paradigm. Within two decades in power, it has challenged various orthodoxies (Çapan & Zarakol, 2017), leading to a spread of fears of Islamisation of the society and the polity. In the "new Turkey"[102] under AKP and the executive presidency of the current president of the Republic, Turkey's Ottoman heritage has been rediscovered, there has been a change in foreign policy priorities shifting from the West to the East and a clear fostering of religion through policies and discourse, often used by the AKP as a means of stimulating polarisation for electoral gain (Bâli, 2021).

The issue of religion, particularly its practice and its reflection in the public sphere, arose frequently in the narratives of the Cretans. The majority expressed that they were not highly religious, and even devout Muslims made a clear distinction between being religious and being a religious fanatic. The informants noted that their

[102] See Bâli, 2021 for an overview.

ancestors practiced Islam and fulfilled their religious obligations, but it did not intrude upon their lifestyle, and definitely, it did not resemble the way Islam is currently practiced in Turkey. Religious Cretans have always been "religious but modern". For example, Lokum's mother and aunt used to pray and fast, while they also used to enjoy trips to the beach. Similarly, Denizali's grandfather would have his Turkish raki after completing his teaching duties at the mosque, then perform ablution and carry on with his religious responsibilities.

Women's attire was central in this respect, brought up both by women and men. Lokum explains how easily her Cretan ancestors adapted to Atatürk's reforms:

> *They adopted Atatürk's reforms very quickly. My husband's paternal grandmother was narrating… for example… the veil for example… when Atatürk introduced the clothing reform, she took her veil off very easily. They accepted [the reforms] very quickly. Where does it stem from? I think it stems from the culture they took there (in Crete).*

Lokum refers to the clothing reforms which were introduced by Atatürk and envisaged the outlaw of the traditional male headgear, the fez, and its replacement with European-style hats. This move reflected the importance he attached to the citizens' "being civilised both in essence and appearance" (Gökberk, 1983, as cited in Heper, 2012). As far as female veiling is concerned, no restrictive legislation was enacted; nevertheless, women were encouraged to abandon the veil and to adopt Western-style dress.[103]

In the early Republic, the presence or absence of veiling, as well as the display of the body (within approved limits and avoiding sexualisation), served as criteria for being considered modernised and civilised (Durakbaşa, 1998, citing İlyasoğlu, 1996; Özyürek, 2006). Murtaza recalls that in photos from the 1940s and 1950s his mother is portrayed as wearing swimsuits and sleeveless dresses, a style of clothing that was not popular in Mersin at the time. Giritliyim Farklıyım believes that her ancestors were "cultured and knew how to dress" in a way that set them apart from all the others. She

[103] In a speech he delivered in Kastamonu, on August 30, 1925, Atatürk voiced his dissatisfaction with the prevailing clothing practices and their symbolism:
In some places I see women who hide their faces and eyes by throwing a piece of fabric, a scarf, or something like that over their head, and when a man passes by, they turn their backs to him or close up by sitting on the ground. What is the meaning and explanation of this behaviour? Gentlemen, would mothers and daughter of a civilised nation assume such an absurd and vulgar pose? This is a situation that ridicules our nation. It has to be corrected immediately. (Atatürk, 1952, cited in Arat, 1994, p. 61)

also looks at their photos and sees "beautiful people in normal, nice clothes". For her, "normal, nice clothes" are clothes not dictated by Islam. In these narratives, the past, and the memory of it are utilised to "redraw the boundaries (…) between the self and the other, by both including or excluding and by establishing hierarchies between social groups" (Lacroix & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013, p. 685).

Such comments are not limited to the past; they also reflect the present. Claims of Cretans being modern and non-conservative were often accompanied by the recurring observation, made both by men and women, that Cretan women do not wear headscarves. Melike specifically drew my attention to a dinner organised by Cretans the previous night, emphasising that there were no veiled women among the Cretans, as I should have already noticed. In an informal discussion with Ahmet (pseudonym)[104] in Mersin, he remarked that Cretan women who wear headscarves feel ashamed to openly identify as Cretan because they do not fit in. The headscarf is a symbol with a lot of power in Turkey[105] and the use of it, especially in the sphere of the state, is interpreted as a threat to Turkey's "modern" identity.

This emphasis on lifestyle and dress style symbolises the Cretans' discontent with "a recent backward transformation toward increasing religiosity and veiling" (Özyürek, 2006, p. 64). Giritliyim Farklıyım, herself a pious Muslim, dresses "in a way that fits the environment but still suits [her] culture", in a "civilised" way, the way she learnt from her ancestors. In a nostalgic view of the past, she believes that this "civilisation" tends to disappear in contemporary Turkey, an unfortunate situation further intensified by the influx of Syrian refugees. Zeruş also thinks that certain values have been lost in Turkey, expressing her dissatisfaction with the Islamisation trend in society. Cretans differentiate themselves from this trend, since "due to the respect they have for their Father,[106] no Cretan is a religious bigot (*yobaz*)". As a speaker stated at

[104] Ahmet is one of the Cretans whom I could not convince to participate in a formal interview. However, he proved to be one of my most valuable gatekeepers in Mersin, always willing to help, and we spent hours discussing Cretans, Mersin, and Turkish politics. He is also one of the young Cretans I met (around 40 years old).

[105] For an overview of the headscarf issue in contemporary Turkey see for example Çınar (2008) and Cindoglu, D., & Zencirci, G. (2008).

[106] The surname "Atatürk" means Father Turk and was adopted in 1934 following the law that required all citizens to adopt a surname (Zürcher, 2010, p. 188). Kemalist Turks often refer to him as Father (*Ata*).

the Cretan festival in Kusadasi in 2019, “Cretanness is the guarantee of secular democracy”. It was a statement met with enthusiastic applause from the crowd.

My informants share the Kemalist discourse of modernity/progressiveness, which was developed as a response to the challenges posed by the Islamist movement (Bora, 2020, p. 179). This discourse is fused with the way they define Cretanness, providing a foundation for construction of difference in that regard. If we consider the specific context in which narratives are articulated, it becomes evident that what we witness is more than just a narrative of difference. Within the value system of most Cretans, the principles of modernism, secularism, progressiveness, and civilisation, also associated with Cretanness, act as markers of superiority. In a society and polity penetrated by the forces of Islamisation and conservativism, their values and lifestyle are what distinguishes them, serving as an anchor of distinctiveness.

6.1.2 Gender relations

Questions about gender and the informants’ perceptions of gender roles in both the private and public spheres were included in the questionnaire. This was not only due to my personal interest in the topic but also because during my preliminary visits to the field, gender-related discussions emerged as one of the most frequent themes in conversations with both Cretan women and men. The relationship between gender and the sense of distinctiveness primarily revolves around the dynamics between husbands and wives, parenting practices, and the concept of the male power within the family. In short, while there were also comments on the reflections of gender relations in the public sphere, the discussions predominantly focused on the private sphere.

In general, the research participants referred to more liberal gender relations between the partners in the couple compared to the patriarchal norms prevalent in Turkey. Both men and women emphasised a relative equality within the couple, drawing from their personal experiences with their spouses or observations they had gathered from their parents. Women were described as “free”, “modern”, “dominant”, and unwilling to “give up their rights”. Elif believes that, due to these characteristics, Cretan women represent “positive examples in terms of gender equality”. Yasemin compares Cretan women to other women she knows and is surprised to discover that,

although a woman works, has economic freedom, and education, she might not have control over her own finances. She also contrasts Cretan women with the "women from the East"[107], who can be viewed as "second-class citizens". Cretan women are respectful to their husbands, but they expect to be treated with the same level of respect, Sardunya says.

Arnavut, who is married to a Cretan woman, thinks that "in the household the woman has the last word" (*evde kadın lafı geçer*).[108] This is not the case with the Bosnian women in Ayvalik, whose opinions have no validity (*hiç kadın lafı geçmez*). Cretan women "don't let themselves be oppressed" (*Giritli kadını ezdirmez*), they "don't walk at the back" (*arkada yürümez*), as Murtaza, also married to a Cretan woman, observes. On the other side, you can see the Arab men walking in the front and the women following, as it happens with the villagers as well (*Arapları gör, erkek önde yürür kadın arkada yürür. Köylülere bak, arkada yürür*). Women in the Cretan community "are not on the side-lines" (*Giritli toplumda kadın pek geride değil*), they are not being oppressed, there are many educated and professional women, as Cesur emphasises.

Cretan men are "democratic" and "respectful to their wives". Denizali, who is married to a Cretan man, argues that Cretan men are "modern" and "compliant" (*uysal*). Giritliyim Farklıyım was happy in her marriage, because her husband, like most of Cretan men, was "helpful" with the raising of the children while she was working. Her sister and her daughter, who both got married to "local" men, had to face violent and jealous husbands. In general, unlike the Cretans, the local men cannot handle the fact the Cretan women are cultured (*kültürlü*), smart (*gözü açık*) and knowledgeable (*bilgili*). During one of our informal conversations, Osman mentioned in a humorous way that he, like most Cretan men, is a "henpecked husband" (*kılıbık*). At another instance, he brought the negative example of his brother who "has not taken anything from Cretan culture" because he does nothing at home. When I asked Lokum

[107] She uses the terms "*Doğu kökenli*" and "*Doğulu*", which means "from the East". She is most probably referring to Kurdish women. These terms are primarily used by Turks with a nationalist background, or speaking within a nationalist discourse, as a way to avoid using the ethnic noun "Kurd" or the adjective "Kurdish".

[108] I had previously conducted an interview with his wife. He was very curious to know how his wife had responded to the same questions.

whether she could cite any general characteristics of Cretans, the first thing she said, particularly referring to previous generations, was that Cretan men are devoted (*düşkün*) to their families and value the needs of their wives and children.

This profile of the Cretan women and men is the reason why people say: "Marry your daughter off to a Cretan's son, but don't marry your son off to a Cretan's daughter" (*Giritliye kız ver, Giritliden kız alma*)[109], Murtaza says. I heard the expression in question several times during fieldwork, although not everyone was familiar with it. As it becomes evident from the informants' description of gender relations among Cretans, this specific phrase is the proud confirmation that Cretan women are so distinct from the rest of women in Turkey that they are rendered an undesirable wife to a patriarchal man. At the same time, Cretan men also carry characteristics that make them different from the others. Erotokritos remembers that in the past in Ayvalik, Cretan men were sought after for marriage. Although such "definite boundaries do not exist anymore", as he comments, both in Ayvalik and Mersin research participants tended to reproduce them in their narratives.

In Cretan culture, partners consult with each other before making decisions, show mutual respect, face the difficulties together and walk in public "holding hands". This distinctive approach to gender relations is not limited to the relationship between

[109] Mansur (1972, pp. 162-189) delves into the marriage practices among locals and Cretans in Bodrum. This same phrase is documented in her work, as used by the locals. She observes that, during her research, endogamy was still prevalent in Bodrum, with only a few mixed marriages occurring between local women and Cretan men. According to her findings, apart from the antagonism that created a divide between newcomers and locals, the primary reason for practicing endogamy was the distinct economic activities pursued by the two communities. Cretan women were disinclined to engage in agricultural work, which constituted the primary occupation of the locals, and lead a peasant lifestyle. Simultaneously, local women could not bear the insecure lifestyle of being married to seafaring Cretan men, whose income had ups and downs and who faced dangers at the sea. Tütengil (1954, p. 43) observes that Cretan women in the village of Ihsaniye in Antalya did not engage in agricultural work with their husbands, unlike the local women from neighbouring villages who shared the same workload with the men outside the house. He also refers to the case of two Cretan women married off to men from neighbouring villages, who "left their husbands because they were used in heavy men's work". Yurduseven (1960) at his follow-up examination of the same village observes that differences between the Cretans and the locals in terms of division of labour had been eliminated throughout the years.
An almost identical statement has been documented by Karakılıç Dağdelen (2015) in her study on exchangees from Northern Greece to a village in the Black Sea region. She comments that by such a statement the exchangees wish to draw attention to the difference in the way they treat their daughters and sisters before marriage compared to the treatment the latter receive after marriage by the non-exchangee groom's family. Likewise, marriage with an exchangee guarantees a kind and considerate treatment towards the woman. The existence of such similarities in perceptions in different settings confirm the view that expressions of difference, distinctiveness and superiority are not necessarily group-specific but reflect broader sociological, but also common psychological processes.

husband and wife, but is also apparent in broader family relationships, particularly in terms of the power dynamics between the family members. In Cretan families all members have the right to speak; it is not like the "Eastern families" where all have to follow the word of the father or the grandfather, as Bayram Cemali argues. In Kemale's family, Cretanness was visible in the relations among the family members that would differ from other families she knew. She was not scared of her father, like other children; to the contrary she and her siblings were talking very comfortably to their father. She was also not expected to show extreme respect to the older brother, as it is normally expected in Turkey. Overall, she grew up in a "more comfortable environment". Melahrini also describes a more comfortable and "free" environment while growing up, as she and her sisters were allowed to have friendships with boys at school, although in Mersin things in general are "a bit strict" (*biraz sıkı*).

Resmolu was raised in a culture where male children had the responsibility to contribute to the housework. At the same time, he observes that in Cretan households, female children are raised with the awareness that they have the right to express their opinions. Unlike the prevalent mentality in Turkey that dictates, "you are a girl, you cannot interfere", such a mentality does not exist in Cretan culture. In Murtaza's words "there is no difference between boys and girls" (*bizim insanımızda kız erkek ayrımı yoktur*). Cretan families value girls' education the same as boys', so that girls become independent women. "There is no such thing in the Turkish patriarchal society" (*Türk ataerkil toplumda bu yoktur*), in which women are expected to have a domestic lifestyle. It is noteworthy that my informants placed significant emphasis on the Cretan families' intention and efforts to support female education. It was also cited as an example of "open-mindedness" and "progressiveness" demonstrated by Cretans in general, and Cretan fathers in particular.

The above accounts highlight the high gender equality standards that characterise the Cretan culture. On other hand, there are accounts like Arfano's, who describes Cretan women as "virtuous" (*namusa düşkünler*), loyal to their husband and adaptable (*uyumlu*). Kara Kartal's perspective also differs from the previous accounts, since he believes that male dominance prevails in Cretan culture. Zeruş chose to abandon her studies in a prestigious field after meeting and falling in love with her future husband. According to her, girls are raised in Cretan families with the

understanding that what they do for their husbands is not seen as sacrifices but rather as acts done willingly and happily.

It is worth noting that even those who were quoted above as celebrating the Cretan culture for its more liberal gender norms, also express views that uphold traditional gender roles or subscribe to patriarchal structures. For instance, Osman, who had depicted himself as a "henpecked husband", next time I visited him, called his wife who was away at the time, to come and prepare coffee for us. On another occasion, at the presence of his wife, he described his nightlife implying that he has affairs with other women. Another example is Murtaza, who drew a further comparison between Cretans on one hand and Arabs and villagers on the other. He noted that on Eid, women in these cultures typically kiss their husband's hand as a sign of respect. Cretan women never do that; instead, they kiss their father's hand. In other words, a male figure to whom women show deference, is simply replaced by another male figure, along patriarchal standards.

Similarly, Yasemin, who praised Cretan women's independence, wanted to make sure that the concept of "freedom" she used to describe the conditions in which Cretan women act was not misunderstood. Cretan women are "free", but freedom does not mean "establishing hegemony over men". Women still act within a widely accepted framework of conduct and are expected to have "self-control" and a sense and awareness of how they should behave in public and interact with men. It should also be noted that despite the egalitarian views on family relations and women's participation in the public sphere, women are still not exempt from gendered responsibilities in the household.

The counter accounts presented are not intended to refute the previous narratives, but rather serve as a reminder that "uncovering" the truth can be a complex endeavour and that there can be multiple truths. Ultimately, the Cretans might be distinct regarding gender and family relations, or they may not be significantly different from the norm in Turkey. This can be revealed only through extensive participant observation and necessitates spending significant time with the informants in their private spheres. What matters is that the actors perceive themselves as having more liberal gender and family relations and choose to highlight them as an area of

distinctiveness, much like how they emphasise their distinctiveness in terms of lifestyle and values.

In the narratives cited, but also in others that I have not included here so as to avoid repetition, my informants compare themselves with a wide variety of "others" that include the Arabs, the Kurds, the Yörüks, the Bosnians, the villagers, the locals, those living in Central Anatolia and those residing in Eastern Anatolia. The specific "other" may vary according to whether the speaker resides in Ayvalik or in Mersin, or according to personal experiences, however the content is more or less the same. What all those have in common in the eyes of Cretans is that they do not respect gender equality, they undermine women's status, and that they promote male dominance and gender segregation. Put differently, they adhere to "conservative" norms and are "bigoted" (*bağnaz*/*bağnazlık*), characteristics that are not found among Cretans.

It is interesting that two informants associated the Cretans' attitudes towards gender directly with political preferences. Cesur thinks that the fact that most Cretan men vote for the Kemalist Republican People's Party (CHP)[110] means automatically more liberal attitudes in terms of gender.[111] The connection of attitudes to the political party here carries a twofold meaning. It denotes the opposition to the ruling political force, but at the same time makes an implicit reference to the Kemalist ideals comparing the Cretan men with the "illiberal" men, who do not share the modern and Western mentality. It also coincides with the Kemalist discourse, which often focuses on the emancipatory policies of the early Republic governments towards women, which introduced and instutionalised women's rights, though a series of changes in the legislative framework (Gündüz-Hoşgör, 1996, p. 142).[112]

Yetimaki also links political party preference to gender. According to him Cretans, when they first came, were close to CHP. Although later they "jumped to different fields, such as nationalist groups or political Islam" in general they "stand on

[110] CHP is the party founded by Mustafa Kemal and ruled the country until 1950.

