

Abstract: Zoning in on the Aegean island of Imvros – ‘Gökçeada’ in Turkish and ‘Ιμβρος’ in Greek – this dissertation applies an interdisciplinary mixed methods approach to the study of competing hegemonic and counter-hegemonic narratives of identity and belonging in the Imvriot borderscape. In addition to substantial grounding in ethnographic observation, primary source data for this dissertation draws on 42 semi-structured interviews and 31 mental maps collected from first, second and third-generation members of the Imvriot diaspora who agreed to participate in a one-year ‘grounded theory ethnography’ conducted in Turkey and Greece between August 2021 and August 2022. By tracing diverse ‘border-scaping’ 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 noteworthy shift between ‘hegemonic borderscape’ and ‘counter-hegemonic borderscape’ eras occurring on the island roughly in the early 1990s. Whereas the former 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 latter is linked to the still-unfolding diasporic return movement which has been partaken in by some members of the Imvriot diaspora since the early 1990s. By delving into the personal memories of research participants, the dissertation illustrates the paradoxical manner by which the competing yet intricately intertwined hegemonic and non-hegemonic border imaginations of *Gökçeada* and *Ιμβρος* – each imbued with unique socio-political myths of belonging to space/place – have simultaneously intervened in and (re)shaped the lived experiences and spatial imaginaries of the Imvriot diaspora throughout both ‘hegemonic borderscape’ and ‘counter-hegemonic borderscape’ eras. Moreover, a firm rooting of both the creation and return of the Imvriot diaspora in ‘border-scaping’ practices respectively emanating from the exclusionary aspects of ‘political belonging’ to *Gökçeada* and a sense of visceral ‘belongingness’ to *Ιμβρος* 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. By integrating the contexts of diaspora creation and return into a recently expanding body of literature on ‘border-scapes’, the dissertation 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. It also contributes to the filling of 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.

Key Words: borders, borderscapes, border imaginations, Greek-Turkish borders, belonging, political belonging, belongingness, nation-building, national minorities, diaspora homeland, Imbriot diaspora, Imvriot diaspora, forced migration, population exchange, Greco-Turkish population exchange, diaspora creation, diaspora return, diasporic identity, diasporic memory, intergenerational trauma, spatial imagination, Imbros, Imvros, Gökçeada, Ίμβρος