

ABSTRACT - EDUCATION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN CYPRUS

This research proposes to examine the role education plays in creating and controlling national identity. Using Cyprus as a case study, special emphasis will be placed on the question of the responsiveness of the educational system to national crises that are related, in part, to the factor of national identity. The research will be divided into the three general areas of 1) Policy, 2) Dissemination and 3) Reception. Classrooms and students will be selected in order to represent standard socio-economic categories. Data will be collected through systematic observation of and open-ended interviews with administrators, teachers and students. Lessons and the physical documents of the educational system will be analyzed through content-analysis. There is adequate documentation of pre-1974 education in Cyprus, but little exists on the post-1974 situation. It is expected that this research will be both a timely update on the present educational approach to national identity in Cyprus, as well as a valuable addition to the general literature on education and national identity. The research is designed to be relevant to a broad range of disciplines, including political scientists, sociologists, educators as well as those concerned with the development of the child.

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Education and National Identity in Cyprus

A Research Proposal
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Contemporary political theory acknowledges the tremendous role that nationalism plays in establishing a modern nation-state. This factor, which had its origins in Europe with the decline of the Holy Roman Church, spread to other parts of the world where it also resulted in the breaking up of great religious empires and the establishment of states. While citizenship in the former was dependent on co-religionism, modern states had other criteria. The colonial struggles of the Middle East and Africa were defined as nationalist in part because religion was no longer the sole determinant of loyalty; nor did differences in religion prevent solidarity against a common enemy. The rise of the Young Turks in Istanbul or Christian-Muslim struggle against the Zionists in Palestine are both examples of nationalist movements in the Middle East. The citizens of these new entities felt themselves to be bound together by a common territory, language and a set of traditions, as well as a common past and destiny. Religion, though still important in defining a social identity, no longer overrode all other considerations. Since nationalist convictions have been and still are so influential in establishing nation-states, and in insuring their weakness or strength in the years to come, it follows that groups both within and outside the state are interested in controlling nationalist sentiments.

Chief among the internal institutions involved in the creation and control of nationalism is the educational system. Its opportunities for influencing the nation's young are obvious and great; until early teens or even later a child receives most of his ideas on the world from the family and from the school.

It is important to emphasize that national identity is presently more crucial for nation-building in some countries than in others. The educational systems of the industrialized world, for instance, are probably more interested in establishing allegiance to a particular economic or political system rather than in ensuring that a group or groups within the state do not advocate territorial changes or transfer their loyalty to some other authority outside the state. In other countries national identity is still a very volatile building block in the construction or destruction of the state. In these countries the educational policy of the state is likely to be an area of great dispute, and whatever policy is decided on can greatly influence the future course of nationalism in that country.

One such country, where national identity and its control is still an explosive issue, is Cyprus. Educational policy on this issue has been characterized by a particular political stance in the past. This stance emphasized Greek-Cypriot ties to mainland Greece rather than any identification with Cyprus as a separate entity. Political allegiance to Greece was seen to follow naturally from these historical

and cultural links, though the presence of the Turkish-Cypriot community prevented official expression of this sentiment. This research proposes to examine current educational policy on this issue and the dissemination and reception of this policy message. In researching the subject I will look at three key levels of the educational system: (1) the ministerial level where policy decisions are made, (2) the individual schools where teachers implement the policy and (3) the students who receive the message of the educational system. Using this investigative approach an assessment will be made of the relationship between public education and national identity in Cyprus.

Literature Review

The question of national identity has been an important one in Cypriot history, and has decisively influenced events since the island's independence from the British in 1960. The British left two important nationalist perceptions behind them. One was the tendency on the part of the Greek-Cypriots to see any attempt to encourage Cypriot identity as part of an imperialistic trick. This resulted from the fact that the British had encouraged Cypriot identity from the 1930s onwards as a way of deflecting demands for enosis, or union with Greece. (Attalides, 1979) Secondly, British use of Turkish-Cypriots in the police force in the late 1950s, the force that was responsible for putting down the Greek-Cypriot resistance, helped create hostility and hatred between the two groups. Major historical works have pointed out that the structural basis of the Cypriot government was an acknowledgement of these two basic groups in the society: Muslim Turk and Christian Greek (Attalides, 1979; Stavrinides 1975; Kyriakides 1968). Public sector jobs had a quota system of 70:30 (Greek to Turk), the educational systems were separate as was family law and numerous other aspects of daily life. How much this constitutional state of affairs was accepted by, or imposed on the Cypriot government from outside (notably by the Greek and British governments), is a matter of great debate. (Attalides, 1979);

The particular brand of nationalism that both the Greek and Turkish communities endorsed was an explosive one. Attalides effectively describes it when he says that Greek (in this case) nationalism "...contributed decisively to preventing Greek Cypriots from thinking realistically about their political problems, including the logical separability of sovereignty and cultural identity." This has had certain practical results. Both sides have resorted to calling in Greece and Turkey when they felt that their communal position on the island was being threatened in some way or even just not satisfied, in violation of traditional concepts of sovereignty and territorial integrity. For example, Turkish-Cypriots appealed to Turkey in 1963 and 1964 when President Makarios attempted to revise certain aspects of the constitution, which resulted in air-bombings of the island. In 1974 a small group of Greek-Cypriot officers cooperated with their Greek mainland counterparts in

the coup against President Makarios in 1974. This brought about a full Turkish invasion five days later which occupied 38% of the country's territory. The eighth anniversary of the invasion was passed this summer and Cyprus remains an occupied country.