[111] *Giritli erkekler de daha liberal. Yani, birçok insan CHP'yi destekliyor işte.*

[112] Feminists in Turkey have long questioned the meaning of Republican reforms for women, arguing that there was no actual liberation, since women were essentially defined as breeders and educators of the new generations (Durakbasa & Ilyasoglu, 2001, p. 195). Arat (1994, p. 59) points to the replacement of the Islamic patriarchy with a secular, "Western" one, while cultural controls over female bodies did not cease to exist. See also Kandiyoti, 1987 and Berktay, 1998.

the left side, that is on the modern side".[113] Following my question on why he thinks this is the case he made the following clarification:

> *Let me put it this way: for example, in our culture, in Cretan culture, there is no kaçgöç (gender segregation). What does kaçgöç mean? If you enter a house, if you enter a Cretan house, the women sit together with the men. They eat altogether at the table. We always eat together with our mother and aunts at the table, women eat together with men. Or when a guest visits us, s/he sits in the same place. But the locals do not have this. It used to be like that, now there is no such thing. In the past, there was kaçgöç among the locals. That is, men would run away to one side, women would sit in the other, in separate rooms. We used to eat at the table. We had forks and knives; they used to eat on the floor. Do you understand? I mean, we are already in a different situation since our culture comes from the West, because it comes from the culture there. I think that's why [Cretans] are more inclined to the left. Because you know, the left [means] internationalism. It's known in the world as non-discriminate. But now the political Islam is not like that.*

Yetimaki's account provides a compelling example of how ideological tendencies, lifestyles, gendered practices, viewpoints on gender and the place of origin are intermeshed. The lack of gender segregation, among Cretans[114] as a sign of more equal gender relations, is also presented as an example of Westernness, which consequently explains why Cretans are more prone to "the left", that is CHP. He also highlights the contrast between the practices of the Cretans to the ethics the current ruling and its religiously inspired political ideology represents and encourages.

Turkey is a country, where "women are still less educated and economically less independent than men" (Arat, 2022, p. 930), while the issue of gender equality and women's human rights come often to the foreground, mostly through common incidents of gender-based violence and the discourse of the political elites. Moreover, several anti-democratic policies in recent years have targeted women and gender equality, and both policies and discourse aim at regulating gender norms, women's conduct, and at enforcing conservative family values (Kandiyoti, 2016). As Kandiyoti

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[113] *Esasında Giritliler genel olarak ilk anlamda –partiyi de vereceğim– CHP'e yakın duruyorlar. İlk geldiklerinde. Fakat sonradan içinden çok değişik alanlara atlayan olmuş, mesela milliyetçi gruplara, ondan sonra, siyasal İslam'a atlayan olmuş. Ama benim gördüğüm kadarıyla genelde hep sol tarafta duruyorlar, yani çağdaş tarafta. Çağdaş olanın yanında duruyorlar, genel olarak.*

[114] Melahrini shared her own experience with gender segregation when she went to meet her husband's family. She was surprised to see that men and women sit and eat in separate rooms. She found them "very backward" (*çok geri*).

(2016) notes, gender has also been utilised by the ruling elite in delineating boundaries between its constituency and the "others". Table 4 provides a glimpse of the gender disparity in Turkey, which demonstrates a consistently low ranking.

Table 4 – Turkey's ranking in terms of gender gap

Year	Turkey's position
2006	105 (out of 115)
2007	121 (out of 128)
2008	123 (out of 130)
2009	129 (out of 134)
2010	126 (out of 134)
2011	122 (out of 132)
2012	124 (out of 135)
2013	120 (out of 136)
2014	125 (out of 142)
2015	130 (out of 145)
2016	130 (out of 144)
2017	131 (out of 144)
2018	130 (out of 149)
2019	n/a
2020	130 (out of 153)
2021	133 (out of 156)
2022	124 (out of 146)

Note: The table is compiled from the data of the Global Gender Gap Reports published by the World Economic Forum.

The gloomy reality in Turkey and the gender regime briefly described above, in combination with my informants' personal experiences and observations, provide an area in which they can feel distinct, while their experiences and practices are perceived "as being something quite specific to their own cultural backgrounds" (Waters, 1990, p. 138). Perhaps it is helpful to recall Cohen's formulation of the sense of distinctiveness as the phrase "I'm not the same as you!" and we can also add the

phrase “I’m better than you!”. The significance of gender as a pillar of distinctiveness is further emphasised by the fact that the majority of the accounts used in the section were not prompted by a specific question on gender. The categories of “Cretan woman” and “Cretan man” and the relation between the two, appear to constitute a central aspect of Cretanness.

For a property or habit to serve as a basis for distinctiveness and distinction, it must be valued and appreciated, at least according to the value system of the one(s) who claim it, which, in turn, is not an arbitrary construct but rather shaped by a complex interplay of historical, social, and cultural factors. In the case of Cretans, the opposition to a conservative gender regime or the articulation of difference in comparison to patriarchal gender norms prevalent in the society or segments of it should also be seen in an analogous manner to the sense of distinctiveness as analysed in the previous section. Yetimaki was not the only one who made a connection to the Cretans’ “Western” roots in association to gender, while the term “modern” used to describe Cretan men and gender relations, implying an opposition to “traditional”, cannot be disconnected from the ideological and historical load it carries. The emphasis placed in the narratives of my interlocutors on the education of daughters is representative in this regard, as it also goes hand-in-hand with the ideals of modernisation and the value placed on women’s education[115] within this framework.[116] Although, inequality in education is not the most significant gender problem that Turkey currently faces, there are still persistent biased social norms that undermine female education.[117]

[115] See Gündüz-Hoşgör (1996, pp. 146-150) for the approach towards women’s education during early Republic.

[116] A second-generation Cretan cited in Suda Güler’s (2012, p. 50) work labels the education of girls as an example of a “western vision”: “When they came, they didn’t know Turkish. The others called them ‘half-infidel’. But they had a western vision; for instance, girls were being educated (*kızlar okutuluyor*).

[117]According to the latest Gender Social Norms Index report by UNDP, 30.04 percent of women and 35.34 percent of men hold biases regarding female education (United Nations Development Programme, 2023)

6.1.3 Dietary choices

We are the only ones who have food culture.
(Erotokritos)

In the previous chapter it was shown that food and cuisine emerge as one of the most visible and at the same time the most constant symbol of Cretanness. It was also shown that food, along with its symbolic dimension, functions as a boundary that separates Cretans from the "others". Although in some accounts shared before, there is an oblique sense of distinctiveness and superiority, in this section I aim to focus on a few more open expressions of it.

References to the healthy aspects of the Cretan diet were quite common. The fact that, as part of the Mediterranean diet, the Cretan diet is considered one of the healthiest diet choices according to the scientific community, is employed by Cretans, who had discovered the secret of a healthy life and longevity long before the science did. The Mediterranean diet, as a modern concept, is a nutritional guide that offers dietary recommendations influenced by the traditional eating habits observed in the island of Crete and Southern Italy in the 1950s and 1960s. The low rates of chronic diseases and the high life expectancy observed in those areas lead the scientists to study the possible benefits of the eating habits of the population (Sikalidis, Kelleher & Kristo, 2021, p. 374). The Mediterranean diet became widely known to the public at the end of the twentieth century, has gained international recognition and has been established as part of the current dietary guidelines in several countries (Sikalidis, Kelleher & Kristo, 2021; Radd-Vagenas, Kouris-Blazos, Singh & Flood, 2017).

Olive oil, which lies at the core of the Cretan diet and is the principal source of fat, guarantees a long life and offers great health benefits, as a number of informants emphasised. In addition to olive oil, the consumption of vegetables and greens, along with other aspects of the Cretan nutritional regimen, currently constitutes the dietary standard to be followed. Lokum summarises the basic components of the Cretan diet and points to the fact that it is the preferred way of eating since it overlaps with what scientists suggest:

[T]he dominant culture on Cunda is Cretan culture, [which] is also the preferred one. I mean Cretan food. Why? Because it's Mediterranean cuisine… Olive oil…That's what we are being told now. What are we being told? Consume olive oil, consume olives, consume greens and vegetables. Then, choose goat meat (küçükbaş et) over cow meat (büyükbaş et). Consume goat milk. (…) We had a goat in our house, my mother used to make goat cheese with its milk. We grew up with those cheeses, we grew up with goat milk. Because almost everyone on Cunda had goats and chickens at home. Now, looking back, that's what we are being told. Drink goat milk, eat goat cheese. (…) For these reasons, when you look around, there is Cretan cuisine, goat milk, goat cheese. (…) That's why the Cretan culture is both dominant (on Cunda) and beneficial.

Now that doctors are speaking about the benefits of the Cretan cuisine, "everyone tries to learn and understand". People are trying to follow the Cretan diet now, and the wild leaf vegetables that were once despised, have gained a significant reputation in recent years,[118] as Kemale points out. Cretan cuisine is admired, and its cultural value has been elevated. Koufopoulou (2003) also acknowledges the sense of superiority that Cretans possess due to their cuisine. Based on her observations on Cunda she notes: "Nowadays, of course, their diet is perceived as being very healthy, particularly as it incorporates the use of much olive oil, a fact that does not go unexploited by Kritiki (Cretan) women, who say that this proves that their cuisine is sophisticated and cosmopolitan" (p. 216).

Food holds a special place in the construction of Cretanness. It is the only cultural practice that has endured at a relatively large scale throughout the years. It also emerges as the primary symbol of symbolic Cretanness, deployed by Cretans in their expressions of difference. However, food is not only a marker of difference but also a marker of distinctiveness. The consumption of olive oil and vegetables goes beyond being a mere representation of Cretanness; it is a carrier of distinction and cultural superiority. This feeling of superiority arises, as it has been demonstrated, from the high status that the Mediterranean diet has acquired in recent years, with the Cretan diet serving as a representative example.[119] The Cretan diet, which is currently

[118] *Sonra, şey, son yıllarda Akdeniz diyeti, Girit mutfağı falan deyince, bizim otlarımızı çok aşağıladılar şimdi iade-i itibar ediyorlar otlara. Girit mutfağı takip edilip beğeniliyor şimdi. Biz ama zaten hep böyle beslendik.*

[119] Cretan culinary tradition is a source of superiority for Cretans in Greece as well for the same reasons. In this case, however, the superiority of Cretan cuisine should also be seen within the Greek national

highly admired and sought after by the rest of society, is the second- and third-generation Cretans' "embodied cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1986), as they have always followed the diet, which is now considered one of the prerequisites of a healthy lifestyle, for generations.

The narratives of my informants reveal that symbolic Cretanness has a great relevance in their lives as the basis of a value system, around which sense of distinctiveness and superiority is cultivated. Their dietary choices, which are currently esteemed by the scientific community add up to this sense. The following section will delve into the emotional load of Cretanness and the feeling of pride which further contribute to the positive connotations that origin carry for the individuals.

6.2 Pride and affect

6.2.1 Feeling Cretan

If you tell me, "Express your feeling in one word", I shall say "I feel proud".
(Elif)

If someone cuts me now, Crete will come out from my blood.
We love this homeland of ours, we love the other one, too. [120]
(Hüseyin)

The centrality of the emotional component of symbolic ethnicity is highlighted by Bakalian (1993) in her conceptualisation of the generational change of Armenian-Americans as a shift from "being" Armenian to "feeling" Armenian. The weakening of the structures that allow someone to "be" ethnic and the erosion of the communal basis of ethnicity – in Alba's (1990) words – is accompanied by a manifestation of groupness and self-identification through a variety of personalised interpretations (Bakalian, 1993). As demonstrated above, Cretans maintain a sense of distinctiveness, which forms a substantial part of the meaning that origin carries for them. At the same time, Cretanness is "felt", and affect comes to complement the attributed meaning. In

context: it is attributed a cultural continuity dating back to Minoan Crete, implicitly suggesting "that the Cretan tradition is the superlative example of Greek tradition, insofar as it appears as the oldest indigenous tradition", as Ball (2003, p. 13) argues based on his analysis of Cretan cookbooks.

[120] *Tora ama me kopsoun etsi, sto aima mou Kriti tha vgei. Agapoume kai tin patrida mas kai toutinie, agapoume kai keinia.*

fact, some informants resorted to an emphasis on feeling as a response to my question about whether the knowledge of the Cretan dialect or lack thereof is an important component of being Cretan.

Bayram Cemali makes a differentiation between "being" and "feeling" in the following quote:

> *Feeling is one thing, living within it (the culture) is another. To my opinion, feeling is more important. You live something if you feel it. Uh, there are [those who speak Cretan] at the village. Because they were brought up in this environment. They speak [the language], but can they feel it?*[121]

Bayram Cemali expresses the opinion that feeling a connection to the culture is even more significant that living within it. The knowledge of culture is taken for granted for those who live within it, but it does not hold much meaning unless it is infused with emotion. The important thing is to be able to appreciate the culture.

When I asked Denizali whether the fact that she does not know Cretan affects the way she feels about her Cretanness, she gave a sheer reply, separating this aspect of cultural knowledge from identification: "I feel fully Cretan. I am not going to say that I am not Cretan, because I do not speak [Cretan]. I am not going to be modest". As I wanted to learn more about how she perceives the concept of "feeling Cretan", I asked her to describe what specific aspects contribute to her sense of Cretanness. She gave me the following reply:

> *It's everything, I guess. I don't know. Ehh, I don't know. I guess it's not that I know how to cook, of course. After all, you can teach anyone how to cook, and they will do it. I guess it's a spirit, right? I think it's a spirit. (O bir ruh herhalde, değil mi? Ruh diye düşünüyorum)*

She suggests that being Cretan is more of a "spirit", implying a deeper, intangible connection to the culture, that goes beyond the practice of it. This spirit is something non-transferable and can be shared only by the Cretans.

The degree of attachment to a culture can be distinguished from the practice of it or even from the knowledge of it. Several informants articulated their identification

[121] *Hissetmek ayrı, onun içinde yasamak ayrı. Bence hissetmek daha önemli. Bir şeyi hissettiğin zaman yaşarsın. Hı, [Giritçe konuşanlar] köyde var. Çünkü o ortamın içinde yetişmiş. Onu konuşuyor, ama hissedebiliyor mu?*

with Cretanness, often a vocal one, but with a vague understanding of what the culture encompasses. In his definition of symbolic ethnicity, Gans (1979, p. 9) acknowledges the affective element in it, when he writes that symbolic ethnicity is "characterised by a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for and pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour". Cretans' nostalgia is not a longing for the homeland left behind, but rather "a consciousness of origin" (Alpan, 2012, p. 228). Love for and pride in the origins are directly related to that, they are an important component of symbolic Cretanness, and, in my view, one of the main components that contribute to its maintenance.

For first-generation immigrants, culture was experienced and lived during socialisation, it was an the "embodied and unreflexive" everyday practice (Jenkins, 2008 p. 79). The Cretans, who embodied the culture, have passed away, and for the current generations, the practices of their immigrant ancestors are no longer taken for granted (maybe with the exception of small, relatively isolated places). What accounts for Cretanness in its symbolic version is not the practice of culture, but the meaning attached to it. Today's Cretans may not "be" Cretan anymore, but they "feel" Cretan. According to Maria, love and nostalgia serve as prerequisites for the Cretanness of the present generations:

> *You have to love being Cretan. I mean, you can't force it if one doesn't love it. Some just say "Yes, I'm Cretan", and nothing more. (Giritli olmayı sevmek lazım. Sevmedikten sonra zorla kabul ettiremezsin, yani. Evet, Giritliyim diyor, geçiyor). (…) Today's Cretans, I mean, how can I put it, I mean, well, they just say "We are Cretans". They don't feel as much nostalgia as I do. But they somehow admit that they are Cretans.*

Crete is part of the family history. Melike sees herself as Cretan because even if she was not born in Crete, it is where her ancestors were born, where they lived, and the place which they had to abandon in a forced way. Ege Denizi describes and interprets, in a similar way, the special place that Crete holds in his heart: "Where does that place in our heart come from? From our ancestors. And especially since our both sides come from there, it is a special place for us in that respect. Crete is a special place". Ege Denizi is one of the Cretans who have visited Crete a couple of times and

who also have connections in Crete now. He also speaks some Greek and some Cretan. He belongs to the Cretans, who can have a more active relationship with the ancestral homeland. Those who have not managed to visit Crete have a nostalgic connection with the ancestral homeland, which covers a large part of what defines their Cretanness. Sardunya, one of the Cretans who longs to visit Crete has transformed it into a family symbol:

> *Our ancestors lived in Crete for 300 years. And we have four generations of graves in Crete. And I want [to visit Crete] so much, that when I say it, it's like something is pulling me there. I want to go there. My grandfather was born there. Maybe I will go there and breathe in the scents of my ancestors, maybe I will find my grandfather's house, maybe I will enter that house and breathe in the scents of my ancestors there. (Ben oraya gidip, atalarımın kokusunu duyacağım belki, belki de dedemin evini bulacağım, belki o eve gireceğim orda atalarımın kokusunu duyacağım.)*

6.2.2 Feeling proud

The emotion of pride emerges as a central aspect of the affective connection to Cretanness, representing one of its core dimensions. In fact, one could argue that feeling proud is another way to feel Cretan. For many informants, this feeling of pride emanates from the fact that their ancestors originate from that land. Melike, for example, associates her pride in Cretanness with her ancestors, and at the same time she presents it as the norm: "Why do I feel proud? Everyone takes pride in their ancestors. Certainly!". It appears that a positive sentiment towards one's origin is inextricably tied to that origin, and is shared by all who share the same descent. It should be noted here that the homeland of the family (Crete) and the homeland of the nation (Turkey) do not replace one another (Kurtoğlu, 2005). Instead, Crete often functions "less as a bounded place and more as a moral location" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p.10).

My informants often mentioned that they feel proud of being Cretan and that being Cretan is a privilege (*ayrıcalık*). As shown in the previous section, Cretanness is to a great extent built upon a culture of distinctiveness. The emotion of pride fits well with this perceived distinctiveness. Along with the pride in heritage, the reiteration of (perceived) positive traits, achievements and cultural superiority

constitutes the basis of a group-based pride. At this point it should be emphasised that group-based pride has a relational dimension. The celebration of "our" achievements, values, standards or goals, implicitly or explicitly constructs or imagines an "other" (Sullivan, 2014, p. 1). When Cretans cite the positive aspects which they associate with Cretanness, regardless of whether these aspects reflect the truth or are exclusively Cretan, they construct themselves in comparison to an "other", to whom they may openly refer, or a more or less undefined "other", who is simply considered inferior.

Bayram Cemali is proud of his Cretanness because Crete is "an integral part" of many scientific fields, such as gastronomy and herbology, and because Cretan dietary habits is a healthy choice. "If we go into detail, inevitably everything starts from Crete", he says. Iskender is also proud that his ancestors come from a place that is currently praised to represent the healthy Mediterranean diet, and has a long and rich history, with its "own civilisation". Matzourana thinks Crete is a place with a special culture of its own, and is proud of Cretan women, like her grandmother, who was hard-working and always willing to help when needed. Güney Rüzgarı and Murtaza feel proud because Cretans "make no mistakes" (*yanlışları olmaz*), are people with no deviant behaviour and no Cretan has been ever put in jail.

