

# ONE **THE IMBRICATED STRUCTURES OF REFUGEEHOOD**

## DISPLACEMENTS

It is summer 2003, a little after Turkish-Cypriot authorities announced they would no longer prevent people from crossing in and out of a self-declared state in northern Cyprus, across the island's Green Line boundary. Masses have been flocking to checkpoints since that late April declaration, venturing into places they had not visited since the bloody period of the 1960s and the war of 1974. A restaurant in the old commercial center of northern Nicosia is preparing for the evening's clientele. As we sit down, a friend joins our table for drinks. There is excitement over the opening of the border. We reminisce at how the last time we met some months ago we had to drive for an hour to meet outside Pyla village, in the east of the island, the only location reachable from both sides and closely watched. We keep repeating to ourselves and each other, through a myriad of examples, how just a couple of months ago, what we are doing tonight was unimaginable.

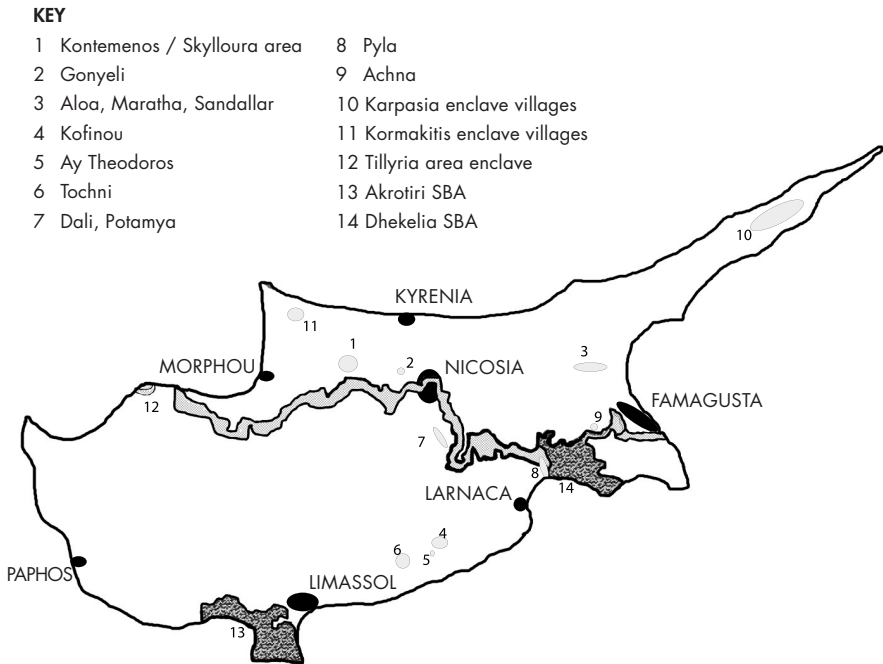
There is a mood of playfulness even as we criticize societal structures that endure. There is still need for change, we agree, and walls of prejudice to be broken. The South Asian waiter serving us, we assume, is exemplary of the problems of discrimination and integration still existing. So we ask about his living conditions and, not surprisingly, hear they are not great. But he also expresses a different concern, since after his visa had expired, he crossed from the south to escape arrest and continue making a living in the north: "Every day I wake up and look across to the other side and remember the house where I used to live, and the place where I worked. It's so near and yet I can't go."

These words prompted a long reflexive pause that inspired the writing of this book. At that moment in 2003, those words sounded strangely

familiar; and as I continued to reflect on their possible meanings, I became aware of how deeply imbricated “the Cyprus problem” is with the experience of being in Cyprus—no matter where one is placed and what position one occupies. This book is the outcome of those reflections and the ten years of research that they have informed. It is a study that looks at all those minor losses that have been engulfed by the Cyprus problem for the last half-century and treated as insignificant, or at least secondary, to that other big question and the questions that attend it: how the Cyprus problem came to be, how the two sides interpret things, what the political future might hold, how we (academics, activists, citizens, internationals, mediators) can help realize that future. Those were the questions that occupied many of us in that jubilant mood of 2003 when this comment of tangential loss brought home to me the expanse of all those questions that major losses foreclose. Those minor losses, I came to realize, have not been incidental to the conflict—they have been shaped by it, and they have shaped subjectivities within and beyond it. And just like in other long-lasting conflict situations (Ireland, the Basque and Catalan regions of Spain, Israel/Palestine), those subjectivities are now informing everyday “normal” relations. They service the jubilant and other affective socialities forming around newfound postconflict freedoms—as these develop across the now loosely monitored border and take the form of movement, work, and consumption. It is to these processes that we must now attend if we are to understand the afterlife of conflict.