The educational system was a major factor in developing a Greek or a Turkish mainland identity among the nation's young (Kitromilides and Coloumbis, 1975; Attalides, 1976 and 1979; Stavrinides, 1975). A Cypriot allegiance would have meant identification with a common territory and government as well as a shared past and future, but this did not develop. Individuals who did not represent (or were not seen to represent) mainland Greek official culture were systematically excluded from the teaching profession, or at least not advanced to positions of authority (Louizos, 1975). Attempts at reform, in the way of a greater emphasis on Cypriot culture and history, failed and in 1972 President Makarios was forced by the Greek hunta to discharge his Minister of Education, who was seen as being too independent minded (Attalides, 1979).

There are adequate references to the pre-1974 situation regarding education and national identity. The historical works on this period of time have consistently pointed to a recognition of the problem of Greek nationalism, and to reformers who wanted to change the thrust of Ministerial policy. There has been little documentation, however, on the present attitude towards Greek nationalism and on current attempts at reform including absorption, if any, by the society at large. Publications of the Cypriot Ministry of Education since 1974 have been, in general, policy statements as to what Cypriot education should be. This research, therefore, proposes to examine education and national identity in light of the Turkish invasion of 1974 and the eight years that have passed since that time.

Methodology

The research will be structurally divided into three major areas. These areas are (1) Policy, (2) Dissemination and (3) Reception. Policy will be considered to include all documents of the Cypriot Ministry of Education, curriculum, books, and assorted teaching aids as well as opinions and ideas expressed by representatives of the Ministry of Education. The opinions of individuals outside the Ministry, but none-the-less influential over educational policy, for whatever reason, will also be taken into account. Dissemination will focus on the classroom and the teacher. Lesson presentation, rules of the classroom (both overt and latent), discussions of the lessons and physical classroom environment will all be included. Personal interviews with the teachers will also be included in the Dissemination section. Reception will focus entirely on the children, and will consist of observations on all aspects of their behavior and interviews, both group and private.

In the course of my research the following questions will be asked:

Policy

1. Is there an official Ministry position on national identity?
2. If it exists, what does the position consist of?

Dissemination

1. What is the background of the teachers? (chiefly professional training)
2. How are teachers selected?
3. How closely does the classroom presentation on national identity adhere to the policy of the Ministry?
4. If classroom presentation on the subject of national identity is notably different than the policy of the Ministry, how does it differ? What factors are behind the divergence of official policy and actual presentation?
5. How is national identity encouraged or discouraged in the classroom?

Reception

1. What national identity do the students themselves seem to possess?
2. Is this identity a reflection of or a divergence from the official 'line'?
3. If a divergence exists, what factors can be attributed to it?

It should be noted here that Reception is considered to be the most important part of the research, and that a disproportionate amount of time will be spent on this section.

Selection of Participating Schools and Students

After the initial stage of data collection at the Ministry level, the major portion of the study will take place in three to five schools, selected to represent the basic social and economic characteristics of the society. Data from the Ministry, as well as discussions with its personnel, will be crucial in this selection. From my own knowledge of Cypriot society and from personal communications with others who have conducted field research in Cyprus, three to five schools is considered to be a reasonable sample. It is expected that the locations of the schools will include 1) rural, 2) urban-affluent and 3) urban-working class neighborhoods.

From each of these schools, one classroom will be studied intensively in its entirety (teacher, students and physical environment). A one-month pilot using classroom observations and interviews with children of all ages will determine the age group(s) to be used in the main study. Selection will be based on (1) level of articulation and (2) the grade level most amenable to this study in terms of quantity and quality of materials covered relevant to national identity (e.g. history, literature, civics etc.).

The analysis of the data, both physical and collected through observation and interviews, will emphasize content analysis rather than statistical comparison. Therefore socio-economic background, representative sampling techniques and other traditional statistical methods will assume a lesser importance relative to the content of the materials gathered.

Procedures and Materials

Policy Level

I will look at the following documents: (1) Books, both content and origin (author and publisher), (2) Curriculum and (3) Official Papers of the Ministry such

as policy statements and objectives. In addition I will interview policy-makers at the Ministry of Education and other influential organizations such as the Pancyriot Organization of Greek Teachers (Π.Ο.Ε.Δ.).