Smith and Mackie (2016, p. 16) argue that self-categorisation as a group member, in other words identification with a group or a category, paves the way for group-based appraisals, but this relationship is modified by the extent of group identification. While identification with Cretanness for second- and third-generation Cretans may function in the periphery, it does not prevent them from recognising themselves as participants in a rich culture that stands out in many respects. Pride emerges from the successful evaluation of a specific trait, value, or achievement, action or behaviour that is considered valuable and meaningful (Lewis, 2006). Although it is experienced individually and may have different sources, after all it is experienced as a result of their identification with Cretanness (Goldenb*erg et al, 2020).*

Denizali takes pride both in her Ayvaliot and her Cretan origins:

> *I am very proud to be from Ayvalik. For example, I lived in Ankara, and they asked me "Where are you from?". I was proud to say that I am from Ayvalık. They would say: "What are you doing in Ankara?" But when we go to a place related to culture, then, for example, I say that I'm Cretan. You know, there were food exhibitions, they cook green vegetables, we taste them, we buy them.*

> *I mean, I'm from Crete. That's why I love these green vegetables. At that time Cretanness comes to the fore. I am proud both to be from Crete and from Ayvalik.*

As implied in Denizali's account, the feeling of pride is triggered by and adapted to the social circumstances in which one finds themselves. Emotions, in general, are "both produced and shaped by social interaction and cultural understanding" (Calhoun, 2001, p. 47). Forgas (2008, p. 96, drawing from Leary, 2000) stresses that "acceptance or rejection by others appears to be a particularly potent cause of affective reactions". Pride is an emotion that is often influenced by the opinions and evaluations of others, as their positive or negative feedback can impact how one perceives and feels about themselves. When others express admiration, approval, or recognition for one's achievements or qualities, it can boost one's sense of pride and esteem. Conversely, if others belittle, or reject one's behaviours or characteristics, it can lead to a sense of shame or insecurity.

Many informants referred to the difficulties that first-generation Cretans faced due to their cultural differences, but also to times in their lives when their Cretan origin was a source of negative reactions by others. The questioning of their Turkishness and Muslimness, as well as marginalisation and rejection because of their origins, has made them hesitant to openly acknowledge them. Currently, as Cretanness has acquired a symbolic character, with the lifting of "objective" differences and the romanticisation of origin, the Cretan heritage does not come at the same costs; on the contrary it may even come with certain rewards.

When referring to their current status, Cretans often emphasise the positive perception others have of them. Bayram Cemali asserts that they "are not thought of as a bad community" and are generally known to be "modern people" (*Kötü bir toplum olarak anılmıyoruz. Çağdaş insanlar olduğumuz biliniyor*). Sardunya proudly conveys the positive reactions she may receive when disclosing her Cretan origins, particularly from individuals with some kind of personal experience of Cretans. Meanwhile, Melike contends that not only is Cretan food highly regarded, but Cretans themselves are often praised as "decent people" (*düzgün insanlar*). Cesur highlights the prominent social standing of Cretans in society, where they hold esteemed positions such as

doctors and lawyers. (*Doktorlar var, avukatlar var. Yanı, çok saygın insanlar çıktı Giritliler arasında*).

Cretans have become "the protagonists of a collective narrative of pride" (Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos, 2001, p. 410). The image of the immigrant with a questionable belonging to the Turkish social context (Gefou-Madianou, 1999, p. 412) has been transformed into a privilege. This transformation is part of a historical process and a consequence of the evolution of Cretanness into a symbolic category. It can also be argued that the emotion of pride and the visibility that has been pursued and gained the past years function in a two-way fashion; the more the Cretan origin is celebrated –within a symbolic framework– the stronger the feeling of pride and the sense of peoplehood (in Bakalian's understanding) become.

This chapter supports my argument that (symbolic) Cretanness maintains its relevance for today's Cretans in Turkey. It forms the foundation for asserting distinctiveness encompassing a sense of superiority. By blending the past and present, individuals make positive identifications with their forebears through the selective stressing of certain values and traits (Epstein, 1978, p. xiii). Crete serves as an external, cultural homeland, functioning as a "source of value" (Brubaker, 2005, p. 5). However, this value takes on a specific meaning when seen within the context of contemporary realities. Within this framework, Cretanness is the frame along which difference is constructed and construed and social reality is coded (Brubaker et. al, 2004; Brubaker, 2004). Cretans advocate their values and lifestyle as a means to differentiate themselves from society. Their emphasis on more egalitarian and liberal gender relations also fulfils this objective. Their praised dietary choices, augment their perception of distinctiveness and superiority, building on the multidimensional function of food as presented in the previous chapter.

The relevance of origin for today's Cretans is also demonstrated by the emotional dimension attached to it. The transformed attachment and affiliation to Cretanness, as it has been outlined in the previous chapter, encompasses feeling as a way to express Cretanness. This feeling (often abstract) arises from a positive association with the origin nurtured in the "intimate" realm (Epstein, 1978), Simultaneously, this emotional attachment has gained importance as "objective" aspects of Cretanness have receded. The feeling of pride is also intertwined with this

positive connection to the origins but is also embedded in the historical and sociological transformation of Cretanness and of surrounding circumstances. Cretanness is no longer perceived as a threat by the state, and Cretans are no longer considered foreigners within society. This point is directly linked to the subsequent chapter, which will explore what I refer to as the need for recognition among the Cretans in Mersin.

CHAPTER 7

RECOGNITION

It's been really nice! (...) We are happy, we are proud, because we are understood. How nice! To be understood. It's a very important feeling.
(Badia)[122]

From my initial visits to Ayvalik and Mersin I observed a greater level of active engagement and often more vocal expressions of identification with Cretanness among the Cretans in Mersin. It required a significant amount of time, deep contemplation, and a meticulous analysis of the narratives provided by the individuals I interviewed to unravel what this difference pertains to, to formulate it, and to contextualise it within a framework. During a relevant discussion with Arnavut in Ayvalik, he argued that people in Ayvalik and Cunda "do not care" (*umurunda değil*) to take steps for the promotion of their cultural heritage. Based on my observations and the discussions with the informants, I would say that people in Ayvalik do not *need* to take the same steps to bring Cretanness to the fore. In this section, I will try to elaborate on this need and to locate it within the broader context.

It should be reminded that "social identification is the outcome of a dialectical process of internal and external definition" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 57). Internal definition accounts for the individual's own sense of self, values, and beliefs, which shape how they define themselves. External categorisation, on the other hand, refers to the way the group is perceived and defined by others in society, including its norms, values, and stereotypes. In the social terrain there is always an active "we" and an active "they" (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 77). In the previous chapter, I focused on the meanings that individuals attach to Cretanness and their affective relation to it, in short how they construct the "we". The findings presented emerged from both sites, and it can be said

[122] *Cok güzel oldu. (...) Seviniyoruz, gurur duyuyoruz. Çünkü anlaşıldığımız için gurur duyuyoruz. Ne kadar güzel! Anlaşılmak. Bu çok önemli bir duygu.*

that they have a broader application when it comes to Cretans in Turkey today. In Mersin the emergence of symbolic Cretanness and the affirmation of distinctiveness have been parallel to a process which I did not observe in Ayvalik, and which I interpret as a need for recognition.

It is a process that has been taking place for roughly the last two to three decades and forms the backdrop against which the seemingly "revival" of Cretanness in Mersin takes place. The recognition aimed to by the Cretans in Mersin is twofold: they have aimed to assert their presence as a distinct community, with certain historical and cultural characteristics, and to be known in a manner that represents them. The intended recognition is not vertical; they do not seek recognition from the state or authorities. Instead, their aim is horizontal recognition, first and foremost by the fellow Mersinians. Cretans have endeavoured to bring Cretanness to the fore and eliminate misconceptions and misunderstandings that may have accompanied their origins in the minds of others.

Murtaza complained that even people with whom they have close social relations might not know who the Cretans are. According to him this was one of the main reasons for the establishment of the association in Mersin in 1997. The initiative to "institutionalise" the Cretan presence was not without reactions by some fellow Cretans, mostly from older generations, who did not want to stand out and to attract attention. They were afraid of possible reactions by the others: "Look, the Cretans came to the fore. They do stuff. They are old Greek seeds. Now what do they want?".[123] Murtaza's response to such fears was adamant: "What would they want? Our thing is clear. There is Atatürk's picture, there is the Turkish flag. (…) We have been settled here. The Cretans are the ones who love Atatürk the most in the Republic of Turkey".[124]

Cesur remembers that the first president of the association would emphasise on different occasions that the Cretans "were not foreigners", "were not Greek Orthodox" (*Rum*), and that they were Muslim and Turkish. According to Cesur, the late president

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[123] *Bak işte Giritliler çıktı ortaya, bilmem ne yapıyorlar. Onlar eski Rum tohumları. Şimdi neler istiyorlar*

[124] *Neler isteyecek? Bizim şeyimiz belli. Atatürk'ün resmi var, Türk bayrağı var. (...) Biz buraya yerleşmişiz. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Atatürk'ü en çok seven, Giritlilermiş.*

employed a "defence mechanism" because he was worried that they would be conceived as Greek or Christians. The Cretans, then, chose to introduce themselves in the public sphere with the establishment of the association. This "publicisation" of their different origin was accompanied by an emphasis on their Turkishness and their Muslimness, similar to what Hasan did when he tried to prove the Cretans' Turkishness to the resident of the neighbouring village.

This emphasis was a claim made "against the versions of identity that the group was ascribed by others" (Sökefeld, 2008, p. 34). Several Cretans in Mersin uttered their discomfort with being mistaken for being Christian. Such a misunderstanding has historical roots that can be traced back to the early years of resettlement in Turkey. In more recent times, second- and third-generation Cretans have tried to negotiate the discrepancy between self-ascription and the ascription by others, and to claim their place as Cretans against the backdrop of what it means to be Turkish. Currently, although such misunderstandings have not been eliminated completely, Cretans have managed to transform the inaccurate image, embracing their origins and being visible and active in the public sphere as Cretans, Turks, and Muslims.

Yasemin blames the fear of expressing themselves for the weakening of the Cretan culture: "We were so afraid to express ourselves that our culture has been assimilated, our language has been assimilated". At present, even if they face negative reactions they have been endowed with more "courage". This is one of the positive implications of the existence of associations according to Yasemin, who no longer minds as much if she is called an "infidel": "I mean if you wish, call [us] infidel. After all, we are European; we are proud of that as well. Because we are Turks, we are proud of that, but being European honours us too".[125] As shown in the previous chapter, the correlation of Cretanness with Europeanness is one of the main pillars of the perceived distinctiveness of second- and third-generation Cretans. Within this framework, Yasemin capitalises on her geographical origin and reverses the questioning of her Muslimness and Turkishness into an advantage. Such questoning led Osman to become a Turkish nationalist, as he sought to refute allegations about his non-Turkishness. He also acknowledged that he had shown no special interest in his origins

[125] *İsterseniz gavur deyin yani. Sonuçta Avrupalıyız, bundan da onur duyuyoruz gibi. Çünkü biz Türk'üz, bundan da onur duyuyoruz ama Avrupalı olmak da bize onur veriyor. Öyle bir cesaret de geldi.*

before. Now, he is more aware and can "openly" declare that he is "a Cretan Turk"; he knows "what he is" and that grants him "freedom of expression" (*Benim ne olduğumu bildikten sonra, ben ifade etme özgürlüğüne sahibim*).

The misconceptions about and misrecognition of the Cretans' origins and identity have been factors that have deprived them from publicly embracing their distinct heritage. The development of symbolic Cretanness offers them a space to proudly showcase their cultural roots. Badia, who was showing me pictures of his grandparents during our interview, is another Cretan who started recently began showing interest in his family's past and participating in the association's activities. He admitted that he does not have much knowledge of his family history. However, upon entering his shop, one cannot but notice the pictures of Crete and signs that read "I'm Cretan". He proudly draws my attention to them, saying: "Look, there are 'I'm Cretan' pictures all around in my shop, there are writings... In the past, we couldn't display them. We would hesitate". They hesitated because people would not know and would misunderstand them.[126]

7.1 Value, worth and esteem

Badia mentions that there may still be people who are unaware of who the Cretans are: "When you say 'Cretan', they say 'What does 'Cretan' mean?'". He undertakes the task of explaining the history of who the Cretans are and how they had been settled in Anatolia, so that people get informed. Giritliyim Farklıyım, an active woman in the association, reiterated multiple times during the interview that the association has been working to introduce the Cretans and the Cretan culture to the public in Mersin and expressed her happiness and satisfaction that more and more people are becoming aware of the Cretan culture:

> *We have two villages, we have introduced them to the people, we have introduced our culture as well, and we continue to do so. We introduce people to our food, our lifestyle, to the fact that Cretan cuisine is the healthiest cuisine. (…) The more those who hear about us get to know us, the more they value us, the more they want to be together with us. (Duyanlar da tanıdıkça, bize daha çok değer veriyorlar, bizle daha çok bir arada olmak istiyorlar.) We do many*

[126] *Bak, benim dükkanımda hep "Giritliyim" resimler var, yazılar var... Eskiden bunları asamazdık. Çekinirdik. Bilmedikleri için bizi yanlış tabir ediyorlardı.*

activities, food, entertainment… we organise tours to take people to our two villages to promote our culture and cuisine, we organise trips (…).

The word "value" (*değer*) that Giritliyim Farklıyım uses in the above quote implies that the Cretans also seek an appreciation of their culture and their group in general. It is not enough that their existence is acknowledged. The particularities that they perceive for themselves as bearers of uniqueness and distinctiveness should also be recognised and validated. Ultimately, there is a demand being expressed, which involves the acknowledgment of their "worth" and the unique perspectives they bring to society (Taylor, 1994). This demand may not be explicitly voiced; it is implicitly articulated, though, when in the narratives their special culture and their contribution in the context of the city are emphasised.

The core elements of distinctiveness are once again at the forefront. Hasan focuses on the culinary culture:

They enriched (genişlettiler) the culinary culture. The local people here did not have the culinary culture of the Cretans. In the past, the locals didn't know anything but bulgur pilaf, beans, chickpeas [and] soup. But after the Cretans came, the variety of food increased. Our villagers, the locals, adopted the Cretan cuisine, as well.

According to Hasan, the Cretan influence is the primary reason behind the richness of Mersin's cuisine today and the strengthening of the Mediterranean diet. The Cretans have also introduced a variety of vegetables and fruits into the local culinary culture. Hasan cites the olives as one of the most significant examples. Emgili's research (2011, pp. 221-223) concurs with Hasan's perspective that the migrants from Crete brought the practice of olive cultivation to Mersin. The narratives conveyed by Emgili indicate that the first olive factory in Tarsus, a town in the province of Mersin, was constructed by a Cretan exchangee, who noticed that the locals, being unfamiliar with the cultivation of olive trees, would cut them down and utilise them for wood fuel.

Many Cretans would agree that their ancestors brought a "modern", "European" culture to Mersin. Cesur thinks that the Cretans widened the horizons of the local people, who had to learn much from them. Those who had resided in the urban areas in Crete, had a broad general knowledge, and brought classical music and a European dress culture with them. To highlight the contributions of Cretans to

Mersin, he recounts an incident between his grandfather and a local butcher, who would sell all cuts of meat at the same price, regardless of the quality. Cesur's grandfather explained to the butcher that different parts of the animal should be sold at a different price.

Bayram Cemali associates tolerance (*hoşgörü*) with the Cretans and lists it as one of their greater contributions along with the different gastronomic and language culture they brought along. He thinks that the Cretans assumed the role of "mortar" (*harç*) not only in Mersin but in Anatolia in general: "Cretans, in Anatolia, had the duty of mortar. When a building is being built, there is concrete. Mortar is needed to hold that concrete, those stones together". The fact that they had lived with Christians in Crete, allowed them to be tolerant towards other cultures: "Why mortar? Because they had lived there with Orthodox. Here they came across Arabs, Catholics and Orthodox. They came across Orthodox Arabs, they came across Armenians. We spent a comfortable time with them here. Until the French came". Bayram Cemali refers to the first years of the Cretan presence in Mersin and argues that the Cretans contributed to a peaceful coexistence, which was ruined by "the imperialists".

The above accounts highlight the contributions of the Cretans to Mersin and to the local culture, as my informants perceive them.[127] While these accounts primarily refer to the past, the importance of their contribution extends to the present. Cretans have developed a belief in their distinctive value, their "sense of collective worth" (Benhabib, 2002, p. 51), which is also closely related to the emotion of pride analysed in the previous chapter. Their efforts to bring Cretanness to the fore and assert their existence, are closely intertwined with the need for an appraisal of the traits and abilities that they possess, and for esteem for the broad culture that sets them apart from the others (Honneth, 1995).

Cretans fill in the content of Cretanness, which they call upon others to recognise. When, for example, they emphasise the positive characteristics of Cretan cuisine, they implicitly invite others to acknowledge them for that – and they feel valued if it is done so. When Giritliyim Farklıyım says: "people know [us] now"

[127] Similar comments by the refugees to Greece we recorded by Hirschon (1989, p, 31): "Before we came here what were they? We opened their eyes. They didn't know how to eat or to dress. They used to eat salt fish and wild vegetables. It was we who taught them everything".

(*insanlar artık tanıdı*) she, basically, identifies the result of a process that involves the recognition of the Cretans. When she adds: "they like our culture", it signifies that the others appreciate the culture that has sought recognition, fulfilling the terms and conditions of the sought recognition.

7.2 Recognition and self-recognition

In order for a claim for recognition to be formed, there needs to be some kind of self-recognition and awareness; the members of a group should possess a conscious sense of belonging to it (Song, 2003, p. 44). In other words, the individuals construct a group by expressing identification with it, but also by a conscious construction of what the group entails. However, the processes of self-recognition and recognition should not be seen as stages where the latter follows the former; they should be seen as a both-way process, in which the one follows the other in a consecutive way. In the case of the Cretans in Mersin, an increased interest in their roots, in concordance with symbolic Cretanness, has generated a need to publicly showcase their distinct identity and culture, seeking acknowledgment and recognition. Simultaneously, this visibility has brought more Cretans closer to their origins, thereby reinforcing the aforementioned need.

One of the questions I asked the participants of my research was whether there had been a particular turning point in their lives when they became more aware of their Cretanness, or when their relationship with their Cretanness changed in a positive direction. I realised that this question was not really applicable to the participants from Ayvalik. On the other hand, Cretans in Mersin had in many cases something to say about how they gained awareness. Yasemin summarised the situation with the following observation: "we were living like Cretans but were not aware of our being Cretan". Sardunya implies something similar when she says that they were aware of being Cretan, but they would "just [be] Cretan". Sardunya acquired a clearer image of her roots and "learnt what Cretanness is" from the internet, most specifically from the Facebook page named "Everything about Cretans".