Physical separation in Cyprus today is no longer a vitally urgent concern for many locals, even though political division is the cornerstone of official rhetoric (see figure 1.1). But the echo of the waiter’s words, which communicate this vital urgency in a surprisingly slanted way, continues to inform my understanding of the border in Cyprus. Those words were strangely familiar in multiple senses. On the one hand, they condensed the hegemonic Greek-Cypriot discourse of displacement in Cyprus: that “our” lands, having been snatched unjustly by Turkey after its invasion in 1974, are just over there, so near and yet so far, waiting for us to liberate them. The motif of the Greek-Cypriot refugee seeing her house but not being able to touch it appears in all kinds of literature from elementary-school books, where short stories depict children sending kites across the Green Line, to poems, fiction, and film, which show envy of stray animals crossing—something people cannot do. Before the opening of the central crossing point in Nicosia, binoculars were handed to

tourists by Greek-Cypriot soldiers on guard, so they could see across the other side; dignitaries are still often bussed to the easternmost border point in the village of Deryneia to peer through a viewing machine turned towards the abandoned beach resort of Varosha, outside the Turkish-military-controlled town of Famagusta (see figure 1.2). There is a dwelling on division that has come to define Greek-Cypriot subjectivity. The tragedy of Greek-Cypriot refugees, the rhetoric goes, is that they are “refugees in their own country.” The impossibility of crossing the border “to go home” was for many years packaged as a corporeal experience for foreigners who, having felt it, are encouraged to become ambassadors for the cause of return. For the Greek-Cypriot-schooled public, the effect was to cultivate a sense of generalized refugeehood. This is a notion I explore in later chapters. To Greek-Cypriots growing up after 1974, the definition of “refugee” seemed obvious and the sentiments of loss that were expected to attend it were perceived as a structure of feeling that the whole population should share. The affective register was, and largely remains, central to the governmentality of conflict subjectivities.



**FIGURE 1.1.** Map of Cyprus, showing areas mentioned in the book.



**FIGURE 1.2.** Deryneia viewpoint: Entrance sign (top); coin-operated viewing-machine (center); Varosha ruins outside Famagusta town through the view finder (bottom).

So to hear this discourse articulated on the opposite side of the divide seemed strange—it was not quite refugeehood. First, the unreachable other side was now the south, not the north. This was only partly strange. Since 1963, Turkish-Cypriots have often articulated longing for homes left in the south, and this has been well researched.<sup>1</sup> This longing is well known, and it is also opposed to the official rhetoric that, since the war of 1974, has emphasized forgetting the homes in the south and looking forward to a brighter future in new homes in the north.<sup>2</sup> Even when not explicitly opposed to official discourse, articulations of longing are positioned against this background, making the desire for return and lament for lost homes complexly ambivalent.<sup>3</sup> What seemed strange, in this sense, was a kind of geographic dislocation of affect. It is not that people in northern Cyprus don't pine for homes in the south, but that they pine for them in *this* way.

Second, the time of this affective expression seemed strange. The inability to go home, which produced this longing, was not in response to the solidity of the border. It took shape precisely at the moment the border opened up, and when it seemed that in fact it was about to be dissolved altogether. Turkish-Cypriot authorities decided to allow crossings over the Green Line in April 2003, during a period (2002–2004) of intense political negotiations. At the end of these, a plan for reunification (the Annan Plan) was put to a referendum in April 2004 and rejected by Greek-Cypriots, while Turkish-Cypriots supported it. This deferred the dissolution of the border; but this referendum was still to come in that summer evening of 2003, and the atmosphere of excitement was not conducive to such predictions, as I explain in later chapters. The waiter's comment exemplified what much of border-studies literature has recently been documenting: that changes in the operations of bordering (the materialities of borders, the apparatus that govern them, and the practices that develop around them) are not evenly distributed across populations. Instead, the easing of some movement might imply, or in this case accentuate, the restriction of other movements (Aas 2011; Rygiel 2010; Brown 2010; Bigo 2006).

The radical change in the operation of the border in Cyprus in 2003 saw thousands streaming across it. Going home was one of the primary activities Greek-Cypriots with ties to the north had been engaging in, *en masse*, and on a daily basis throughout the previous months. Middle-aged men and women visited homes they remembered from childhood; elderly parents were driven to meet neighbors and friends, collect agricultural produce from fields,

and retrieve movables saved and collected by those now living in their former homes; youngsters were guided through houses that suddenly seemed much smaller and through landscapes less grand than they had remembered or imagined. There was ambivalence here too in the encounters between different owners and in the performance of return. But there was a definite sense that the main barrier to whatever return might ensue, was slowly being lifted. So on that evening, the emblematic articulation of Greek-Cypriot refugeehood seemed misplaced, in both place and time. This was not the time to pine for lost homes, but to celebrate their imminent recovery—for Cypriots.