Dissemination

This part of the research will concentrate on systematic observations of the teachers in the classroom and of the classroom environment in general. Pictures on the wall, books in the library, display of student compositions etc. will all be taken into consideration. At this phase the element of rapport with at least some of the teachers will be very important in order that the quality of information will be distorted as little as possible. It is recognized that my presence will be an unavoidable but, it is to be hoped, slight distortion.

Reception

The largest part of this segment, the most important as I have noted, will be spent on observation of the children in the classroom and on interviews. The interviews will use a limited amount of direct questions on the subject of national identity; more often they will rely on indirect questions on relevant subjects since I believe it is difficult for children to respond to direct questions on an abstract theme like national identity. In addition I will ask them, with the cooperation of the teachers, to write essays/narratives on certain historical periods and to complete other activities such as map-drawing, comments on art-work depicting Cypriot society, sentence completion and story-telling.

Chrono-Diagram

Pilot	1 month
Research at the Ministry of Education	2 months
Observation, Interviewing, School 1	3 months
Observation, Interviewing, School 2	3 months
Observation, Interviewing, School 3	3 months
Total	12 months

Feasibility and Merit of the Research

Feasibility

A fair amount of the ground-work as already been covered. For a list of people and organizations already contacted see Appendix A. These people have expressed a willingness to assist with all stages of the research and have contributed much to my conviction that the research is practically based and feasible. The size of the Republic of Cyprus is very conducive for doing research, both in terms of territory to be covered and in terms of governmental bureaucracy. My experience has already shown me that contacts, even at the highest levels of the government are relatively easy to establish.

Content analysis has already begun on materials sent to me by the Pancyriot Organization of Greek Teachers. The two childrens' magazines and one book of

drawings by children on the subject of Archbishop Makarios, deceased president of Cyprus, have proved to be revealing and rich on the subject of education and national identity.

Finally, my fluency in Greek - both written and spoken - will contribute significantly to my ability to establish rapport with the teachers and the students, and to read sources in Greek.

Merit

The Literature Review has pointed to the difficulties involved since independence in building a Cypriot national consciousness. The educational system in particular tended to produce individuals with a strong loyalty to either Greece or Turkey.

The coup d'etat and the Turkish invasion of 1974 were dramatic events in the history of Cyprus, as they would be for any country. National ideals were involved on both sides. The results for the Greek-Cypriots were disastrous. After a tragedy countries typically go through a period of self-examination and reevaluation, and Cyprus was no exception to the rule. Both personal and collective attempts were made in many fields to understand the past and to put together a new vision for the future. Self-examination and renewal in Cypriot education has not been documented, however, despite the enormous role that education plays in creating national identity. By looking at education now, much can be learned about the dynamic relationship between education, national identity and actual events. The problem can be stated in two parts: 1) Do educational systems shift tracks on national identity and 2) If they do, what is the success record in instilling this new national identity among the young?

The problem of national identity continues to create history world-wide. There are a number of countries today where the actions of one segment of the population point to a failure on the part of the government (and thus, indirectly, educators) to impart a sense of identification with, and loyalty to, the country. The Kurds in Iran and the Muslims in the Philippines are two such examples, despite the fact that their historical details differ greatly from the Cypriot case. One analysis of the Lebanese Civil War posits the lack of Muslim identification with Lebanon as a root cause of the war.

Thus the issue is universal. Nationalist sentiments continue to be crucial in the preservation or destruction of a state. Therefore it is worthwhile to look at the institution that is most responsible for creating a national identity, the educational system.

Appendix A - Persons and Organizations Contacted

Michael Attalides - Ph.D. in Sociology, Princeton University

Minas Hatzikostas - Member of the Pancyriot Organization of Greek Teachers, Larnaca, Cyprus.

Peter Louizos - Ph.D. in Anthropology. Faculty Member at the London School of Economics.

Climis Navridis - Assistant Professor, University of Ioannina, Greece
Ph.D. in Social Psychology.

Eleni Nikita - Cypriot Ministry of Education, Cultural Service.

Deanna Trakas - Research Fellow at the Institute of Child Health, Athens Greece. Ph.D. in Anthropology.

Appendix B - Estimated Budget

Living Expenses

Apartment, including Electricity
and Water (12 months) \$1,200.00

Expenses, per diem \$10.00

\$4,850.00

Transportation

External - Round Trip Athens/Cyprus \$190.00

Internal - Bus Trips to Larnaca and
Paphos Area \$175.00

\$365.00

Supplies

Tape Recorder and
Clip on Microphone \$125.00

Miscellaneous
(Xerox, Paper, Cassettes, Paper,
Pencils etc.) \$175.00

\$300.00

TOTAL \$5,515.00

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Ministry of Education Publications

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