Murtaza mentioned that he gradually started being more interested in his origins. In the past he only knew that his ancestors had escaped from Crete and migrated to Turkey, that they had suffered in Crete because of the repression they

faced, but also that they continued facing many difficulties after their resettlement in Turkey. He acknowledges that his point of view was quite narrow in the past, but there were no available sources to broaden it: there was no internet and "history books tell certain things" (*tarih kitapları belirli şeyler anlatıyor*). He lacked access to scientific research, or these issues had not been extensively studied at that time (*veya bu konular çok detaylandırılmadı*). His curiosity about his origins grew when the Cyprus issue[128] gained prominence, as his father spoke Greek and worked as an interpreter during that period. Subsequently, he started asking his family members questions about the Cretan past. After the establishment of the association, he had the opportunity to acquire more information about his heritage.

Kemale admits that due to her being busy with education and career, she did not have much time to develop an interest in her origins. In addition, there were not many sources to check. In the 1990s, she recalls attending a book fair in Istanbul where she stumbled upon a copy of "Ethnic Groups in Turkey" by Peter Alford Andrews. As she browsed through the book, she has surprised to see the Cretans listed as one of the ethnic groups in Turkey, since "until that moment [she] had never thought that [she] belonged to a different ethnic group in Turkey". When she was younger, she would notice differences between her family and other families in her environment, she would hear elderly members use the term "local" when referring to others, but she did not fully comprehend at the time where all these stemmed from. She could gradually put them in context and see some things more clearly. Later, as she began reading and traveling, she became more informed. She also watches Greek television even if she understands almost nothing, just to listen to Greek.

Giritliyim Fraklıyım also compares the past with the present in terms of awareness. Previously, she was unaware of any "cultural differences" between the Cretans and other groups. Her interest grew over time, particularly after becoming involved with the association, which heightened her awareness. It was during that time that she came to the realisation that Cretans are "very different". As an example of this difference, she cites her own mother, who, despite being an uneducated woman, insisted on her daughter taking mandolin lessons. This was due to the cultural influence

[128] He is referring to the years following the Turkish intervention in Cyprus, which took place after the *coup d'état* orchestrated by the Greek junta in 1974.

of her ancestors in Crete, where the mandolin has been one of the most widely used musical instruments.

What the previous accounts demonstrate is that Cretans in Mersin have passed through a process of changing their self-image (Taylor, 1994, p. 65) or developing "more substantial and distinctive common views of themselves, their relations with the rest of the world, and their (…) collective past" (Cornell, 1996, p. 276). This process has occurred in parallel with changing attitudes towards cultural background, towards diverse self-identifications and the emergence of a space for refugees and emigrants from the former Ottoman lands in Turkey to express their origins, as discussed in Chapter 5. The Cretans in Mersin constitute an example of this altered environment in Turkey. Obviously, every individual has a unique life journey and the informants have described their personal trajectories of awareness in different ways, however they all converge towards a similar trend.

The development of "more substantial and distinctive common views of themselves", and the claim for recognition as depicted above, do not mean that Cretans are transformed into a "community of culture", or a "community of interests" (Cornell, 1996). The basis of the community is symbolic, both in Gans' (1979) and Cornell's (1996) sense, and the demands voiced are of an analogous nature. The question of why the way Cretans relate to their Cretanness in Mersin differs from that in Ayvalik, and what circumstances lead to such differentiation, remains to be answered.

7.3 Mersin versus Ayvalik

The experiences of the Cretans in Ayvalik present similarities with those of the Cretans in Mersin regarding the way they have been treated by others in the past. The discrimination Cretans faced during the first years after resettlement in the form of derogatory characterisations, pertaining mostly to questioning their ethnic and religious credentials, has also been documented in Ayvalik. Some informants from Ayvalik shared personal unpleasant experiences they faced when leaving the borders of Ayvalik and going to neighbouring areas. For example, I was told that when Cretans would go to Edremit, a neighbouring city, 30 years ago, the locals would refer to them as "the infidels". Similarly, Kara Kartal mentioned that when they attended football

matches in neighbouring villages or districts, people there would shout "Rum" and "Rum seed" at them.

The most commonly cited negative experiences among second-generation Cretans, especially those who had grown up in a Greek-speaking environment, were related to interactions at school. When I asked Erotokritos if there had been any times when he was hesitant to disclose his Cretan roots, he gave the following response:

> *Ehh no, let me put it that way. Hesitant, well…We were never hesitant. Oh! When did we hesitate? When I was a child, for example, when I was going to middle school or primary school, they called me "half infidel". [They called] everyone "half infidel", the children of Cretan. Okay, then we were a little hesitant. In Turkey of that day, under the conditions of that day. But I've seen it in Greece too. They used to call those who migrated from here "half Turkish" or something similar. It's the same, they were also hesitant. (…) Everything has changed now. Everything has changed. By "now" I mean the last 25-30 years. I can freely say [that I am Cretan] anytime.*[129]

Although Erotokritos initially could not think of any instances at which he hesitated to express his Cretanness, a couple of moments later he referred to the unpleasant experiences he had at school, downplaying their significance by adding that refugees from Anatolia to Greece had similar experiences.

In general, references to discomfort felt because of their origins held a much less prominent role in the narratives from Cretans in Ayvalik compared to those in Mersin. Furthermore, even if such discomfort was voiced, it was primarily limited to the past and not accompanied by claims of non- or misrecognition, nor demands for recognition. Based on the understanding that active engagement and pursuit of visibility in Mersin has been directly linked to the Cretans' need to present themselves to a wider public, in a manner that represents them, it can be inferred that the lesser efforts of Cretans in Ayvalik to foreground their Cretanness can be attributed to a lack of similar need. The way people perceive the purpose and objective of the association

[129] *Yoo, şöyle söyleyeyim ben size, çekinme…şey… Hiçbir zaman çekinmedik. Ha! ne zaman çekindik? Ben çocukken, mesela orta okula, ilk okula giderken bana "yarım gavur" derlerdi. Herkese. Giritli çocuklarına. Tamam, o zaman biz biraz çekinirdik. O günkü Türkiye'de, o günkü şartlarda. Ama bunu Yunanistan'da da gördüm. Burdan göç edenlere, onlara da ayni şekilde "yarım Türk" falan diyorlardı. Aynı şey, onlar da çekiniyorlardı. (…) Şu anda her şey değişti. Her şey değişmiştir. Şu anda derken, son 25-30 yıldır. Ben bunu rahat rahat her zaman söyleyebilirim.*

also reflects this difference. In Ayvalik, the establishment of the association amounts to an effort to seize on the remaining aspects of culture, and although visibility is one of the goals, – visibility is, after all, an integral part of symbolic Cretanness – it serves more as a celebration than a proclamation of origin.

The residential concentration (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998) of Cretans in Ayvalik and Mersin, in conjunction with the demographic characteristics of these two locations, is an important contextual factor in the analysis and can provide an explanation for the differences observed between the two sites. Cretans had been resettled in both sites according to a resettlement plan. The first-generation Cretans in Mersin, either those who came before the exchange of populations or the ones who came within the framework of it, were resettled in certain areas. The same goes for Ayvalik, where the exchangees from Crete were resettled mostly in Cunda and in certain neighbourhoods in the town. Therefore, according to Cornell & Hartmann's (1998) framework, as far as the first generation is concerned, we can talk of residential concentrations of "high exhaustiveness", since the residential opportunities available were limited, and of relatively "high density", as the residential arrangements allowed for frequent interactions among the Cretans.

Consequently, many of the second-generation Cretans grew up in Cretan majority areas. In the case of Mersin, the expansion of the city in the past decades has led to the dispersion of the Cretan population in different locations and to the villagers' moving to the city. Naturally, density and exhaustiveness in the urban environment have become low. In Ayvalik, and especially in Cunda, exhaustiveness and density among the Cretan population is higher than in Mersin due to the size of the town and the fewer residential alternatives. According to Cornell and Hartmann (1998), high exhaustiveness and density are more likely "to support the formation or persistence of an ethnic or racial identity and to make it more comprehensive or thick, that is to organise more of group life in terms of that identity" (p. 168).

Following Cornell and Hartmann's line of thought, we can say that in a smaller place with high exhaustiveness and density, such as Ayvalik, the Cretan presence has been more prominent, the preservation of networks easier and people have had the chance to experience the culture to a greater extent and to be more connected with this part of "self". We are not able currently to talk of a "thick identity", but it can be said

that Cretanness was being experienced in a relatively comprehensive way, accompanied by public articulations. Matzourana, for example, recalls that until the 1970s, when the first-generation of Cretans was still alive, weddings, engagements and circumcision ceremonies were celebrated "publicly" (*dimosia*) on the island of Cunda and participants danced Cretan and Turkish dances. Mustafa (pseudonym),[130] a second-generation Cretan, who has a pretty good knowledge of Greek and the Cretan dialect, told me that, in contrast to the cities, where Cretans might have been hesitant to speak Greek, people in Ayvalik and Cunda, were making extensive use of the language; in fact "you could find no one who would speak Turkish" (*den evriskes kanena na milei Tourkika*).

It can, therefore, be argued that in Ayvalik, end especially in Cunda, Cretanness, for the second generation was more of a "given"; it was, in a way, "taken for granted" and it was experienced within the family and neighbourhood, with a less diverse network of relations compared to Mersin. This also explains why the question about whether there has been a specific moment of awareness in their lives was less relevant in Ayvalik. It is not because Cretans in Ayvalik are less aware; it is because identification with Cretanness was more continuous and unreflective, due to the contextual factors that facilitated different expressions of Cretanness, more frequent and dense interactions with fellow Cretans, and a stronger sense of commonality. This is also why associations were "not necessary" in Ayvalik until now, as Iskender suggests. However, with more people starting to migrate to Ayvalik (*dışarıdan insanlar başladı gelmeye*), associations have become necessary, and Cretans may need to gather under the umbrella of an association.

Although the third generation of Cretans in Ayvalik has been less immersed in the behavioural aspects of Cretanness, both the second and the third generation of Cretans have experienced Cretanness in a more comprehensive manner and maintained a continuous connection to it. Despite waves of migration, Ayvalik has remained relatively homogeneous compared to Mersin. On the other hand, Mersin has witnessed diversification and expansion, in both demographic and geographic terms. Within these circumstances, second and third generation of Cretans in Mersin have entered a

[130] Although I could not conduct a formal interview with Mustafa, which is why he is not included in the list of informants, we had a lengthy conversation with him and his wife.

process of (re)construction, which has been accompanied by a more vocal expression of identification. This aligns with Barth's (1969) work suggesting that "ethnic attachments are not the result of the social and territorial isolation of groups, but of their interaction with other groups" (Malesevic, 2004, p. 176). It also resonates with the observations by Conzen et al. (1992), who argue that frequent and intimate encounters with others in urban environments intensify the process of constructing a sense of peoplehood by symbolically differentiating "us" from "them".

The diversification and frequency of interactions also relates to the daily experience, as a construction site, the banal interactions where "the boundaries between groups often are most clearly drawn or most subtly reinforced" (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 184), and where the boundary between "us" and "them" is constructed and reinforced through common, occasional reminders (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 187). In the interaction with the "other", one may have to face stereotypes or may have to explain who they are, and depending on the circumstances and the audience, origin and ancestry may acquire a central place in these processes. In the case of Mersin, as has been demonstrated, incidents of nonrecognition and misrecognition have been common in day-to-day interactions. The need for a response to such incidents has been developed that involves constructing a narrative about the "self" and the utilisation of platforms to present it to the public.

Obviously, Cretans in Ayvalik are not an isolated community; processes of identification and boundary-demarcation have been observed in Ayvalik as well, the sense of distinctiveness has been cultivated to a great extent against their own significant other, the Lesviots, and the everyday interactions are always a site where messages are conveyed. However, the smaller size of the town and the higher density of relations are critical differentiating factors, accounting for the lack of incidents of non- or misrecognition and consequently for the less active presence by Cretans there. Another significant factor is that the majority of Ayvaliots belong to the same category, the "exchangee" category. They are the "founders" of Ayvalik, products of similar historical realities, and they share similar experiences. As Yorulmaz (2007, p. 22) points out until 1960 "being Ayvaliot meant being an exchangee". Cretans did not need to introduce themselves to their fellow townspeople, and I dare to imagine that people in the region would have a relative familiarity with the Cretans and their history.

Kemale also made a similar observation when comparing Mersin to Izmir. She recalled her visit to a friend in Izmir and commented that there were "many people who were close to [her] culture", citing examples of individuals whose ancestors had migrated from Greece[131].

Furthermore, Ayvalik's proximity to Greece seems to have played some role in the way Cretans in Ayvalik have experienced Cretanness, as it has facilitated a more frequent enactment of the parts of Cretanness that overlap with Greekness, namely the language. Kara Kartal and Arnavut mentioned that in the 1970s, when television was first introduced in Ayvalik, the Turkish public broadcaster had a limited range and broadcast time, and they were watching Greek public television instead. Kara Kartal improved his Greek by watching Greek television, while Arnavut enjoyed the shows with traditional Greek dances and he felt he belonged there (*Yani, kendi benliğimi buluyorum orada*). Many Cretans have improved and used their Greek language skills for professional reasons, so that they work in the trade or the tourism sector and accommodate the needs of Greek tourism to Cunda and Ayvalik, which has flourished since the 1980s (Koufopoulou, 2003, p. 218).[132]

The preservation of the language to a greater degree is something that has reinforced the perception of difference and has contributed to an awareness of a diverse origin. Although Cretanness in Ayvalik, as well, has taken a symbolic turn, the demographic and residential context, and the geographical position of the town has allowed for a continuous sense of Cretanness and its expression as a natural part of the self. Even the ones who currently relate to Cretanness in a more superficial way have lived in an environment in which they were often "reminded" of it. Moreover, the familiarity of the "near others" with their historical background explains the absence of incidents of nonrecognition or misrecognition, something that, according to my understanding, consequently, accounts for the fewer public vocal articulations of Cretanness.

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[131] *İzmir'e gitmiştim (…) arkadaşımın tanıdıkları falan, biri Rodosluyum diyor, öbürüsü bilmem ne Selanikliyim diyor, öbürüsü Hanyalıyım diyor. Kendi kültürüme yakın çok insan vardı.*

[132] Although there had been limited ferry connectivity before, in 1984 a passenger line was introduced between Lesvos and Ayvalik, which had great appeal, as a Cretan informant involved in the business told me.

This chapter demonstrates the different dynamics of Cretanness in the two research sites. While the symbolic character of Cretanness, the sense of distinctiveness and superiority and the emotional dimension are common patterns between Ayvalik and Mersin, evidence from the field reveals a difference in the intensity of the public articulations of Cretanness. I argue that this difference is the result of a need for recognition in Mersin, and a lack thereof in Ayvalik. This need was detected in my informants' narratives, in which they emphasised their discomfort with the ignorance and misunderstanding displayed by fellow Mersinians and their desire to introduce themselves in the public sphere as Cretans, and simultaneously as Turks and Muslim. I also view this need for recognition as parallel to a process of cultivating a self-awareness, and the consequent (re)construction of difference. It should not be forgotten that this need for recognition, and in some cases the process of self-recognition, is also a product of the times and parallels symbolic Cretanness and its aspect of visibility. Cretanness in both Ayvalik and Mersin has been transformed into symbolic Cretanness; however, it can be said that in Ayvalik the element of visibility is less central.

I interpret the discrepancy between Mersin and Ayvalik by considering the two different contexts and utilising Cornell and Hartmann's (1998) framework. Along these lines, the higher exhaustiveness and density in Ayvalik have accounted for a continuous and somehow unreflective preservation of a sense of Cretanness, while the lower exhaustiveness and density due to the city's expansion in Mersin have led to ruptures in this regard. The homogeneity of the population in Ayvalik, along with its proximity to Greece have also had a similar impact on the relation of Cretans there to their Cretanness. Meanwhile, the diversification of everyday relations in the urban environment of Mersin has provided a fertile ground for a more active (re)construction of Cretanness, which is closely linked to need for recognition.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The year of completion of the present thesis coincides with the centennial anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne and the Convention for the Exchange of Populations. These historic agreements recognised Turkey as a sovereign nation-state, shaped its territorial borders, influenced the geopolitical landscape of the broader region, and had a profound impact on the demographic compositions of both Greece and Turkey. They also affected the lives of approximately two million individuals who were forced to resettle from the one country to the other, but also those who were left behind and have been in-between the two states and societies. The Cretan Muslims were among the ones who were compelled to abandon their homeland, to redefine themselves and to rebuild their lives in their new homeland. For Cretan Muslims the Treaty of Lausanne is the second landmark of their migration towards Anatolia, as they had already begun seeking refuge there since the end of the nineteenth century.

The year of completion of the present thesis also coincides with the centenary year of the Republic of Turkey, the official discourse of which defined to a great extent the trajectory of the scholarship regarding the topic of the exchange of populations and the lives of the affected individuals in Turkey. The scarcity of sociological and anthropological studies capturing the first-hand experiences of the first-generation individuals who were subjected to the exchange, means that we have a limited understanding of their perspectives, the course of their lives, the cultural changes across generations, their political preferences, their social mobility, their feelings and so on. This applies not only to the immediate years following the exchange but also to the following decades. Even more limited is the understanding on the populations who had come before the exchange.

Later studies on the second and third generations have attempted to close this gap by placing emphasis on the narratives transmitted to them by their ancestors.

Undoubtedly, this holds significant value. However, there is also the need for works dedicated to scrutinising the experiences of later generations in their own right. In the present dissertation, my aim was to explore what form Cretanness has taken for the second- and third-generation Cretans, with a focus on public expressions of Cretanness. I sought to view them not only as descendants of the Cretan Muslims but as descendants of the Cretan Muslims *in* Mersin, *in* Ayvalik and *in* Turkey. I argue that Cretanness has been transformed and has acquired a symbolic form, which includes an intermittent involvement with the origins, the precedence of food as a symbol, and the pursuit of visibility. Additionally, I argue that Cretanness today is employed as a basis for asserting distinctiveness and superiority constructed within the context of contemporary Turkey and that it encompasses an affective component, which revolves around a positive connection with the origins and the feeling of pride. Furthermore, I contend that the visibility aspect of symbolic Cretanness in Mersin has paralleled a need for recognition, which is something that differentiates the two sites of research. In the following lines I will present a recapitulation of the main findings.

Several points included in this thesis are not novel suggestions. The Cretans' attachment to their culinary culture, for example, is not a discovery of mine. The emphasis they place on Europeanness and Westernness, and the sense of superiority they derive from it, have also been documented before. An important contribution of this thesis to the literature on Cretan Muslims, stems from the fact that this thesis also goes beyond a mere description or mere observation by attempting to connect current expressions of Cretanness, articulations of self-identification and distinctiveness to the broad context. It presents how Cretanness is practiced today, how it is manifested and negotiated in contemporary society, and what is the relevance of the difference of cultural origin in the present. Additionally, the dissertation contributes to the literature on the sociology of Turkey. By examining the descendants of Cretan Muslims as a case study, the research expands sociological understanding on the exchangees and the refugees from the former Ottoman lands. In this respect, it is the first sociological work that incorporates research conducted at two different sites, enhancing the comprehensiveness of the subject studied.