And ultimately, the cause of that misplacement was the strangeness of a specific subjectivity. It seemed strange to hear what I had come to recognize as a Greek-Cypriot discourse on loss, articulated by a stranger—an immigrant with no apparent familial ties to Cyprus. There was an uncomfortable realization of the presumptuousness with which I, and others, had approached the Cyprus conflict up to then, which guided much of my questioning since. So what did its strangeness mean? Is the so-near-yet-so-far discourse actually the articulation of something banally self-evident, perhaps, and not the epitome of Greek-Cypriot politics at all? And does this banality point to something universally applicable rather than a feature of a specific political culture? What is the affect that a sealed border exudes and how does it come to surpass the conflict that sealed it in the first place? How do ethnic divides exceed the binaries that define them? At the time, the waiter's comment seemed a spontaneous attempt to relate the excitement of meeting someone coming from the side that had become inaccessible. I since wondered whether it might have also been mediated by the experience of having lived in the south and among the Greek-Cypriot refugee discourse (likely to have been expressed by people above him in the class hierarchy). But it is the questions about the excesses of conflict imaginaries and the losses they foreclose that I have repeatedly returned to, and which I want to highlight as inroads to reconsidering the subjectivity of refugeehood in general.

To recognize that the waiter's discourse is misplaced is to recognize the misplacement of subjectivity too. And to reflect theoretically on the validity of these analytics of misplacement requires that we ask where it is that subjectivity is "correctly" placed in Cyprus. Who are Cypriots, and who are the proper subjects of Cypriot refugeehood? To probe this question requires examination of several layers of discourses about refugeehood, displacement, and

loss, which I engage in later on. And most importantly, I argue, it requires engagement with the ways in which all these layers are connected to each other—examined under the metaphor of imbrication.

Such imbrication is not unique to Cyprus. To return to the long-standing conflicts previously mentioned, the discursive structures developed in Palestine, Ireland, and Spain govern and affect the experience and policy of migration today. After the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, where a border has undergone a similarly radical shift as in Cyprus, the legacy of the conflict has created an all too familiar “grim reality for people of colour, refugees, and migrants” (McVeigh and Rolston 2007, 11) where the “politics of identification . . . position migrants and minority ethnic communities within dominant sectarian discourse” (Geoghegan 2008,174). In Ireland, narratives of immigration and the legitimacy of refugees entail “unresolved Irish memories of colonisation, the Famine, and emigration” (Moriarty 2005, 6.7). The politics of occupation and international recognition in which the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is embedded is also familiar to Cyprus. International migration in Palestine arises through these politics as a question on which “Israel demands the last word,” and this results in limited and patchy regulation by the Palestinian Authority, as exemplified by failure to link regular work with regular stay (Khalil 2008,12). And on the other side of the wall, “Israel’s labor migration policy reflects the state’s continuous anxiety over a changing ethnoscape” (Raijman, Schammah-Gesser, and Kemp 2003,733), an anxiety stemming directly from the history of the conflict there, and resulting in the placement of irregular women migrants at the bottom of the scale. This arises because the citizenship regime, ethnically determined through and through, leaves no prospects of integration, assigns foreign workers to a category “with a biblical connotation of profanity” (ibid., 747) and conceptualizes domestic work within the patriarchal-military imaginary that societies emerging from conflict, like Israel and Cyprus, know so well. And in Spain, conflicts over autonomy and secession in the Basque region and Catalonia have differentiated both areas in their immigration policies. Catalanian parties have articulated opposition to centralizing attempts from Madrid on the point of immigration policy resulting in sometimes more progressive and at other times more restrictive approaches. In the referendum of 2017, which solicited independence from Madrid, both pro- and anti-immigration arguments propped the separatist position: independence could ensure more autonomy to improve

integration structures, and more autonomy to stem migration policies too. The strong emphasis on Catalan identity and language, which is currently a cornerstone of integration policies, can easily be adapted to opposing perspectives that drive the secessionist argument. In the Basque region, on the other hand, Basque parties have built on “the link between the promotion of internal diversity and Basque values” (Jeram 2013). The legacy of conflict in Spain means, in short, that “immigration is not so much a component of diversity as it is a vehicle through which existing diversities are brought to the fore” (Zapata-Barerro 2010,171). These complex situations are in different ways reflected in the themes I examine in Cyprus.

A major claim of this book is that the entrenchment of conflict structures in society and government implicates—and most importantly imbri-cates—forms of classification and exclusion, as well as the experiences that go with them, that stretch far beyond the conflict. And it is out of these imbri-cations that postconflict subjects of multiple positionings emerge. In Cyprus, the framing of such imbrications is refugeehood.

### **REFUGEEHOOD, POWER, AND CONFLICT**

Wisdom has it that refugees flee war. Much less is said about what they find after they do so, not in terms of the reception they receive, but in terms of the conflicted societies they land in. At the same time, much of the literature on forced displacement grapples with this seemingly simple link between conflict and refugeehood. One example is the debate that persists over the appropriateness of the term “environmental refugees” to describe people who are forced out of unlivable habitats. And while environmental degradation could have been tied to wars and conflict in the past (El-Hinnawi 1985; Kibreab 1997), it now more often results from natural disasters and rising sea levels (Bates 2002; Keane 2003; Hartmann 2010). This only confirms a basic tenet of refugee studies: that refugeehood is not an objective but a political category. As McNamara puts it, “[The assertion] that environmental refugees do not exist is still a social construction of environmental refugees, a subject identity reliant on an absence or negation of a particular characteristic or condition” (2007, 15).

