

Zoning in on the Aegean island of Imvros – Gökçeada in Turkish and Ίμβρος in Greek – this thesis deploys the developing ‘borderscape’ lens to explore socio-political myths of belonging linked to processes of diaspora creation and return. By tracing diverse ‘borderscaping’ practices which have occurred on Imvros since its post-WWI cession to the newly-created Turkish nation-state and the exemption of its Greek-speaking inhabitants from the 1923 Greco-Turkish population exchange, it highlights a substantial shift between ‘hegemonic borderscape’ and ‘counter-hegemonic borderscape’ eras occurring on the island roughly in the early 1990s. Whereas the ‘hegemonic borderscape’ era is linked to the multifaceted impact(s) of Turkish nation-building on the forced displacement of Imvros’ Greek-speaking inhabitants – and thus the parallel creation of the Imvriot diaspora – primarily between the 1960s and 1980s, the ‘counter-hegemonic borderscape’ era is instead linked to the unfolding diasporic return movement which has been partaken in by some members of the Imvriot diaspora since the early 1990s. Data for this thesis also draws on 42 interviews and 33 mental maps collected from first, second and third-generation members of the Imvriot diaspora who agreed to participate in a grounded theory ethnography conducted in Turkey and Greece between August 2021 and August 2022. By delving into the personal memories of research participants, the thesis illustrates the paradoxical manner in which juxtaposing hegemonic and non-hegemonic socio-political myths of belonging to Imvros – or more appropriately, to imaginations of either Gökçeada or Ίμβρος – have simultaneously intervened in and (re)shaped the lived experiences and spatial imaginaries of members of the Imvriot diaspora throughout both the ‘hegemonic borderscape’ and ‘counter-hegemonic borderscape’ eras. It also sheds notable light on the liminal spaces of identity and belonging occupied by many members of the Imvriot diaspora as they navigate their relationship(s) to Imvros, Turkey, Greece and beyond. By integrating the context(s) of diaspora creation and return into a recently expanding body of literature on ‘borderscapes’, the thesis also responds to ongoing needs to adopt new pathways for the study of ever-evolving migration trends – in this case shifting patterns of diasporic homeland engagement – linked to the fluid realities of a continually globalising world. Moreover, a firm rooting of both the creation and return of the Imvriot diaspora in ‘borderscaping’ practices respectively emanating from the exclusionary aspects of ‘political belonging’ to *Gökçeada* and a sense of visceral ‘belongingness’ to *Ίμβρος* ultimately demonstrates that ‘belongingness’ – albeit at times portrayed as a less-socio-politically relevant form of belonging – may constitute just as powerful a force as ‘political belonging’ in the catalysation of substantial socio-political change. The thesis also contributes to empirical gaps regarding the intergenerational impact(s) of the 1923 Greco-Turkish population exchange specifically on exempt national minorities – rather than on exchanged minorities – in both Turkey and Greece, as well as to the expansion of an at-present slim body of literature regarding the Imvriot diaspora’s intergenerationally diverse – and perpetually transforming – relationship to its Imvriot homeland throughout the three previous decades.