The dissertation was initiated by the intention to explore the framework within which recent expressions of Cretanness can be situated, as well as to examine how

second- and third-generation Cretans establish their connection to their roots. If one considers only the visible articulations of Cretanness or the devoted efforts of a handful of individuals to bring Cretanness to the fore, they may reach the misleading conclusion that what is observed is an effort by the current generations to revitalise aspects of the Cretan culture. In the initial stages of the research, I found myself also captivated by this notion, primarily influenced by the active participation and enthusiasm witnessed at festivals, the continuous establishment of associations, and the endeavours to promote Cretan cuisine. However, at the same time, I could not comprehend the contrasting trend of a lack of consistent interest, limited participation in associations, a lack of knowledge about their family histories or the collective past in general, and the almost complete absence of later generations in the field.

The signs of assimilation were evident. At the same time, identification with Cretanness and the Cretan origin was often quite vocal. However, even the more outspoken ones often oscillated in their narratives between appropriating the category "Cretan" and referring to the Cretans as "we", and distancing themselves from the category "Cretan" referring to Cretans as "they", meaning the previous generations. My paradigm was that people are not a singular entity, and that individuals have multiple self-identifications and belongings, often ambivalent or contradictory. This can explain the variations in their narratives. Nevertheless, the question of what relation they form with their Cretanness and what relevance it holds in their lives remained to be explored.

The concept of "symbolic Cretanness" inspired by Gans' term "symbolic ethnicity" is the concept that helped me make sense of the paradox of identification without the prominence of cultural aspects. Symbolic Cretanness allows for flexibility of attachments and a latitude of choice. It accounts for intermittent involvement with the roots and expressions of self-identification that can be somewhat superficial in nature. In this transformation of Cretanness from the "lived" to the "symbolic", food and language become cultural patterns that are transformed into symbols. This means that they are not practiced every day, but it does not imply that they are not practiced at all. A crucial difference lies in the conscious deployment of these symbols to demonstrate Cretanness, to "tell" it (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 227), as is the case

with all those Cretans who share the Cretan dishes they have prepared on Crete-related Facebook groups.

Food and cuisine have covered a large part of my informants' narratives and emerged as the cornerstones of (symbolic) Cretanness. Food aligns well with the transformation of Cretanness, as it is a cultural aspect "within the reach of all" (Bakalian, 1993, p. 47). The transferability of food knowledge and habits across generations has facilitated their widespread appeal. Food serves the perpetuation of the ancestral culture, without posing many practical requirements. Within this framework the consumption of olive oil and wild green vegetables, in particular, is portrayed as an almost exclusive Cretan trait, reinforcing commonality while also functioning as a boundary that discerns Cretans from the others. While culinary habits and dietary preferences seem to have been diachronically a fundamental element of Cretanness, also defining the relation between self and other, they assume now an extraordinary role as a symbol of Cretanness, as other cultural markers, more difficult to be preserved, have faded, or are fading away.

Food transcends being a mere reflection of Cretanness; it also constitutes an area around which Cretans develop a sense of distinctiveness and superiority. The scientific community's heightened regard for the Mediterranean diet, in general, and the Cretan diet, in particular, and its recognition as one of the essential foundations for a healthy lifestyle have elevated the cultural value of Cretans' dietary choices. This appreciation from the health science realm provides the context which second- and third-generation Cretans can exploit to validate and celebrate their nutritional preferences and to articulate their distinctiveness. They now take pride in their eating habits and anticipate acknowledgment for their contributions to the broader culinary culture within their society.

The emotion of pride has emerged as an almost inextricable part of Cretanness, for the current generations of Cretans. The feeling of pride for the Cretans has evolved in different ways and is distinct from the feeling cultivated through the operation of state institutions, the one instilled to the members of a nation through the operation of the official history. It is also different but slightly closer to the feeling that accompanies groups and collectivities who might aim to utilise emotion to reach a wider mobilisation. The feeling of pride for the Cretans can be mostly defined as a

generalised feeling towards their origins, which can have different undertones for each individual. It goes hand in hand with the symbolic nature of Cretanness, as it has come to replace the cultural aspects, that have weakened. Additionally, it has emerged within circumstances in which one's identifying with their Cretan background does not incur costs or disadvantages as it could have happened with the embodied or articulated expression of different origin in the past; on the contrary it might also elicit positive reactions from others.

Informants' self-identification with Cretanness is not solely limited to their origins; instead, each self-identification is explicitly or implicitly accompanied by a certain meaning. Pride, in particular, and affect, in general, are not only components of the symbolic Cretanness, but they also contribute to the overall meaning that Cretanness holds for Cretans, offering a sense of gratification and fulfilment. By examining the aspects on which Cretans focus within their narratives, it becomes apparent that a culture of distinctiveness is constructed around Cretanness. Apart from the emphasis on culinary habits, the research participants frequently referred to character traits, values, behaviours, and viewpoints that apply to the Cretans and distinguish them from others, endowing them with a sense of superiority. Next to food as a pillar of distinctiveness stand the domains of lifestyle and values, as well as the domain of gender relations.

Lifestyle and values play a significant role in shaping the sense of distinctiveness among the Cretans. Specific practices, values, and traits are ascribed meaning, highlighting their role as foundations for expressing distinctiveness. By emphasising their origins and the specific elements of their ancestry, Cretans construct a sense of continuity in terms of "Westernness" and "Europeanness" aligning themselves with "the West" while simultaneously differentiating themselves from others who lack the qualities necessary to be part of the culture that the West represents. Values such as religious bigotry, conservatism, and narrow-mindedness are attributed to the "other", while the Cretans perceive themselves as a civilised, modern and open-minded entity. While expressions of distinctiveness can be observed among different communities in various contexts, examining their placement within the historical and contemporary socio-political context can provide insights into their specific underpinnings. In this case, I argue that this aspect of distinctiveness

developed around Cretanness is congruent with the Cretans' ideological adherence to Kemalism and serves as an alternative to the trends of Islamisation and conservatism prevalent in Turkey's social and political landscape.

I view the emphasis placed on gender relations and gender related values within a similar framework. Distinctiveness, by definition, is relational. This means that it is developed in relation to others. My informants used an abundance of comparisons in order to support their difference and distinctiveness in terms of gender and family relations. What interests me is not whether they are distinct from the others, but the fact that they perceive a difference and that this difference is linked to Cretanness. Distinctiveness is relational in another respect as well: there are no absolute criteria that can form the basis for developing a sense of distinctiveness. The criteria vary according to what is valued at a particular time and place, as well as what is valued by the community or individuals claiming distinctiveness. Gender equality is a widely debated principle in Turkey. It is often undermined at the societal and state levels, and objections to it most often align with a religious and conservative mindset. Obviously, I do not mean that upholding gender equality is equivalent to claiming distinctiveness. What renders the emphasis upon it significant in the context of this thesis is that it is viewed by the informants as one of the defining aspects of Cretanness.

Although Cretanness operates in the periphery for most second and third-generation Cretans, both as a practice and as a self-identification, it maintains significance for them. Examining whether an individual opts for a certain identification, whether they decide to adopt or stress a cultural category is important; nonetheless, examining the meaning attached to an identification is equally important. Alba (1990, p. 318) argues that ethnic identities for Americans of European ancestry have become "tastes rather than social attachments. Yet they also bring some benefits to those who possess them, (…) even if [they have] little practical consequence in everyday life". Cretanness has been transformed as well, but it has not ceased to retain value. Origin has been rendered a source of feeling and it is "instrumentalised" for a demonstration of distinctiveness. This distinctiveness stems from the Cretan origin but is performed and finds purpose within a certain context, the context of which second and third-generation Cretans are a part.

In a general vein, when studying social categories, it is important to consider them as being "grounded in real life context and social experience" (Conzen et al., 1992, p. 4). It is crucial to remember that identifications do not transcend history (Hall, 1990); they evolve over time, both in terms of their name and their content, at both the collective and individual levels. They can change due to structural shifts, upon a calculation of costs and benefits, as a result of mobilisation, and other factors. Furthermore, it is essential to recognise that there is no singular way to experience an identification, and people may participate in varying degrees and in different forms in a social category (Calhoun, 2003). This can also mean that certain behavioural forms may be absent, but that a certain identification may still be endowed with meaning. Exploring this meaning can provide valuable insights into the motivations and choices of the actors, whether we are talking about voluntary or "binding" affiliation and attachment to a social category.

Visibility is a central aspect of symbolic Cretanness. This visibility is congruent with the detachment of Cretanness from its threatening character for homogenisation, the romanticisation of origin and the "engagement with diversity articulated as multiculturalism" that has marked Turkey's public domain over the first decades of the twenty first century (Iğsız, 2018, p. 181). Symbolic Cretanness is meant to be visible and easily accessible to insiders, who experience a connection to their origins and a sense of we-ness. Simultaneously, it is intended to be visible and accessible to outsiders, who participate in this celebration of heritage. Festivals, events, associations, and internet platforms are both products of this phase of visibility, but also spaces where the principle of visibility is enacted. Food, in the form of traditional dishes, food stands and restaurants, is also a part of it. Cretan cuisine acts as a tangible representation of the culture and can be widely shared and appreciated. This is one of the reasons it has gained such importance for second and third-generation Cretans. In line with this reasoning, it is understandable that language, as a symbol, has a more limited appeal. Language is not accessible to everyone, and it cannot serve the purpose of visibility as effectively as food does.

Relevant to the concept of visibility is the concept of recognition, although they are distinct from each other. Their relevance stems from the fact that they both pertain to the "publicisation" of origin and cultural heritage. Visibility is an aspect of symbolic

Cretanness, applicable both in Ayvalik and Mersin, and is associated with the broader contextual developments prevalent in the country and with the symbolic character of Cretanness. The need for recognition was primarily observed in Mersin and is related to the micro-context and the differences in the trajectory of the informants' relationship with Cretanness between Ayvalik and Mersin. It is also part of the symbolic phase of Cretanness, which provides the appropriate framework for such claims for recognition to be voiced. Visibility and recognition are, in a way, two sides of the same coin: visibility is a prerequisite for recognition, while at the same time, it increases as recognition increases.

The concept of recognition in this thesis refers to the elimination of misconceptions and misunderstandings surrounding the origins of Cretans and the acknowledgment of their cultural and historical distinctness. The need for recognition emerges from within the interplay of processes of self-identification, self-narrative construction, and boundary demarcation. These processes occur across interactions with the "others" in everyday encounters. The narratives about who "we" are, are not only relevant to "us", but are also stories we tell the "others". Within this framework, the role of the "other" becomes significant. In Mersin, these processes have coincided with instances of ignorance regarding Cretan heritage, leading Cretans to feel misrecognised or not recognised at all. Implicit in this need is the belief that Cretans deserve to be valued and esteemed for their and their ancestors' cultural contributions, including their culinary traditions, their broad perspectives, their contributions in fostering coexistence among different communities, and the modernising influence that emanates from their European origins.

The need for recognition is what accounts for the different patterns observed in Ayvalik and Mersin, which involve a more active engagement and, at times, a more vocal expression of identification with Cretanness in Mersin. In order to understand this difference between Ayvalik and Mersin, I have suggested to look at the context, and more specifically at the residential concentration of Cretans in Ayvalik and Mersin, along with the demographic characteristics of these two locations, as well as to their geographical positions. The initial resettlement of first-generation Cretans in specific areas contributed to the formation of concentrated Cretan communities in both Ayvalik and Mersin. The high exhaustiveness and density within these communities

fostered frequent interactions and the continuation of certain cultural expressions. While the expansion of Mersin has dispersed the Cretan population, Ayvalik, especially Cunda, maintained higher exhaustiveness and density, leading to a more prominent Cretan presence and a more comprehensive and unreflexive experience of Cretanness. The homogeneity of the local population in Ayvalik, and the fact that the majority of Ayvaliots, share a common history of refugeeness, in comparison to the heterogenous and diverse population of Mersin, is another factor that explains the difference between the two sites. To these factors Ayvalik's proximity to Greece can also be added.

This difference regarding the need for recognition and the trajectory of the relation of Cretans with their Cretanness, was revealed to me through research at two sites. Had I solely focused on research in Ayvalik, I would have overlooked a crucial aspect of contemporary Cretanness. This aspect may have relevance in other locations as well, although it necessitates further testing and exploration to validate this hypothesis. Similarly, if my research had been confined to Mersin, I would have overlooked the contrasting dynamics present in Ayvalik, which, is a significant location for studying the Cretans, given their dense presence in the town. Research at two sites, however, was helpful not only in identifying differences between them but also because it revealed the pervasiveness of the meaning attributed to Cretanness and that, despite differences in trajectories and contexts, Cretanness has taken a symbolic turn.

Overall, conducting research at two sites has allowed me to form a more comprehensive understanding of the state of affairs concerning Cretans in Turkey. Rather than perceiving these sites as two locations separate from each other, I sought to keep my visits and findings in dialogue, in order to benefit from the various perspectives and the information revealed to me at each location. Simultaneously, while focusing on the specific context of each site, I also remained mindful of the broader context, recognising that the dynamics and experiences observed were influenced by larger factors. Moreover, my participation in festivals, which can be considered as an additional third site with its own unique characteristics, enhanced my research by allowing me to interact, albeit to a limited extent, with Cretans from different regions of Turkey and engage with my informants in diverse settings.

Generally speaking, this thesis constitutes a reminder of the fact that valuable insights can be gained from multi-sited research and the consideration of unique dynamics in different locations. The present work focused on a group dispersed along different regions within a single country. Similarly, this approach can be applied to studying minorities in one or multiple countries, diasporas spanning different nations, or even social movements, in general, to studying phenomena that are geographically dispersed, networked, or contextually dependent. Research conducted across multiple sites also aligns with the perspective according to which we cannot talk about bounded wholes, even though they may appear as such, brought together for a cause or possessing distinct cultural characteristics. Such research can account for and incorporate particularities of experience, factors operating at different levels, and context-specific structural realities. As a result, researchers can uncover complexities and interconnections that may not be apparent in a single-site study.

I would also like to make a note on the generations. The focus of this thesis is the present-day Cretans in Turkey. Within this framework I did not have strict differentiating criteria regarding generations when approaching my informants. Eventually, second- and third-generation Cretans emerged to be the main participants of the research. Findings do not demonstrate clear differentiating lines between these two generations. The only cultural aspect that can be said to demonstrate differences among generations is language. However, even in this regard, the crucial factor concerning the knowledge of the Cretan dialect, or the lack thereof is not so much the generational distance from the first generation but the environment one grew up. Therefore, it is possible to find third-generation Cretans with knowledge of the Cretan dialect, and second-generation Cretans with passive or limited knowledge. The same applies to ancestry knowledge. The presence or absence of an "ethnohistorical informant" (Iğsız, 2018) has had a greater impact on knowledge than the generational distance from immigration, at least when it comes to the second and third generations. Furthermore, many individuals have acquired knowledge from external sources. Narratives of distinctiveness, the affective connection to the origins, and the need for recognition in Mersin do not show variation based on generational differences. Ultimately, the second and third generations can be considered together as a single category, encompassing informants born from the 1940s to the 1960s.

One of the issues that preoccupied me during fieldwork, albeit beyond the scope of the research questions, was the future of Cretanness and whether, considering factors such as intermarriage, social mobility, and the further dispersal of families and community, it could remain relevant in the lives of the later generations of the Cretans, even in a symbolic form. I frequently discussed this issue with my informants. Some expressed optimism, believing that the associations can provide a platform for the continuation of Cretanness. Bayram Cemali, while questioning whether his daughter will have time to be involved, believes that he and others who have participated in establishing the associations "have paved the way for the future generation of Cretans to at least be united" (*gelecek nesil Giritlilerin en azından birlik olabilme yolunu açtık*). Others estimate that it may last only one more generation. Melike estimates ten more years, and Denizali thinks that her children's generation might be able to maintain the culture, hoping that the generation after her children "will not kill [it]".[133] Kritikos, who views relationship to Cretanness in the context of nostalgia, anticipates that some degree of nostalgia may persist. However, it remains questionable whether this nostalgia will be as intense as that of his generation.

Gans (1992) makes the following ambivalent prediction about the future of symbolic ethnicity:

> *Symbolic ethnicity might fade away if people chose to forget everything about ethnic origins of any of their ancestors, but it could also become a permanent source of extra identity, an occasion for nostalgia, [or] a pleasant leisure time activity (…) Consequently, symbolic ethnicity could have a long lifespan* (p. 45).

In another article, written two years later he makes the following observation, adding the role of the broader social context to the equation: "[T]he future of symbolic ethnicity and ethnic identity is shaped as much or more by needs, wishes and opportunities that originate in the larger society as by those created from internal changes in the ethnic group" (Gans, 1994, p. 588).

In the case of symbolic Cretanness, there are reasons that make it difficult to be optimistic about the future. The associations are important contributions made by

[133] *Belki bizim çocuklarımız da severek yaşatacaktır. Ondan sonraki kuşaklar inşallah öldürmezler bizi. Öldürmesinler yani.*

the second- and third-generation Cretans. However, their sustainability and continued existence rely on individuals who are willing to dedicate their time and energy to support their activities. There were very few young Cretans present at festivals, events, and dinners, and even fewer showed active engagement and interest. Mary, born in 1990, was the youngest among my informants. She is a third generation Cretan on her father's side. During her childhood, she used to spend time with her paternal grandparents in Cunda, while her father is knowledgeable about various aspects of the culture. I met her at a food stand of the association during a fair in Ayvalik, where she had prepared some of the food. She told me that she is the sole young person involved in the association. The formal interview with Mary did not last longer than twenty minutes. She talked in a somewhat disconnected way about her ancestors, and despite her contribution to the culinary activities of the association, it is hard to argue that she sees herself as a link in the chain of cultural continuity.

On the other hand, there will continue to be sources that can function as an archive for those who wish to get in touch with their origins - provided that they are aware of them. The already existing written sources, such as cookbooks, personal memoirs, literary texts, and other cultural products will continue to exist. Younger Cretans may have learned how to cook certain Cretan dishes or may experience the familiar taste of these dishes at local restaurants in the Aegean or Mediterranean regions. Crete can still be a destination for those who wish to combine their holidays with a touch of family history. Future generations may also find enjoyment in using a few words and expressions they have learned within their families. It remains to be seen whether these factors can play a stimulating role and contribute to the maintaining a sense of Cretanness, and if so, what meanings individuals will associate with it. This depends on the broader social context, as well, or to borrow Gans' formulation again on "needs, wishes and opportunities that originate in the larger society".