In the same way, the assertion that political and economic adversities can be separated out as producing refugees in the first instance and economic migrants in the second is also a social construction of refugees



and economic migrants. This second debate, the most enduring in the field of forced migration studies, manifests the predicament of using legal standards to square politics and ethics. Many scholars have insisted for some time now on the need for policy makers to extend the interpretation of “refugee” from the two categories (political refugees/economic migrants) to account for the fact that most irregular migrants fall somewhere in the vast gray area between them. Scholars have convincingly argued that the insistence of states on this erroneously sharp distinction is a political tool that enables them to deny refugee protection to great numbers of people who might otherwise qualify for it (Gibney 2004). They have also shown that the legal basis of labeling refugees is a shifting field itself: over the last two decades, argues Zetter,

the refugee label has become politicized, on the one hand, by the process of bureaucratic fractioning which reproduces itself in populist and largely pejorative labels whilst, on the other, by legitimizing and presenting a wider political discourse of resistance to refugees and migrants as merely an apolitical set of bureaucratic categories. (2007, 174)

At the heart of this regime, Andersson has more recently argued (2014), is a vast industry that relies on security and surveillance apparatus and employs humanitarianism and development discourses to meet out profits on everyone but irregular migrants. And even though Andersson brackets out the legal debate and the terminology of “refugeehood” from his study, he makes it clear that this is the performative stake in the entire operation of what he instead terms the “illegality industry.” This use and abuse of the legal concept (Schuster 2003) also elicits differentiated practices of migration, we now know—far from being docile victims, asylum seekers make choices, often based on considerations of these shifting legal apparatus (Schuster 2005). But for precisely these reasons, others have argued, it is vital to insist on maintaining refugee status as a special category requiring protection irrespective of political priorities (Hathaway 2007). The discussion over the categories “refugee” and “internally displaced person” (henceforth IDP), developed on the back of two opposing perspectives on refugee assistance, is particularly interesting in this respect.

Described by Brun (2010) as the “UN-Brookings” and “ICRC” approaches, one focused on the tailoring of specialized assistance, the other on prioritizing needs. Like the categories previously discussed, both of these

are also political. Brun shows how in Sri Lanka IDPs are provided humanitarian assistance and initial hospitality, but never fully integrated into the societies they flee too. The question is therefore both moral and political: it concerns the “responsibilities of institutions in dealing with internal displacement, the general responsibility we all have towards others, and how these two forms of responsibility should interact” (ibid., 351). Ironically, this debate about the correctness of classifying “convention refugees” as different from others (e.g., refugees, internally displaced persons, individuals in need of humanitarian protection) hinges on the interpretation of the parameters of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (henceforth the 1951 Convention) as if these clauses could be objectively upheld. Yet, at the same time all sides agree that their implementation in practice is political.

This book looks at these politics in an expansive way that stretches beyond the legal frame of the 1951 Convention application. It traces how legal parameters produce political subjects who are oriented in specific ways vis-à-vis refugeehood, explicitly or unbeknown to themselves. An economic migrant who pines for a home in southern Nicosia but not a home in south Asia; asylum seekers whose claims may be judged on whether they have crossed a ceasefire line in Cyprus but not multiple lines before getting there; foreign women who suffer violence normalized by a militarist structure sustained through concepts of refugeehood; Cypriots who engage in litigation battles because their losses are not properly scripted into the calibrations of refugeehood by the powers that be. All these subjects fall out of the strict definition of 1951 Convention refugees. And yet, their subjectivity is determined by how that definition is understood and diverges from the multiple local uses of the term “refugee.” Attention to these subjectivities and their (re)productions provides a clearer sense of the tensions and contestations in the foundational concepts of refugee studies, forced migration, and displacement.

In the pages that follow, I explain how, in Cyprus, the label “refugee” has come to denote the victimized condition of the national self in remarkable divergence from the script of the 1951 Convention; how that subjective positioning can be internalized by others who do not belong to the national group but who are remarkably fluent in the idiom of longing for the other side; and also how it has constructed a solid basis for excluding a number of people who feel they too have legitimate claims to refugeehood. Taking the situation in Cyprus as exemplary of the governmentalities that inform applications of the

1951 Convention elsewhere, I argue that it is from these exclusions, and the claims of loss that they deprioritize, that we have to begin constructing the political field within which the “refugee” label comes to create refugee subjects. And it is precisely that political subjectivity that the term “refugeehood,” as I use it here, is meant to convey. Those losses that officialdom classifies as minor in Cyprus and discounts from the hegemonic imaginary of loss constitute fields of experience, modes of being, affective dispositions, reflections on the legal, orientations within the political. They are not descriptors of identities that we might take for granted (refugee, nonrefugee). *Refugeehood*, and not *refugeeness*, is not an identity but a subject position that is in this case thoroughly invested in the Cyprus conflict. And it is one that determines not only the status and position of refugees on the island (however we define them) but of everyone living on one or the other side.