Despite the gloomy future I described above there are several avenues for future investigation regarding the second- and third-generation Cretans. The findings of this research can operate as a starting point for the exploration of the specific dynamics of Cretanness in other sites and for the examination of varying degrees and forms of engagement with Cretanness. It would be interesting to explore how Cretanness functions in an urban environment, which shares similarities and

differences with the one in Mersin, such as the diverse city of Izmir, which is home to considerable population of people from all Ottoman lands. A study in a diverse environment could also include the study of different segments of the population, encompassing not only the processes of self-identification among Cretans but also the perspectives of others towards them. Additionally, further research could focus on the commercialisation of Cretanness within the rural setting of the village of Melemez in Mersin. Although the coronavirus pandemic has hindered initiatives, which had started to gain momentum before, it is possible such initiatives regain the lost momentum. Lastly, delving into the presence of Cretans on social media platforms could serve as a fruitful area for conducting online ethnography, enabling a more comprehensive exploration of their engagement and interactions within the digital realm.

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APPENDICES

A. PROFILE OF INFORMANTS

The names with an asterisk are my choices.

Table 5 – List of interviewees in Ayvalik

Name	**Gender**	**Year of birth**	**Generation**	**Ancestors from Crete**	**Education level**
Resmolu (Rethymnian, in Turkish, Rethymno is his town of origin in western Crete)	Male	1961	Third	Paternal side	University
İskender (Alexander, in Turkish, a reference to Alexander the Great)	Male	1967	Second	Both sides (apart from maternal grandmother)	University
Zeruş	Female	1943	Second	Both sides	High school
Denizali (family names)	Female	1966	Third	Both sides (apart from paternal grandfather)	University
Ayvalık'tan kalo kopeli (meaning "Nice young man/kid from Ayvalik" in Cretan dialect)	Male	1959	Second	Both sides	High school
Erotokritos (one of the most important works of Cretan literature and the name of the protagonist)	Male	1949	Second	Both sides	High school

Table 5 (continued)

Lokum (a nickname her mother used to call her)	Female	1968	Third	Both sides (apart from maternal grandfather)	University
Mehmet*	Male	1942	Second	Both sides	Secondary school
Arnavut (Albanian in Turkish, part of his ancestors might have had migrated to Crete from Albania)	Male	1963	Third	Both sides	University
Maria (a Greek name, a name a friend of hers used to call her)	Female	1955	Second	Paternal side	3rd grade of primary school
Hüseyin*	Male	1954	Second	Both sides	High school
Kara Kartal (Black Eagle, symbol of a Turkish football team)	Male	1951	Second	Both sides	High school
İsparoz (annular sea bream in Turkish, a nickname of his)	Male	1942 (passed away in 2021)	Second	Both sides	n/a
Ege Denizi (Aegean Sea, in Turkish)	Male	1961	Third	Both sides	High school
Matzourana (marjoram in Greek, indigenous herb in Crete)	Female	n/a	Second	Both sides	University
Orhan*	Male	1972	Fourth	Paternal side	n/a
Asiye*	Female	1942	Second	Both sides	Secondary school
Mary	Female	1990	Third	Paternal side	University

Table 6 – List of interviewees in Mersin

Name	**Gender**	**Year of birth**	**Generation**	**Ancestors from Crete**	**Education**
Giritli (Cretan in Turkish)	Male	1960	Third	Both sides	High school
Badia (the name of the village his family is from in Crete)	Male	1962	Second	Both sides	High school
Sardunya (Geranium in Turkish, a flower that she thinks exists in front of every house in Crete)	Female	1959	Third	Both sides	n/a
Cesur (brave in Turkish)	Male	1953	Second	Paternal side	University
Yasemin*	Female	1965	Third	Paternal side	High school
Ekrem*	Male	1956	Third	Both sides	University
Arfano (orphan child in Cretan dialect)	Male	1959	Third	Both sides	Primary school
Melachrini (brunette in Greek)	Female	1943	Second	Maternal side	High school
Nisi (island in Greek)	Female	1946	Second	Maternal side	High school
Kritikos (Cretan in Greek)	Male	1953	Second	Both sides	University
Bayram Cemali (names of family members)	Male	1954	Second	Both sides	High school
Güney rüzgarı (south wind)	Male	1965	Third	Paternal side	n/a
Osman*	Male	1959	Second	Both sides	High school
Kemale (name of a family member and a common name among Cretan Muslims)	Female	1959	Second	Both sides	University

Table 6 (continued)

Murtaza (a family name)	Male	1960 (passed away in 2021)	Third	Both sides	University
Yetimaki (Cretan surname)	Male	1970	Third	Paternal side	University
Melike*	Female	1949	Third	Both sides	Teachers' Training School
Giritliyim Farklıyım (meaning "I am Cretan, I am different" in Turkish)	Female	1942	Second	Both sides	Teachers' Training School
Elif*	Female	1981	Fourth	Both sides	Master's degree

B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ENGLISH

Personal life and family

1. Could you tell me briefly about your life? Which generation of Cretans are you? When and where were you born? Where did you grow up? What was/is your parents' occupation? What is your occupation? What is your marital status? If married, what is your spouse's origin?
2. Do you know the story of your ancestors? What have your parents and your grandparents narrated to you? What were/are the most important things/values they transmitted to you?
3. How was your childhood? In what kind of culture did you grow up? In what respects are the younger generations of Cretans different from the older ones in your opinion? Do you keep the culture alive? How?
4. Do you have children? Are your children married? If yes, to whom? If not, to whom would you like see/wouldn't you like to see your children married?

Self- and group- identification / Cretan culture/identity

5. How would you identify yourself? Do you feel part of a group/community?
6. Have you been to Crete?
7. What does being Cretan mean to you? How would you define Cretan culture?
8. Have you always called yourself Cretan? Have you always been aware of being Cretan? Has there been a turning point in your life in terms of identification and/or awareness?
9. What differences do you see in comparison to the past in terms of the expression of your identity?
10. To what extent has the Cretan culture been preserved in your opinion?
11. Do you participate in the association? Why do you think did so many associations emerge now and not in the past?
12. Do you follow the Crete-related pages?

13. How are your relationship with Cretans living in other places? Do you see any differences?

Interactions

14. How do you think has your city/town changed in the past years?
15. With the people of which community do you come to better terms with/ don't you come to terms with? To whom do you feel close or distant? Why?
16. Could you talk about Cretans within the context of the city/town?
17. Have you ever faced discrimination or any problem because of your Cretan origin?
18. How was your experience at school/the neighbourhood, etc.?

Religious and political affiliation

19. Do you consider yourself religious? Would you characterise Cretans as religious?
20. To which political view do you feel closer?

Gender

21. Is there such a thing as 'Cretan man' or 'Cretan woman'? If yes, could you please define it?
22. How is the ideal man/woman in private and public in your opinion?
23. Do you think there are certain gender roles?

Language

24. Do you speak the Cretan dialect?

For those you can speak it:

a. Do you teach / are you going to teach it to your children?
b. Do you think the language is important in the maintenance of culture?
c. Do you feel 'more Cretan' compared to the ones who cannot speak it?

For those who cannot speak it:

a. Why didn't you learn it? Would you like to be able to speak it? Why?
b. Do you think the language is important in the maintenance of culture?
c. Do you feel 'less Cretan' compared to the ones who speak it?

25. Do you have anything to add?

TÜRKÇE

Özel hayat ve aile

1. Kısaca hayatınızı anlatabilir mısınız? Kaçıncı kuşak Giritlisiniz? Nerede ve ne zaman doğdunuz? Nerede büyüdünüz? Ebeveynlerinizin mesleği ne? Sizin mesleğiniz ne? Medeni durumunuz? Evli iseniz, eşiniz nereli?
2. Atalarınızın hikayesini biliyor musunuz? Aileniz neler anlatmıştı/anlatırdı? Size aktardıkları en önemli şeyler/değerler nelerdi?
3. Çocukluğunuz nasıl geçti? Nasıl bir kültürde büyüdünüz? Sizce Giritlilerin daha genç kuşakları önceki kuşaklardan hangi açılardan farklılıklar taşıyor? Atalarınızın kültürünü yaşatıyor musunuz? Nasıl?
4. Çocuklarınız var mı? Evliler mi? Evet ise, kime/nasıl birine? Hayır ise, kime/nasıl birine evlenmelerini ister mıydınız/ istemez mıydınız?

Özdeşleşme / Girit kültürü/kimliği

5. Kendinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız? Kendinizi bir grubun/topluluğun parçası olarak görüyor musunuz?
6. Girit'e gittiniz mi?
7. Giritli olmak size ne ifade eder/nasıl bir anlam taşıyor? Girit kültürünü nasıl tanımlarsınız?
8. Kendinizi hep Giritli olarak görüyor muydunuz? Giritli olmanızın hep farkında mıydınız? Özdeşleşme ve/veya farkındalık açısından hayatınızda bir dönüm noktası oldu mu?
9. Geçmişe kıyasla Giritli kimliğinizi ifade etmekte nasıl farklar görüyorsunuz?
10. Girit kültürünün ne derece muhafaza olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?
11. Dernekte aktif misiniz? Sizce niye son zamanlarda o kadar çok dernek ortaya çıktı? Niye şimdi? Niye daha önce değil?
12. Girit'le ilgili olan sayfaları takip ediyor musunuz?
13. Başka yerlerde yaşayan Giritlilerle ilişkileriniz nasıl? Farklar görüyor musunuz?

Etkileşimler

14. Sizce son yıllarda şehriniz / kasabanız nasıl değişiklikler gördü?

15. Hangi topluluktan insanlarla daha iyi anlaşıyorsunuz/anlaşamıyorsunuz? Kimleri uzak veya yakın hissediyorsunuz? Neden?
16. Giritleri şehir/kasaba bağlamında biraz anlatabilir misiniz?
17. Giritli olduğunuz için hiçbir zamanda ayrımcılık veya herhangi bir sorun yaşadınız mı?
18. Okulda/mahallede/iş yerlerinde deneyimleriniz nasıldı?

Dinle ve siyasetle ilişki

19. Kendinizi dindar olarak görüyor musunuz? Giritlileri dindar olarak niteler miydiniz?
20. Kendinizi hangi siyasi görüşe yakın hissediyorsunuz?

Toplumsal cinsiyet

1. Sizce 'Giritli erkek' veya 'Giritli kadın' diye bir şeyden söz edebilir miyiz? Evet ise, tarif edebilir misiniz?
2. İdeal erkek / kadın özel ve kamusal alanda nasıldır?
3. Belli cinsiyet rollerinin olduklarını düşünüyor musunuz?

Dil

4. Girit lehçesini biliyor musunuz?

Bilenler için:

a. Çocuklarınıza öğretiyor musunuz / öğretmeyi planlıyor musunuz?
b. Dilin, kültürün korunmasında önemli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
c. Konuşamayanlara göre 'daha çok Giritli' hissediyor musunuz?

Bilmeyenler için:

a. Neden öğrenmediniz? Bilmek ister miydiniz? Neden?
b. Dilin, kültürün korunmasında önemli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
c. Konuşanlara göre 'daha az Giritli' hissediyor musunuz?

5. Başka bir şey söylemek ister misiniz?

C. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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26 MART 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof.Dr. Ayşe Gündüz HOŞGÖR

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Efpraxia NERANTZAKİ'nin **"Bağlam içinde özdeşleme: Mersin ve Ayvalık'taki Girit Müslümanları"** başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **125-ODTÜ-2019** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız

Prof. Dr. Tülin GENÇÖZ
Başkan

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL
Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR
Üye

Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI (4.)
Üye

Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK
Üye

Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT
Üye

D. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name:	Efpraxia Nerantzaki
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EDUCATION

September 2011	**MA in Turkish Studies (Distinction)** School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London, UK
April 2010	**BA in Translation (English – German – Greek) (8.33/10)** Department of Foreign Languages, Translation and Interpreting, Ionian University, Corfu, Greece
September 2008 – January 2009	**Studying abroad student** School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland
March 2008 – June 2008	**Erasmus student** Centre for Translation Studies, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

September 2017 – August 2022	**Lecturer** Department of Modern Greek Language and Literature, University of Ankara, Ankara, Turkey (Türkiye)
December 2016 – July 2017	**Media screener / Press assistant / Translator** Embassy of Greece in Ankara, Ankara, Turkey (Türkiye)
January 2014 – March 2015	**Research Fellow** European Stability Initiative, Greece / Germany
October 2012 – February 2013	**Trainee** European Commission, DG Enlargement, Brussels, Belgium

September 2013 – November 2013	**Project Assistant (Volunteering)** Flying Broom Women's Rights Communication and Research Association, Ankara, Turkey (Türkiye)
January 2012 – September 2012	**Research Associate (Volunteering)** Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East and Islamic Studies (CEMMIS), Athens, Greece

LANGUAGES

Greek – Mother tongue
English – Fluent
Turkish – Fluent
German – Good knowledge
French – Intermediate knowledge

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Data Science: R Basics
HarvardX, Harvard University Online, 20/12/2020

Online Instructor Certificate
Ankara University, Faculty of Open and Distance Education, 30/10/2020

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

TÜBİTAK-BİDEB 2215 -Graduate Scholarship Programme for International Students

2015-2016 Academic Year METU Graduate Courses Performance Award (CGPA: 3.89/4.00)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Nerantzaki, E. (2017). The complexity of identity and feminist solidarity. In A. Arıkan (Ed.), *3rd International Language, Culture & Literature Symposium* (pp. 131-139). https://englanglit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/e-proceedings.pdf

Nerantzaki, E. (2012, July 9). *Turkey Report 5*. Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East and Islamic Studies. http://cemmis.edu.gr/files/turkey_report5.pdf

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Nerantzaki, E. (2012). Iran, Turkey and the Arab Spring: The race for hegemony. *Middle East Bulletin 23*, 8-12. Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East and Islamic Studies. http://www.cemmis.edu.gr/files/middle_east_bulletin_23/middle_east_bulletin_23.pdf

E. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, Ayvalık ve Mersin'deki ikinci ve üçüncü kuşak Giritlilerin bugün Giritlilikleriyle nasıl ilişki kurduklarını araştırıyor. Bu Giritliler, 1923 yılında Türkiye ile Yunanistan arasında imzalanan Lozan Nüfus Mübadelesi Sözleşmesi çerçevesinde Girit Adası'ndan sürülen ya da on dokuzuncu yüzyılın sonlarına doğru Osmanlıların Girit'ten çekilmesinin ardından Anadolu'ya sığınan Giritli Müslümanların çocukları ve torunlarıdır. Geçtiğimiz yıllar, Türkiye'deki Giritlilerin kökenlerine ve Giritliliğin kamusal ifadelerine yönelik ilgilerinin yeniden arttığına tanıklık etmiş; festivallerin düzenlenmesi, derneklerin kurulması ve Girit'le ilgili çeşitli Facebook grupları ve bloglar aracılığıyla çevrimiçi faaliyetler buna örnek teşkil etmiştir. Girit kültürünün güzergahı, Giritliliğin ifadeleri ve Giritlilikle özdeşleşme ve yıllar boyunca diğerleriyle etkileşimler hakkında kapsamlı bir görüşe sahip olmamızı sağlayacak çalışmalar olmasa da, Giritliliğin bu belirli kamusal ifadelerinin son yirmi otuz yıla tarihlendiğini biliyoruz; bunları bugün Giritliliğin daha derinlemesine araştırılması için önemli bir başlangıç noktası olarak görüyorum.

Araştırmam bu gözlemlerle başladı ve saha çalışmam boyunca, son yıllarda meydana gelen söz konusu gelişmelerin hangi çerçeveye oturtulabileceğini ve Giritliliğin bugün Giritliler için ne anlama geldiğini keşfetmeyi amaçladım. Bu noktada, yukarıda bahsi geçen gelişmelerin Giritli Müslümanların çocuklarına ve torunlarına özgü olmadığını, mübadiller (ve benzer tarihsel geçmişe sahip diğer nüfuslar) arasında genel bir eğilimi yansıttığını ve Türkiye'deki daha geniş tarihsel ve toplumsal süreçlerle ilişkili olduğunu belirtmek gerekir. Bununla birlikte, ortak kalıplara rağmen, "Giritli" etiketi aracılığıyla Giritliliğe yapılan vurgu, göz ardı edilmemesi gereken bir husustur ve Giritliliğin bugünkü dinamiklerini anlamak için daha derin bir araştırmayı gerektirmektedir.

Bu amaçla, Türkiye'deki, daha özelde Ayvalık ve Mersin'deki Giritlilerin bugün Giritlilikle nasıl ilişki kurduklarına ışık tutacak bir dizi soru sorarak ilerledim. Giritlilik, kimlik tanımlamaları repertuarında nasıl bir yer tutuyor? Aktörler ona hangi anlamları yüklüyor? Girit kültürü bugün ne ölçüde uygulanmaktadır? Girit kültürünü

yeniden canlandırmak gibi bir amaç ya da girişim var mı? Ayvalık ve Mersin'de gözlemlenen farklı örüntüler var mı?

Giritliliğin dönüştüğünü ve kökenlerle aralıklı bir ilişki, yemeğin bir sembol olarak önceliği ve görünürlük arayışını içeren sembolik bir biçim kazandığını iddia ediyorum. Buna ek olarak, Giritliliğin günümüzde çağdaş Türkiye bağlamında inşa edilen farklılık ve üstünlük iddialarının temeli olarak kullanıldığını ve kökenlerle olumlu bir bağ ve gurur duygusu etrafında dönen duygusal bir bileşen içerdiğini savunuyorum. Ayrıca, Mersin'deki sembolik Giritliliğin görünürlük boyutunun, iki araştırma alanını birbirinden ayıran bir tanınma ihtiyacıyla paralel olduğunu iddia ediyorum.

Giritli Müslümanlar Türkiye'nin farklı bölgelerine dağılmış olduğundan, durumun daha kapsamlı bir resmini yakalayabilmek için iki bölgede saha araştırması yapmaya karar verdim. Araştırmamın iki sahası Kuzey Ege kıyısında yer alan Ayvalık ve Türkiye'nin Akdeniz kıyısında yer alan Mersin'dir. Birbirlerinden coğrafi olarak uzak olmalarının yanı sıra, bu iki yer hem tarihsel hem de güncel olarak nüfus büyüklüğü ve yapısı bakımından önemli farklılıklar göstermektedir. Türk-Yunan nüfus mübadelesi'nden sonra Ayvalık, Cunda'yı da içine alan birincil göçmen yerleşim alanına dönüşmüş; Midilli ve Girit adalarının yanı sıra Yunanistan'ı oluşturan diğer bölgelerden gelen 16.530 mübadil ilçeye yerleştirilmiştir (Çomu, 2016b, s. 163-164). Ayvalık, 2021 yılında nüfusu 72.371 olan küçük bir sahil kasabası olarak kalmıştır. Ayrıca, mübadillerin yerleştiği kasabanın karakterinin, en azından yerel halkın bilincinde, bir dereceye kadar hala canlı kaldığı görülmektedir. Ayvalık, Mersin'den önemli bir açıdan daha farklıdır: Yunanistan'a yakındır. Bu yakınlık, Yunanlılarla daha fazla temas ve Yunanca konuşmak için daha fazla fırsat anlamına geliyor.

Mersin'e yerleşen Giritli göçmenler, Ayvalık'ta olduğu gibi neredeyse boşaltılmış bir yer bulmamış ve zorunlu nüfus transferi mevcut toplumsal yapıyı derinden sarsmamıştır (Çomu, 2016b, s. 167). Ayrıca, on dokuzuncu yüzyılın sonunda adadaki Müslüman nüfusa yönelik şiddet olaylarının patlak vermesi nedeniyle Girit'ten kaçan Giritlilerin bir kısmına da ev sahipliği yapmıştır. Mersin, çok kültürlü bir geçmişe ve artan nüfusuyla çok kültürlü bir bugüne sahip bir şehir olmuştur; şu anda birçok etnik ve dini topluluğa (bunlar arasında Yörükler, Çerkezler, Kürtler, Araplar, Romanlar, Aleviler, Hıristiyanlar bulunmaktadır) ev sahipliği yapmaktadır.

Mersin'in merkezinde yer alan ve Giritlilerin yerleştiği İhsaniye mahallesi el değiştirmiştir ve artık başta Güneydoğu olmak üzere Türkiye'nin dört bir yanından gelen göçmenleri barındırmaktadır. Mersin'in "altın çağı" olarak adlandırılan 1960'ların ikinci yarısı ve özellikle 1970'ler boyunca kentin ekonomik ve endüstriyel gelişimi büyük göç dalgalarını çekmiştir (Doğan & Yılmaz, 2015). Özellikle Kürt nüfus, 1980'ler ve 1990'lar boyunca kentte hızlı ve büyük ölçekli bir demografik büyümeye yol açmıştır (Doğan ve Yılmaz, 2015). Mersin son dönemde Suriyelilerin yoğun olarak yaşadığı bir il haline gelmiştir.

Analiz için sosyal aktörlerin anlatıları ve deneyimleri temel alınmıştır. Ancak, aktörlerin anlatılarına eleştirel bir gözle bakılmıştır ve deneyimleri "nesnel" gerçekliğin yanı sıra aktörlerin parçası olduğu çeşitli ilişkilere karşı da konumlandırılmıştır. Sosyal gerçekliği anlamak ve açıklamak istiyorsak ne metodolojik bireycilik ne de metodolojik bütüncülük tek başına yeterli olabilir. Bireyler, gruplar, daha büyük sosyal bütünler ve daha geniş sosyal ortamlar birbiriyle ilişkilidir ve –herhangi bir düzeyde analiz– bu karşılıklı ilişkinin akılda tutulmasını gerektirir. Eylemler ve anlatılar, içinde yer aldıkları ve ifade edildikleri bağlama gömülü olarak incelenmelidir. Eylemler, sosyal ilişkiler ağının bir parçası olan ve belirli kısıtlama ve fırsatlara sahip bireyler ve gruplar tarafından gerçekleştirilir ve öz veya kolektif anlatılar üretilir. Sosyal aktörler koşullar tarafından şekillendirilir ve bu koşullar ve yapılar aktörlerle etkileşimler yoluyla sürekli olarak yaratılır ve yeniden üretilir. Araştırmacının görevi, karmaşık bir gerçeklik veya gerçeklikler zemininde araştırmaya ve analize devam etmektir.

Mayıs 2018'den Mart 2020'ye kadar Mersin ve Ayvalık'a seyahatler gerçekleştirdim. Ayvalık'ta 18, Mersin'de ise 18 derinlemesine mülakat gerçekleştirdim. Bu süre zarfında ayrıca Kuşadası'nda iki festivale ve Mersin'de iki festivale/anma etkinliğine katıldım. Bulgularım, bu festivallerdeki katılımcı gözlemler ve dernek ziyaretlerinin yanı sıra, en az görüşmeler kadar verimli olan kahve ya da yemek eşliğinde yapılan gayrı resmi toplantılar ve sohbetlerle desteklendi. Ayrıca, Mersin ve Ayvalık derneklerinin Facebook sayfalarının yanı sıra Türkiye'deki Giritlilerle ilgili diğer grup ve sayfaları da aktif olarak takip ettim. Araştırma gezilerimi, iki araştırma bölgesini dönüşümlü olarak ziyaret edecek şekilde planladım. Bunu yaparak, iki yerdeki araştırmamı etkileşim içinde tutmayı amaçladım, ve bir

yerden edindiğim bilgileri diğer yerdeki çalışmamı bilgilendirmek için kullanmaya çalıştım. Ayrıca bu yaklaşım, saha çalışmasından geri adım atma ve araştırmanın sonraki aşamaları için yaklaşımlarımı iyileştirme fırsatı bulduğum için aradaki zamanlarda topladığım materyal ve saha çalışması deneyimi üzerinde düşünmeme de olanak tanıdı.

Görüştüğüm bazı Giritliler o dönemde Mersin veya Ayvalık'taki Giritliler derneklerine ya katılmış ya da katılmakta olan kişilerdi. Diğerleri ise farklı festival ve etkinliklerde tanıştığım ya da bana araştırmamda yardımcı olabilecek bilgili Giritliler olarak tanıtılan kişilerdi. Dolayısıyla, görüştüğüm kişilerin çoğunluğu kökenlerine aktif bir ilgi gösterirken, aynı düzeyde ilgi göstermeyen kişilere de ulaştım.

Mülakat soruları aracılığıyla, bilgi verdiğim kişilerin Girit kültürüne (terimi katılımcıların doldurmasına izin verdim) ve atalarının tarihine aşinalık ve bilgi derecelerini değerlendirmek için büyüdükleri ortamı keşfetmeye çalıştım. Amacım Girit kültürüne ait unsurların aile içinde uygulanıp uygulanmadığını ve aile büyüklerinin ata topraklarına herhangi bir bağlılık duygusu besleyip beslemediğini keşfetmekti (Aydıngün & Yıldırım, 2010, s. 29). Ayrıca, bilgi verdiğim kişilerin kendi çocuklarına ne aktardıklarını ya da aktarmakta olduklarını keşfetmeye çalıştım. Ek olarak, bireylerin Girit kültürünün korunmasına katkıda bulunup bulunmadıklarını, nasıl katkıda bulunduklarını ve genel olarak korunmasına nasıl baktıklarını belirlemeyi amaçladım.

Onlardan kendilerini nasıl tanımladıklarını, Giritliliği tanımlamalarını ve Giritli olmanın onlar için ne anlama geldiğini açıklamalarını istedim. Değerlerini ve bu değerlerin Giritlilikle ne ölçüde ilişkili olduğunu keşfetmeye çalıştım. Ayrıca, Giritliliğin deneyimlenme biçiminde herhangi bir değişiklik algılayıp algılamadıklarını, Giritlilik ile ilişkilerinde zaman içinde değişiklikler olup olmadığını ve bu değişiklikleri etkileyen belirleyici bir an olup olmadığını araştırmayı amaçladım. Ayrıca dernekler, restoranlar, festivaller gibi son dönemdeki Giritliliğin kamusal ifadelerini, görüşme muhataplarıyla tartıştım. Dahası, bilgi aldığım kişiler ile çalışılan yerlerdeki "ötekiler" arasındaki etkileşimleri keşfetmeye çalıştım ve kendilerini ve "ötekileri" nasıl algıladıklarına da odaklandım.

Analizimde, bağlılıkları ve aidiyetleri, kültürü, grupsallığı ve özdeşleşmeyi tartışmak için analitik araçlar olarak ilgili teori ve kavramları kullandım. Büyük ölçüde

Richard Jenkins, Rogers Brubaker ve Fredrik Barth'n perspektif ve teorilerinden faydalandım; bunların ortak ekseni "grup" ve "kimlik" gibi statik kavramları sorunsallaştırmış olmalarıdır. Barth (1979) teorisini "etnik gruplar" üzerine kurar, ancak sınır kavramını ortaya atarak grubun aktif ve karmaşık bir şekilde anlaşılmasını önerir. Grupların oluşturulmasında aktörlerin oynadığı merkezi rolü kabul eder ve odağı "sınıra", diğer bir deyişle aktörler tarafından farklılığın işaretleri olarak kullanılan kültürel özelliklere kaydırır. Brubaker (2004) "tanımlama", "kategorize etme" ve "sınıflandırma" gibi faaliyetlerin dinamik, süreçsel karakterine ve bağlamsal doğasına dikkat çekmiştir. Gruplara atıfta bulunmak yerine, "sabit ve verili olmaktan ziyade bir olay, değişken ve olumsal" olarak ele alınması gereken "grupsallık" kavramını önermektedir (s. 12). Ayrıca, etnisitenin bilişsel inşasını vurgulayarak, etnisiteyi "deneyimi anlamanın, yorumlamanın ve çerçevelemenin bir yolu olarak" (s. 86) ele almayı önermektedir. Brubaker'ın çerçevesi içinde süreçler ve algılar boşlukta yer almamakta, güç, değerler, gündelik deneyim ve daha geniş sosyo-tarihsel süreçlerin yapılandırılmasıyla doğrudan bağlantılı olmaktadır.

Jenkins (2008) "birbirine bağlı ancak teorik olarak farklı iki süreç" arasında ayrım yapmaktadır (s. 76): bireylerin kendilerini bir grubun üyesi olarak tanımlamalarını ve grubun ad(lar)ını, doğasını ve sınır(lar)ını tanımlamalarını içeren "grup tanımlama" süreci (s. 56); ve bir dizi kişinin diğerleri tarafından tanımlandığı ve sonuç olarak sosyal olarak kategorize edildiği, güç ve otorite mekanizmalarını içeren "sosyal kategorizasyon" süreci. Cornell & Hartmann (1998) tarafından önerilen inşacı çerçeve de benzer düşünce çizgisinde yer almaktadır. Toplumsal ve sosyal koşulları - kendi deyimleriyle "inşaat sahalarını" ve "grup varlıklarını veya özelliklerini" (s. 196), yani kimlik inşasına katkıda bulunan iç faktörleri bir araya getirmişlerdir. Koşullar ve aktörler arasındaki etkileşime dayalı olarak etnik ve ırksal kimliklerin yaratılması, sürdürülmesi, yeniden üretilmesi ve dönüştürülmesi (s. 96) için kapsamlı bir çerçeve geliştirmişlerdir. Onların "inşaat alanları" analizi, bu tezde Giritliliğin mevcut ifadelerini ve Ayvalık ile Mersin arasındaki farklılıkları açıklamak için kullanılmıştır.

Yukarıda bahsedilen kavram ve çerçevelere ek olarak, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki Avrupa kökenli göçmenlerin torunlarının etnik kökenleri üzerine geliştirilen literatürden de faydalanacağım. Özellikle Gans'ın (1979) "sembolik etnisite" kavramından faydalanacağım. Gans, sonraki nesil Beyaz etnikler için

etnisitenin kişisel bir merak meselesi olduğunu savunarak etnik kültürel bağlılıkların potansiyel sığlığını ve sınırlı önemini vurgulamaktadır. Gans'ın bize hatırlattığı şey, olgular, yüzey ve öz arasında bir boşluk olabileceği ve "etnik kültürel bağlılıkların sığ olabileceği, başka türlü etnik olmayan bir hayata müdahale etmeyen birkaç etnik sembolle sınırlı olabileceğidir" (Alba, 1990, s. 77). Sembolik etnisite, etnisitenin "etniklerin yaşamlarında giderek daha periferik" hale geldiği (Alba, 1981, s. 95) ancak aralıklı bir şekilde de olsa hala bir miktar önemini koruduğu bir durumu tanımlar. Sembolik etnisite kendini birçok biçimde gösterebilir, ancak özünde kişinin atalarının kültürüne veya eski ülkesinin kültürüne nostaljik bir bağlılık içerir. Sembolik etnisite aynı zamanda kültürel geleneklere duyulan sevgi ve gururla da kendini gösterir. Bu duygular belirli geleneklere veya genel olarak kültürel mirasa yönelik olabilir.

Bakalian (1993) bu kavramı ele almış ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki sembolik Ermeniliğin bileşenlerinin ana hatlarını çizmiştir. Ermeni-Amerikalıların kuşak değişimini, Ermeni olmak'tan Ermeni hissetmek'e geçiş olarak kavramsallaştırmaktadır. Bir kişinin etnik "olmasına" izin veren yapıların zayıflamasına, çeşitli kişiselleştirilmiş yorumlar yoluyla grup olma ve kendini tanımlamanın bir tezahürü eşlik etmektedir. Ermenilik, göçmen neslin atfedilen, bilinçsiz, zorlayıcı ve verili kabul edilen geleneksel Ermeniliğinin aksine sembolik, diğer bir deyişle gönüllü, rasyonel, bölümsel ve durumsal hale gelmiştir.

Alba (1990) sembolik etnisiteyi yeniden formüle etmekte ve Avrupa kökenli göçmenlerin torunları arasında etnisitenin temeli olarak topluluğun yerini kimliğe bıraktığını savunmaktadır. Evlilik, arkadaşlık çevreleri ve etnik örgütlere üyelik gibi yapıların eksikliğine ya da var olmaları halinde kimlikten bağımsızlıklarına odaklanmaktadır. Daha sonraki nesil göçmenlerin sosyal dünyalarının "derin bir etnisite izi taşımadığını" savunmaktadır (Alba, 1990, s. 301). Aksine, etnik kimliklerini karakterize eden şey, özelleştirme, bireyselleştirme, etnik kimliğin ana yönü ve bu seçimi etkileyen bir sosyal arka plan olsa bile seçimdir. Etnik kimlik, aile soyu ile sınırlandırılmış kişisel bir mesele haline gelmekte, bir grubun üyeleri için ortak olan özelliklerin erozyona uğraması etnisiteyi toplumsal yönünden yoksun bırakarak topluluk anlamının daha da yitirilmesine yol açmaktadır.

Waters (1990), etnik kimlik inşasının temeli olarak "seçenek" kavramını incelemekte ve bireylerin tarihsel, yapısal ve kişisel kısıtlamalar dahilinde aile

geçmişlerine ilişkin bilgi ve enformasyonu seçerek kullandıklarını vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca "etnik imaj eksikliğine" de işaret etmektedir (s. 144-145), yani belirgin bir etnik kimliğe sahip olmak, bu etnik kimliğin ne anlama geldiğine dair net bir anlayışa sahip olmayı gerektirmemektedir.

Yemek ve mutfak, kaynak kişilerimin anlatılarının büyük bir bölümünü kapsıyor ve (sembolik) Giritliliğin temel taşları olarak ortaya çıkıyor. Yemek, "herkesin ulaşabileceği" (Bakalian, 1993, s. 47) bir kültürel unsur olduğu için Giritliliğin dönüşümüyle iyi bir uyum içindedir. Yemek bilgisi ve alışkanlıklarının nesiller arasında aktarılabilir olması, yaygın bir çekiciliğe sahip olmalarını kolaylaştırmıştır. Yemek, çok fazla pratik gereklilik ortaya koymadan atalardan kalma kültürün sürdürülmesine hizmet eder. Bu çerçevede, özellikle zeytinyağı ve yabani otlar tüketimi, Giritlileri diğerlerinden ayıran bir sınır işlevi görürken aynı zamanda ortaklığı pekiştiren, neredeyse Girit'e özgü bir özellik olarak tasvir edilmektedir. Mutfak alışkanlıkları ve beslenme tercihleri, diyakronik olarak Giritliliğin temel bir unsuru gibi görünse de, aynı zamanda ben ve öteki arasındaki ilişkiyi tanımlasa da, korunması daha zor olan diğer kültürel işaretlerin kaybolması ya da kaybolmakta olması nedeniyle, Giritliliğin bir sembolü olarak olağanüstü bir rol üstlenmektedir.

Yemek, Giritliliğin sadece bir yansıması olmanın ötesine geçerek, Giritlilerin ayırt edicilik ve üstünlük duygusu geliştirdikleri bir alanı da oluşturmaktadır. Bilim camiasının genel olarak Akdeniz diyetine, özel olarak da Girit diyetine olan saygısının artması ve sağlıklı bir yaşam tarzının temellerinden biri olarak kabul edilmesi, Giritlilerin beslenme tercihlerinin kültürel değerini yükseltmiştir. Sağlık bilimleri alanındaki bu takdir, ikinci ve üçüncü kuşak Giritlilerin beslenme tercihlerini doğrulamak, kutlamak ve özgünlüklerini ifade etmek için kullanabilecekleri bir bağlam sağlamaktadır. Artık beslenme alışkanlıklarıyla gurur duyuyor ve toplumlarındaki daha geniş mutfak kültürüne yaptıkları katkılar için takdir edilmeyi bekliyorlar.

Gurur duygusu, Giritlilerin mevcut nesilleri için Giritliliğin neredeyse ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Giritliler için gurur duygusu farklı şekillerde evrimleşmiştir ve devlet kurumlarının işleyişiyle beslenen, resmi tarihin işleyişiyle bir ulusun üyelerine aşılanan duygudan farklıdır. Aynı zamanda daha geniş bir seferberliğe ulaşmak için duyguları kullanmayı amaçlayabilecek grup ve

kolektivitelere eşlik eden duygulardan da farklı ama biraz daha yakındır. Giritliler için gurur duygusu çoğunlukla kökenlerine yönelik genelleştirilmiş bir duygu olarak tanımlanabilir ve her birey için farklı alt tonlara sahip olabilir. Bu duygu, Giritliliğin sembolik doğası ile el ele gitmekte olup, zayıflayan kültürel yönlerin yerini almıştır. Buna ek olarak, kişinin Girit kökeniyle özdeşleşmesinin, geçmişte farklı kökenlerin somutlaştırılmış veya açıkça ifade edilmesinde olduğu gibi maliyet veya dezavantajlara yol açmadığı, aksine başkalarından olumlu tepkiler alabildiği koşullarda ortaya çıkmıştır.