In Cyprus, refugees (in the 1951 Convention sense, but arguably beyond it too) do not *just* flee conflict. They also land in it, whether they arrived here having fled other conflicts, or whether they have fled their homes on the island years ago. Whether consciously or unbeknown to them, people on the island live with a conflict that determines their everyday lives in significant ways. The temporal connections between conflict and refugeehood exist here in the multiple. They orient political subjectivity towards transition by fostering a rhetoric of return at the same time as they solidify this rhetoric, making such political subjective orientation permanent. Refugeehood in this sense is not only shaped by specific national discourses, which Malkki suggests are incredibly pervasive even beyond national and territorial boundaries (1995, 4–6)—it is also a key factor of the “national order of things” (*ibid.*). So a central point of analysis in this book is about the way displacement comes to displace other displacements—as when, for example, people are made to feel they are less refugee than others, or where their refugee identity is questioned or denied altogether. For if refugee subjectivity hinges on the conditions of empowerment, as Malkki’s study shows, the Cypriot case prompts us to rethink the temporal manifestations of governing refugeehood. Malkki argues that Hutu refugees in the Mishamo refugee camp were less empowered than those settled in Kigoma town because of their attachment to the refugee identity (*ibid.*, 8–17). This attachment shares similarities with Greek-Cypriot refugee discourses, giving pause for rethinking how the temporal governmentalities of refugeehood might produce diachronically disempowered political subjects.

Part of the problem is that in Cyprus, as in other protracted conflicts such as Palestine (Chatty 2010a), refugee identity endures across generations. At the point of writing in 2017, third-generation Cypriot refugees would themselves be young adults. It is also a matter of the quality of “durable solutions” (Harrell-Bond 1986) and the fact that the solutions provided by the state at various phases of the conflict were embedded in a logic of temporariness. Those grandchildren of 1974 refugees have come to expect different things from their displacement-certification documents—their “refugee cards,” as they call them—than their parents did. And it is also that while repatriation did not materialize for many refugees in Cyprus, the rebuilding of lives that renders “refugee return” always a misnomer (Hammond 2004) began shortly after that crisis point. Refugee settlements comprising tents made of canvas might loom large in the imagery of refugeehood in Cyprus, but their actual existence was relatively short in the Greek-Cypriot case (they were dissolved by 1976). So even though temporality is a crucial factor in the multiple layering of refugeehood in Cyprus, it is not the passage of time per se, or the views on history and the nation, or even the infrastructures that mark continuity and belonging that are at stake. It is the way time is governed that makes the difference and the way time is used to distinguish some refugees from others who are officially excluded from that category. And that time refers not only to the temporality of waiting, which has recently been pointed out in migration studies as a predicament of irregular mobility (Andersson 2014; Griffiths 2014; Conlon 2011b, Brun, 2010). It refers also to historical time, which marks out major events that created “proper” refugees and other events that created other forms of displacement—in the language of law and policy. It is that governmentality of time that places people, infrastructures, law, and affect within and outside refugeehood.

Cyprus has served as an important example in understanding conflict and development. Even in early studies, there was a concern to look beyond the moment of flight to the ways in which refugees manage lives and uncertainty (Loizos 1981; 2008; Volkan 1980; Zetter 1991). Nearly four decades after that seminal study of Greek-Cypriot war refugees (Loizos 1981), the question today is not about development but the detrimental effects of those policies and logics that had initially appeared successful. The refugees at the focus of this book are not the coherent groups that make up classic ethnographic case studies. They are the marginal groups that the “refugee” label keeps out. In this

sense, it could be said that the book departs from mainstream research on displacement. It examines refugee subjectivity as a structural aspect of citizenship regimes. It looks at specific but multiple refugee groups differently integrated in the same location. Analyzing their battle with integration, it recasts “refugee” as the foundational concept for establishing structures of exclusion. It is a study of what refugeehood does on an everyday basis across society.

Refugee studies have for good reason argued for a need to view refugees as more than victims. It is a call, as Nyers (2013) shows in a careful examination of UNHCR, activist and other refugee-focused discourse, that is easily expounded, but nearly impossible to achieve in a context where the proof of refugee status is so intimately tied to victimization (also Fassin and Rechtman 2009). What I present here brings the argument full circle. I revisit the image of the *sans papiers* as an iconic political figure to argue that multiple exclusions and possibilities arise within the evolving structures of displacement and accommodation. I want to recast the relationship between refugees and conflict, as a relation of power in a Foucauldian sense, meaning that the question we should be asking is not about a property that is or is not (power, conflict, refugee), but qualities that morph and change.

It is incredibly apt that since 2015, faced with a purported refugee crisis—which is rather a crisis of refugee reception in Europe—citizenship scholars are turning to one of Foucault’s shortest texts to speak about the confrontation of people and governments.<sup>4</sup> In it, Foucault speaks of a division of labor between people on one side who are indignant and talk and on the other governments who deliberate and act.<sup>5</sup> This is immensely instructive for the work of scholars who have thus far argued that citizenship is not a binary (in or out, passport holding or not), but a matter of gradation (native, minority, migrant, naturalized).<sup>6</sup> The destitute Vietnamese boat people, who prompted the writing of Foucault’s Geneva address, may be the extreme of victimhood, but power morphs through them in the international scene in the call for accountability demanded by a new regime of international citizenship that Foucault proposes on their behalf. Loss, through their absolute destitution, remains a key theme here.

Images of destitution in the iconic refugee figure are prominent in other philosophies. Derrida’s notion of “hospitality” (2000) where the space between hostility and hospitality is explored, focuses on the lack of knowledge invoked by the image of the stranger in the history of

philosophy. But when this aporetic concept is folded into a call to practice, to create cities of refuge that do not prefigure mutuality as a condition of care, the central image invoked is concrete: “[a]sylum-seekers knock[ing] successively on each of the doors of the European Union states and end up being repelled by them”; an image that becomes even more specific in the image of a Kurdish refugee unlawfully deported to Turkey (2001, 13). Destitution drives the specific critique of Schengen Treaty politics. The same image is also present in the figure of the person who remains unaccounted for by government mechanisms in Badiou’s vision of Evental (revolutionary) Sites existing outside the “situation” (2005). It is from this unaccounted person the one who “is not registered and remains clandestine” that the Event begins (ibid., 174). This divestment of subjectivity (regained either by these figures themselves or by others speaking on their behalf or giving them refuge) is power laden and political. It is as if the refugee is the ground zero from which philosophy can become political. Agamben’s insistence on the process by which encamped Jews were molded into bare life figures after being denationalized by the Nazi regime (2004; Arendt 1951) is precisely about that process both as analytical tool and a philosophical question. Agamben’s answer on both counts is to insist that being a *sans papiers* is not a condition but a political process. But if it is today a fact that refugees have agency and that the stripping of life to its bare form is no simple task (even in the face of proliferating camps across European spaces), we must now reconsider how and why we have come to think of refugees as totally lacking that agency in the first place.

Arendt, the foremost theorist of the *sans papiers* subject brings us back to the political underpinnings of refugee terminology:

The term “stateless” at least acknowledged the fact that these persons had lost the protection of their government and required international agreements for safeguarding their legal status. The postwar term “displaced persons” was invented during the war for the express purpose of liquidating statelessness once and for all by ignoring its existence. (1948, 355)

It is often remarked that Arendt’s and Foucault’s analysis of the refugee situation are prescient of what we are witnessing today. It is vitally

important, in making such remarks, however, to clarify that what is current in their analyses is not some chance characteristics of a situation but the parameters within which the links between refugees, conflict, and power emerge. What sounds hauntingly familiar today is the realization that the “more the number of rightless people increased, the greater became the temptation to pay less attention to the deeds of the persecuting governments than to the status of the persecuted” (ibid., 374). It is not random things, actions, situations, that we see today that resemble what Foucault and Arendt saw, but deliberate practices that have endured their criticisms. In practice, cities of refuge may be configured by ambivalence as Derrida predicted, but that ambivalence comes to look very different when it becomes imbricated in specific national discourses and politics of locality. The affective ambivalence articulated in “hostipitality” could easily be read alongside Papataxiarchis’s analysis (2016) of native responses to the arrival of refugees (estimated at three to five thousand a day) on the island of Lesbos in the summer of 2015. Papataxiarchis frames the response within a discourse of “patriotism of solidarity” (2016), a conditional kind of humanitarianism that sets up cities of refuge open to everyone “unconditionally,” but which succeeds in doing so only in the knowledge that such lifting of conditions is temporary. Such solidarity ultimately falls back on well-established connections between hospitality and national identity: refugees (no matter under whose say) are welcome, but so long as they remain refugees, and on the move (albeit slow) to an elsewhere. And so long, I would add, that they remain destitute, and in dire need—Lesbos, and Greece in general, is a shining example of first response, but by the time of writing in 2017, the lack of durable structures and integration planning seems to be developing into yet another crisis situation. In Cyprus, as we shall see, mass displacement established the conditions of refugeehood that still guide reception today, as conditions premised on temporality, ethnicity, and gender.

In the following pages, I argue that it is by examining the politics that produce the status of the persecuted between scales of legal and political priorities that we can put the attention back to the practices of persecution. And when we do that, we also see that the persecuting governments are not only the ones from whom refugees flee, but those to whom they appeal for refuge too. A careful and critical calibration of loss is required, I argue, that

pushes the debate past the binary either/or approach and examines how the evaluation of loss operates; who and what it subjects; what actions and agency it elicits; what it produces, and what it forecloses.

### IMBRICATIONS

Refugeehood is about the intricacies of citizenship. In this book, it does not signify the lack of citizenship. If anything, in Cyprus, refugeehood could be thought of as a privileged position in civic subjectivity. What it shares with mainstream accounts of refugeehood, however, is that either through presence or absence, it defines citizenship. These links are not simple or stable; they are uncertain, shifting, unexpected. But they nevertheless emanate from firm structures that exist and are maintained by daily work on the governmental, legal, and affective planes. As a way of maintaining this double focus on the structural aspects that need to be questioned, and the shifting aspects of what actually happens at the intersections of individual and governmental practice, I use the idiom of “imbrication.”