Birinci kuşak göçmenler için kültür, sosyalleşme sırasında deneyimlenmiş ve yaşanmış, "somutlaşmış ve düşünsel olmayan" bir gündelik pratiktir (Jenkins, 2008 s. 79). Kültürü gündelik pratiklerinde taşıyan Giritliler vefat etmiştir ve şimdiki nesiller için göçmen atalarının pratikleri artık kanıksanmamaktadır (belki küçük, nispeten izole yerler hariç). Giritliliği sembolik versiyonuyla açıklayan şey kültürün uygulanması değil, ona yüklenen anlamdır. Bugünün Giritlileri artık Giritli "olmayabilirler" ama Giritli "hissediyorlar". Giritli olmak daha çok bir "ruh"tur ve kültürle, onun pratiğinin ötesine geçen daha derin, soyut bir bağ anlamına gelir. Bu ruh aktarılamaz ve sadece Giritliler tarafından paylaşılabilir.

Görüşme muhatapların kendilerini Giritlilikle özdeşleştirmeleri sadece kökenleriyle sınırlı değildir; bunun yerine, her özdeşleştirmeye açık veya örtük olarak belirli bir anlam eşlik etmektedir. Özellikle gurur ve genel olarak duygulanım, sadece sembolik Giritliliğin bileşenleri olmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda Giritliliğin Giritliler için taşıdığı genel anlama da katkıda bulunmakta, bir tatmin ve tatmin duygusu sunmaktadır. Giritlilerin anlatılarında odaklandıkları hususlar incelendiğinde, Giritlilik etrafında bir ayırt edicilik kültürü inşa edildiği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Mutfak alışkanlıklarına yapılan vurgunun yanı sıra, araştırma katılımcıları Giritliler için geçerli olan ve onları diğerlerinden ayıran, onlara üstünlük hissi veren karakter özelliklerine, değerlere, davranışlara ve bakış açılarına sıklıkla atıfta bulunmuşlardır. Farklılığın bir ayağı olarak yemeğin yanında, yaşam tarzı ve değerlerin yanı sıra toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkileri alanı da yer almaktadır.

Yaşam tarzı ve değerler, Giritliler arasındaki farklılık duygusunun şekillenmesinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Belirli pratiklere, değerlere ve özelliklere anlam atfedilmekte ve bunların ayırt ediciliğin ifade edilmesindeki temel

rolleri vurgulanmaktadır. Giritliler, kökenlerini ve atalarının belirli unsurlarını vurgulayarak, "Batılılık" ve "Avrupalılık" açısından bir süreklilik duygusu inşa etmekte ve kendilerini "Batı" ile aynı hizaya getirirken, aynı zamanda Batı'nın temsil ettiği kültürün bir parçası olmak için gerekli niteliklerden yoksun olan diğerlerinden farklılaşmaktadırlar. Dini bağnazlık, muhafazakarlık ve dar görüşlülük gibi değerler "öteki"ne atfedilirken, Giritliler kendilerini medeni, modern ve açık fikirli bir varlık olarak algılamaktadır. Farklılık ifadeleri çeşitli bağlamlarda farklı topluluklar arasında gözlemlenebilirken, bunların tarihsel ve güncel sosyo-politik bağlam içindeki yerlerinin incelenmesi, özel dayanaklarına dair içgörü sağlayabilir. Bu örnekte, Giritlilik etrafında gelişen bu ayırt edicilik yönünün Giritlilerin Kemalizm'e ideolojik bağlılıklarıyla uyumlu olduğunu ve Türkiye'nin sosyal ve siyasi manzarasında yaygın olan İslamcılaşma ve muhafazakarlaşma eğilimlerine bir alternatif teşkil ettiğini savunuyorum.

Toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkilerine ve toplumsal cinsiyetle ilgili değerlere yapılan vurguyu da benzer bir çerçevede değerlendiriyorum. Ayırt edicilik, tanımı gereği ilişkiseldir. Bu da başkalarıyla ilişkili olarak geliştirildiği anlamına gelir. Görüşme muhatapları, toplumsal cinsiyet ve aile ilişkileri açısından farklılıklarını ve ayırt ediciliklerini desteklemek için pek çok karşılaştırma kullandılar. Beni ilgilendiren, diğerlerinden farklı olup olmadıkları değil, bir farklılık algıladıkları ve bu farklılığın Giritlilikle bağlantılı olduğu gerçeğidir. Ayırt edicilik başka bir açıdan da ilişkiseldir: ayırt edicilik duygusu geliştirmek için temel oluşturabilecek mutlak kriterler yoktur. Kriterler, belirli bir zamanda ve yerde neye değer verildiğine ve aynı zamanda ayırt edicilik iddiasında bulunan topluluk veya bireyler tarafından neye değer verildiğine göre değişir. Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği Türkiye'de çok tartışılan bir ilkedir. Toplum ve devlet düzeyinde sıklıkla baltalanmakta ve buna yönelik itirazlar çoğunlukla dini ve muhafazakar bir zihniyetle örtüşmektedir. Tabii ki, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini savunmanın farklılık iddiasında bulunmakla eşdeğer olduğunu kastetmiyorum. Bu tez bağlamında buna yapılan vurguyu önemli kılan şey, bunun görüşme muhatapları tarafından Giritliliğin tanımlayıcı yönlerinden biri olarak görülmesidir.

Giritlilik, hem bir pratik hem de bir özdeşleşme olarak çoğu ikinci ve üçüncü kuşak Giritliler için periferide yer alsa da, onlar için önemini korumaktadır. Bir bireyin belirli bir kimliği tercih edip etmediğini, kültürel bir kategoriyi benimseyip

benimsemediğini ya da vurgulayıp vurgulamadığını incelemek önemlidir; bununla birlikte, bir kimliğe yüklenen anlamı incelemek de aynı derecede önemlidir. Alba (1990, s. 318) Avrupa kökenli Amerikalılar için etnik kimliklerin "sosyal bağlardan ziyade zevkler" haline geldiğini savunmaktadır. "Yine de, günlük yaşamda çok az pratik sonuçları olsa bile (...) onlara sahip olanlara bazı faydalar sağlamaktadırlar". Giritlilik de dönüşüme uğramıştır, ancak değerini korumaktan vazgeçmemiştir. Köken bir duygu kaynağı haline getirilmiş ve farklılığın gösterilmesi için "araçsallaştırılmıştır". Bu ayırt edicilik Girit kökeninden kaynaklansa da, ikinci ve üçüncü kuşak Giritlilerin de parçası olduğu belirli bir bağlam içinde icra edilmekte ve amaç bulmaktadır.

Görünürlük, sembolik Giritliliğin merkezi bir yönüdür. Bu görünürlük, Giritliliğin homojenleşmeyi tehdit eden karakterinden arındırılması ve kökenin romantikleştirilmesi ile uyumludur. Sembolik Giritlilik, kökenleriyle bir bağ ve bizlik duygusu yaşayan içeridekiler için görünür ve kolay erişilebilir olmayı amaçlamaktadır. Aynı zamanda, bu köken kutlamasına katılan dışarıdakiler için de görünür ve erişilebilir olması amaçlanmıştır. Festivaller, etkinlikler, dernekler ve internet platformları hem bu görünürlük aşamasının ürünleri hem de görünürlük ilkesinin hayata geçirildiği alanlardır. Geleneksel yemekler, yemek standları ve restoranlar de bunun bir parçasıdır. Girit mutfağı kültürün somut bir temsili olarak işlev görür ve geniş çapta paylaşılıp takdir edilebilir. İkinci ve üçüncü kuşak Giritliler için bu kadar önem kazanmasının nedenlerinden biri de budur.

İlk kuşak Giritlileri için Girit lehçesi, kültürel farklılığın güçlü bir göstergesiyken ve ikinci kuşaktan bazıları parçalı bir şekilde de olsa bu dili hala kullanırken, çoğu için bu dil, ebeveynlerinin ve büyükanne ve büyükbabalarının dilini hatırlatan kelimelere ve deyimlere dönüşüyor gibi görünüyor. Bu açıdan bir sembole dönüşmüş durumda. Bununla birlikte, yemekle karşılaştırıldığında dilin daha az görünür bir sembol olması, daha az yaygın olarak paylaşılması ve gündelik hayata daha az uygulanabilir olması, onu Giritliliğin bir tanımlayıcısı ve farklılığın bir amblemi olarak daha az merkezi hale getirmektedir.

Dernekler farklı amaç ve işlevlere hizmet etmiştir. Özellikle Mersin'deki dernek, Giritlilerin kökenleri hakkındaki yanlış anlamaları ortadan kaldırma ve kendilerini topluma (yeniden) tanıtma çabalarında önemli bir araç olmuştur. Aynı

zamanda, Giritlilerin geçmişleri ve kökleri hakkında daha bilinçli olmalarına katkıda bulunmuştur. Ayrıca Giritlilik için referans noktaları olarak da işlev görebilirler. Elbette bu derneklerin herkesle, hatta çoğu zaman üyeleriyle bile ilgili olması gerekmiyor. Bazen derneklere katılım sadece sosyalleşmek için bir bahane ya da boş zaman geçirmenin bir yoludur. Bazıları için siyasete girmek için bir basamak olabilir ve "katılımcı" olarak adlandırılabilecek olanlar da vardır (Alba, 1990, s. 240). Bununla birlikte, toplantılar ve etkinlikler aracılığıyla dernekler "biz-lik" duygusunun (Bakalian, 1993) sürdürülmesine ve "ruhun canlı tutulmasına" katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Festivaller görünürlüğün özüdür. Giritlilerin Girit kültürünün bazı parçalarını sergilemeleri ve benliklerinin bu parçasını göstermeleri için bir platform sağlarlar. Kimliğin bu tür şenlikli ifadeleri sadece iç tüketim için değildir. Festivaller açık alanlarda düzenlendiğinden, dışarıdakilerin meraklı bakışlarını da davet etmektedir. Giritliler varlıklarını gösterme ve kendilerini yeni kitlelere tanıtma ya da Giritliliklerini arkadaşları ve komşularıyla birlikte kutlama şansına sahiptir. Bu tür festivaller, dil, kültür ya da tarih bilgisi gerektirmeyen münferit etkinliklerdir. Bunlar kutlama alanlarıdır ve herkes katılabilir. Sembolik Giritlilik işte bunu temsil eder. Girit, Yunan ve Türk unsurlarını bir araya getirerek Türkiye'deki Giritliler için özel bir deneyim sunarlar.

İnternet ve sosyal medyanın yaygın kullanımı hiç şüphesiz Giritliliğin geniş bir erişimle görünürlüğünün artmasına katkıda bulunan bağlamsal bir faktördür. Aynı zamanda Giritlilerin bu çevrimiçi varlığı, sembolik Giritliliğin hayata geçirilmesinden biridir. Bu bağlamda sosyal medya ile etkileşim, az çaba ve zaman gerektirdiği ve periferide takip edildiği için sembolik Giritliliğin tam olarak nasıl uygulandığını göstermektedir. Girit'le ilgili gruplara üye olmak ve onların çevrimiçi faaliyetlerini takip etmek Giritliliği teyit eden bir şeydir. Bu tür alanlarda içeridekiler ayırt ediciliklerini yeniden teyit edebilir ve dışarıdakileri de içeren geniş bir kitleye ulaşabilirler.

Girit'e yapılan geziler Giritlilik "pratiği" yapmak için bir fırsat olmuştur. Girit lehçesini konuşanlar arasında en sık dile getirilen yorum, atalarının dilini konuşmaktan heyecan duydukları, genellikle yerel halk tarafından şaşkınlıkla karşılandıkları ya da yok olmak üzere olan bir lehçeyi korudukları için hayranlık duyduklarıdır. Bu geziler aynı zamanda Giritliliklerini "test etme" ve onaylama aracı olarak da işlev gördü. Bu

onaylama, Girit'teki insanların kendileriyle benzer alışkanlıkları paylaştığını ya da fiziksel olarak kendilerine benzediğini fark etmelerinden kaynaklanıyor. Bu tür seyahatlerin kişinin mirasına karşı hissettiği bağı güçlendirmesi, "kişinin köklerine dair duygusunu" yoğunlaştırması muhtemeldir (Bakalian, 1993, s. 388), çünkü öncelikle geçmişle somut bir bağ sağlamaktadırlar. Girit ile daha istikrarlı bir bağ kuranlar için bu ziyaretler Giritlilik duygularını da derinleştirebilir.

Birbirlerinden farklı olmalarına rağmen, görünürlük kavramı tanınma kavramıyla bağlantılıdır. Aralarındaki ilişki, her ikisinin de köken ve kültürel mirasın "kamusallaştırılması" ile ilgili olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Görünürlük, hem Ayvalık hem de Mersin'de geçerli olan sembolik Giritliliğin bir yönüdür ve ülkede yaygın olan daha geniş bağlamsal gelişmelerle ve Giritliliğin sembolik karakteriyle ilişkilidir. Tanınma ihtiyacı öncelikle Mersin'de gözlemlenmiştir ve mikro bağlamla ve görüşme muhataplarının Giritlilikle ilişkilerinin yörüngesinde Ayvalık ve Mersin arasındaki farklılıklarla ilgilidir. Bu, aynı zamanda bu tür tanınma taleplerinin dile getirilmesi için uygun çerçeveyi sağlayan sembolik Giritliliğin bir parçasıdır. Görünürlük ve tanınırlık bir bakıma aynı madalyonun iki yüzü gibidir: görünürlük tanınırlık için bir ön koşuldur, aynı zamanda tanınırlık arttıkça görünürlük de artar.

Bu tezdeki tanınma kavramı, Giritlilerin kökenlerine ilişkin yanlış anlamaların ve yanılgıların ortadan kaldırılmasını ve kültürel ve tarihsel farklılıklarının kabul edilmesini ifade etmektedir. Tanınma ihtiyacı, kendini tanımlama, öz-anlatı oluşturma ve sınır belirleme süreçlerinin karşılıklı etkileşimi içinde ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu süreçler, gündelik karşılaşmalarda "ötekiler" ile olan etkileşimlerde ortaya çıkar. "Bizim" kim olduğumuza dair anlatılar sadece "biz" için geçerli değildir, aynı zamanda "ötekilere" anlattığımız hikayelerdir. Bu çerçevede "öteki"nin rolü önem kazanmaktadır. Mersin'de bu süreçler, Girit mirasına ilişkin bilgisizlik örnekleriyle çakışmış ve Giritlilerin kendilerini yanlış tanınmış ya da hiç tanınmamış hissetmelerine yol açmıştır. Bu ihtiyaçta, Giritlilerin mutfak gelenekleri, geniş bakış açıları, farklı topluluklar arasında bir arada yaşamayı teşvik etmedeki katkıları ve Avrupa kökenlerinden kaynaklanan modernleştirici etkileri de dahil olmak üzere, kendilerinin ve atalarının kültürel katkılarına değer verilmesini ve saygı görmeyi hak ettikleri inancı yatmaktadır.

Tanınma ihtiyacı, Ayvalık ve Mersin'de gözlemlenen farklı örüntüleri açıklamaktadır; Mersin'de Giritlilikle özdeşleşme daha aktif bir katılımı ve zaman zaman da daha sesli bir ifadeyi içermektedir. Ayvalık ve Mersin arasındaki bu farkı anlamak için bağlama, daha spesifik olarak da Giritlilerin Ayvalık ve Mersin'deki yerleşim yoğunluğuna, bu iki yerin demografik özelliklerine ve coğrafi konumlarına bakmayı önerdim. Birinci kuşak Giritlilerin belirli bölgelere ilk yerleşimleri, hem Ayvalık hem de Mersin'de yoğun Girit topluluklarının oluşmasına katkıda bulunmuştur. Bu topluluklardaki yüksek yoğunluk ve çeşitlilik, sık etkileşimleri ve belirli kültürel ifadelerin devamını teşvik etmiştir. Mersin'in genişlemesi Giritli nüfusu dağıtırken, Ayvalık'ta, özellikle de Cunda'da, Giritlilerin daha belirgin bir şekilde var olmasına ve Giritliliğin daha kapsamlı ve düşünsel olmayan bir şekilde deneyimlenmesine yol açan daha yüksek bir ilişki homojenliği ve yoğunluk korunmuştur. Mersin'in heterojen ve çeşitli nüfusuna kıyasla Ayvalık'taki yerel nüfusun homojenliği ve Ayvalıklıların çoğunluğunun ortak bir mültecilik geçmişini paylaşıyor olması, iki yer arasındaki farkı açıklayan bir diğer faktördür. Bu faktörlere Ayvalık'ın Yunanistan'a yakınlığı da eklenebilir.

Bu tez, özellikle Giritli Müslümanlara odaklanarak, genel olarak mübadiller hakkındaki mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır. Giritli Müslümanların sonraki nesillerini ve Giritliliğin günümüzdeki ifade ve algılarını, kendi başlarına daha derinlemesine incelenmeyi hak ettikleri için özel olarak incelemiştir. Ayrıca bu tez, sadece mevcut durumun ve ataların kültürünün ne ölçüde korunduğunun araştırılmasının ötesine geçmektedir. Bulgu ve gözlemleri "sembolik Giritlilik" olarak adlandırdığım kavramsal bir çerçeve altında bir araya getirmektedir. Giritliliğin kamusal ifadelerine odaklanarak, günümüzde Giritliliği neyin tanımladığını sistematik olarak vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca bu tez, Giritlilikle özdeşleştirmelere atfedilen anlam(lar)ı araştırıp analiz etmekte ve bunları günümüz Türkiye'sinde bir bağlama oturtmaktadır. Mevcut çalışmalarda tespit edilen bir boşluk olan, kaynak kişilerinin anlatıları olduğu gibi kabul etmekten kaçınarak, anlatıların altında yatan süreçleri inceleyecektir.

Bu tez, Türkiye sosyolojisi literatürüne katkıda bulunmaktadır. Giritli Müslümanların torunlarını bir örnek olay çalışması olarak inceleyen araştırma, eski Osmanlı topraklarından gelen mübadiller ve mülteciler hakkındaki sosyolojik anlayışı

genişletmektedir. Bu çalışma, farklı deneyimlere yol açabilecek geniş ölçekli süreçler ve benzersiz bağlamsal koşullar arasındaki etkileşimi kabul ederek, iki farklı sahadan sözlü anlatılar toplayan ilk çalışmadır. Sonuç olarak, eldeki araştırma sorularına daha kapsamlı yanıtlar sunmaktadır. Her iki yer de Giritliliğin günümüzde nasıl işlediğini derinlemesine anlamak ve farklı dinamiklerini ortaya çıkarmak için zengin bir malzeme sunmaktadır.

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