In the wake of well-rehearsed poststructural critiques, a call for such double focus might seem tired. Yet it is in the context of an increasingly obvious need to account for structure that much of the current theory seeking to understand the neoliberal order is emerging. And yet, that structure can no longer be a simple question in the way that middle-way theories such as structuration (Giddens 1984) might have suggested earlier. The questioning of what exceeds materiality in the most tangible of objects that actor-network theory asks is exemplary (Latour 2005). The emergence of geography as a key domain for understanding complex capital shifts (Harvey 2001; Sassen 2011; Thrift 2008) is equally indicative. Structure is important to seminal poststructuralist texts exactly because it bears the possibility of deconstruction (Derrida 1976) and the dissolution of single-order signification (Baudrillard 1975). It is from this perspective that I keep returning in this book to structures, metaphorically in the image of a roof, and analytically in the case of governmentality apparatus.

Foucauldian governmentality—the full force of which emerged in Anglophone analysis after the translation of his *Collège de France* lectures (2004; 2007; 2010, 2011)—hinges on exactly this centrality of structure even in the most counter-conductive formation of self.<sup>7</sup> Central to Foucault’s concept is the double facet of discipline and care, working not in separate domains (as



for example in the repressive and ideological apparatus of Althusser [1971]) but arising within the same field. The workings of power in governmentality is about the subscription and reproduction of ways of being governed from within. And this “within” is again, a double ground when we are dealing with biopower: working on the level of the body as well as on the level of population, both of which are produced by biopolitical governmentality. Thus, a body of citizens is posited as the “population” and defined by particular characteristics down to the individual body level, but then (or rather so that) governmental apparatus can be put in place to ensure the congruence between the putative population and the actual bodies being governed. In my earlier work, I examined such practices in depth with reference to the rendering of minority populations in Greece (2013). I am here developing a much more encompassing concept of minoritization: I am talking not only of particular and generally targeted exclusions (such as the situation of Turkish speakers in northern Greece), but at the various forms of governing put in place that exclude or discount a much broader spectrum of experience—in fact the vast majority of the population who do not fit the ideal. And they do so not always, perhaps not even mostly, in a targeted way, but often inadvertently, as a by-product of other governmental conducts. That is the way *minor losses* arise. Minor losses are thus also a double concept because they are conducted through a central figure of the victim but found wanting, and lose out, with reference to that victimhood.

But that conduct through the ideal, is precisely what also elicits counter-conduct. For as soon as that ideal is recognized as such, it is recognized as a *dispositif* of government and not an actual body or population part. It is recognized for the incongruence between the “us”, which “population” is meant to solidify, and the exclusion of “me” effected in the process. This is the workings of performativity that Butler’s earlier work on Foucault tackles (1997b). For Butler, performativity emerges in the space between subjection and subjectivation as a destabilizing condition of selfhood—a real self, just as a totally performative persona recedes from view. And this allows space for critique and, I argue, the contemplation of being conducted otherwise. It is in this space that what earlier anthropological theory has termed “resistance” (Scott 1985) begins to emerge—but only in an uncertain form. In question is not only the way in which it will be actualized, as for example in everyday practices, but indeed, if it will be at all. So what I am interested in is the moment at which the disciplinary forms of subjectivation, so well described by ethnographies

of colonialism (e.g., Mitchell 1991), morph into a more politically reflective disposition. In those moments, Das (1995) reminds us, critical events of past violence are reworked in the everyday and rupture the mundane. Whether and how they do so remains uncertain, however. Stevens speaks of “accidental citizenship” (2017, 17) and of “caprice” (a term I have also found useful in previous work) in articulating the uncertainty with which rights and rightlessness are bestowed and the line between them delineated in law and policy. I propose *imbrications* as an idiom that captures and exceeds these concepts to better reflect the tension between the unintentional and the structural. What I want to highlight through the idiom of imbrication then is a way of maintaining a focus on what is constraining, or enabling, in governmental practice and thinking, to the ways in which people interact with, internalize, or counter those structures. I am recasting, in this process, some of the major questions in this theoretical trajectory: what allows subjects or prompts them to “see like a state” (Scott 1998)? What excess of explicit knowledge is it that subjectivizes them in implicit ways (Mitchell 2002)? And how is the everyday crafted as a question of the state (Das 2007)?

The image I wish to evoke here is of a roofing structure where tiles overlap in specific arrangements, but only partly; and where these interstices allow processes to happen (rainwater to run off, soil and dust to build up, plants to sprout, animals to nest), while also serving the purpose of preventing other processes (water leaking or air gushing through). And while the structure itself has this purpose, it is characteristic of roofs to leak, tiles to break, gaps to allow wildlife in. The unexpected is embedded in the structure and not distinct from it. I therefore ask here how we might think these metaphors theoretically in ways that allow us to approach refugeehood in an expanded way. For if refugees in Cyprus appear difficult to recognize through current debates in refugee studies, we should resist the instinctive reaction of classifying them on the basis of the legal parameters of the 1951 Convention and infer that they “are not refugees” because they reside in their own country. Instead, we should look to the techniques by which refugeness is conferred and denied and see in the subjects of refugeehood the continuities between international, national, and individual assumptions about what refugees are, what they should look like, and how they should behave. In those terms, refugeehood in Cyprus is about otherness. But it is so in surprising ways—a category punctuated by many crevices that entrap people they were not meant to. I speak here not of

ethnic otherness, but an otherness that was not targeted in the first place, as an exclusion that the Green Line border was meant to effect. This surprising aspect of the border requires us, I want to argue, to employ similarly expansive metaphors. The conceptualization of the border as process (Green 2013; Demetriou and Dimova 2018) thus also requires a geometric metaphor that goes beyond the shift from line to area and two-dimensional area patterns (lattice, nodes, mesh). The visual metaphor of imbrication communicates this expansiveness.

References to imbrication have been used to describe how planes are entangled in one another (e.g., the political in the social, the local in the global).<sup>8</sup> The metaphor of imbrication seems to be taken in stride, without much discussion of what it might help us conceptualize. An imbricated arrangement, the definition goes, is one “composed of parts (leaves, scales, or the like) which overlap like tiles” (OED). Roof tiling is given in most dictionaries as the key image for this definition, and the Latin origin of the word points to gutter tiles (*imbrex*) that carry away the rainwater (*imber*). *Imbrex* roof tiles are differentiated in masonry from *tegula* roof tiles because of their curved form—*tegula* tiles being flat, and the two kinds are often used together for better drainage. Valpy’s *Etymological Dictionary of the Latin Language* of 1828 associates the word *imbrex* to the Greek word for rain ὄμβρος [*ómvros*] (197), where, in classic etymological fashion, the tracing stops. There are, however, suggestions that this backward trajectory continues outside the Indo-European linguistic system (Beekes 2009). This etymological story can in fact be taken as exemplary of my point in using the word “imbrication” to refer to power complexities. I do not see etymology as holding some truth in itself, so that one can follow a route (e.g., down the gutter tiles) and arrive at some beginning of time located in Greek antiquity, but as offering interesting overlaps that can help us expand a conceptual tool—in this case a metaphor—which inevitably will hit upon its own limitations too.

Imagined as the effect of tiling a roof therefore (and not the original gutter tiling), imbrication speaks of an expansive layering and patterning that is different from three close alternatives: (1) stacking, where layers overlap completely; (2) alignment (as in gutter tiles) where there is no layer but a singular route; and (3) enmeshing, where layers are dissolved into one. Imbrication, furthermore, retains something of substantive differentiation (each tile) but in an arrangement that is neither fixed (as in that much problematized metaphor of coexistence, the mosaic) nor completely arbitrary. The unexpected arises

in imbrication as the interaction of matter with process (tiles, water, soil, and animal droppings, with rain, wind, or nesting). Imbrication is expansive in that it goes beyond a single-layer mesh, beyond a single type of interaction as in the mosaic that is looked at and makes sense only in being looked at.

In the analysis I undertake in the book, imbrication describes the aspects of emplacement and displacement that give rise to interactions between individuals, practices, laws, policies, and patterns of thought. If the border in Nicosia exudes an aspect of trauma and loss for a migrant, a tourist, or a refugee (however and by whomever defined), this cannot happen without the process of politicization, in which the border is thoroughly embedded. While differently configured in each case, this politicization is neither anterior nor posterior to the ontology of the border; it is the effect of conflict, violence, and war, as well as policing and the continuous reenactment of forms of violence that policing entails. By seeing this relation between the border and politicization in terms of imbrication we could better analyze processes unfolding in time and space and influencing one another on legal, affective, and material registers. And we can begin to clearly see the fault lines between police, politics, and the political that according to Rancière (2010) mark out the terrain of democracy.

In Cyprus, access to rights relating to migrant and refugee protection, as well as its limitation, is mediated through the structure of the conflict. The words of the waiter with which I began this chapter are indicative of how work and residence, denied by migration law on one side of the divide, can materialize on the other while this denial can produce discourses that emulate political subjectivities of unlikely populations. The links between ethnic enemies and migrants are an important part of this layering. They form an imbricated infrastructural frame that shapes lives and subjectivity. This is not the Marxist infrastructure that underpins ideological (nonmaterial) superstructures. They merge the two to form the bedrock on which new structures (policing, political campaigning, and refugee and immigration procedures) are deposited. Imbrication is manifest here in its geological sense, as the formation arising from sediments deposited in an alluvial or other channel. Time is crucial to this layering, whereby governmentalities oriented at one kind of population at a particular point in time (Turks as ethnic enemies) come to subjectivize others (migrants) as the border develops into something else. These connections structure the chapters that follow.