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***TITLE:*** “*Political Identity Types: The role of the Content and the Context on Identity*”

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## Political Identity Types: The role of the Content and the Context on Identity

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### Abstract

Political identity content of Greek Cypriot adolescents in terms of values, beliefs and attitudes was explored using an inductive method to elicit data. The macro-context of Greek Cypriot society was chosen specifically, because the national issue of a partition makes political identity particularly salient. Adolescents (449 males and 589 females) were asked to write three answers to the question "Who are you in terms of your political beliefs?" The variables elicited from the open-ended question were cluster analyzed by the use of a person-center-approach to identify nine political identity types. These types were closely related to the specific macro-

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context of Cyprus. This approach provided an extension and critical reconsideration of the four-identity statuses paradigm. Results indicate a set of political values, beliefs and attitudes that are significant indicators for healthy political engagement, reflecting the macro-context and related to gender, type of school and socio-economic status.

**Keywords:** *political-identity-content; macro-context; SES; type of school; gender; person-center approach*

The vitality of democracy is dependent on the political involvement of its citizens. For Sherrod (2007), the level of civic engagement is an indication of a nation's health. Research conducted across the world suggests that adolescents show low levels of both interest and involvement in political activity (Youniss et.al., 2002; Snell, 2010). However, studies on adolescents' political identity in some countries (e.g., Cyprus, North Ireland) show that political apathy is not universal (Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008; Whyte, 1999). It is important to understand what might enhance adolescents' participation in politics if we are to maintain a healthy international political environment. Snell (2010) shows the important role of beliefs in forming interest in political participation, and indicates that beliefs and values are underexplored

within the political identity literature. There is also limited research on how these beliefs and values are shaped by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems.

Identity content in terms of beliefs, values, and attitudes is obscured by the use of nomothetic identity approaches, such as Marcia's (1966) Identity Status Paradigm (ISP). The emphasis is on process and simplifies identity into four statuses based on Erikson's (1959) identity dimensions of exploration and commitment. Achievement status exhibits both exploration and commitment, moratorium status exhibits only exploration, foreclosure status exhibits only commitment, and diffusion status exhibits none). The existence of sub-statuses has not been given appropriate attention, despite empirical evidence that the four statuses provide an inadequate fit for data (Archer & Waterman, 1990; Kroger, 1995; Solomontos-Kountouri, 2006). ISP is also not adequate for investigating the role of context on identity formation; and conceals contextual variations in meanings, which jeopardizes the validity of quantitative methods of data collection (Hammack, 2006; Schachter & Ventura, 2008).

In this study, we use an inductive method to elicit the content of adolescents' political identity and a person-centered approach to identify relatively homogeneous subgroups of adolescents characterized by distinct profiles of beliefs, values and attitudes; and we assess the relationship between political identity content and contextual factors. This approach conforms to recommendations for moving beyond the ISP (Schwartz, 2005) and using methods that are more sensitive to individual differences in intraindividual profiles (Magnusson, 2003; von Eye & Berman, 2003).

#### *The content of identity: an underexplored area*

In the early stages of identity research, Bourne (1978) suggested that the ISP should move towards examining adolescents' basic life values. However, Bourne's (1978) suggestions were

neglected and only a few identity researchers looked at this fruitful area of identity content. For example, Berzonsky (1994) and Berzonsky, Macek & Nurmi (2003) found that adolescents who belonged in different identity statuses relied on different sets of values and goals. Research on political and civic identity has paid limited attention to the role of individual values and beliefs in promoting civic participation. Rather, researchers emphasize the effects of civic activities (Youniss & Yates, 1999), youth activities and social involvement (Zaff, Malanchuk, and Eccles, 2008) in predicting future civic engagement. Snell (2010), however, found that individualized moral beliefs were more likely to predict future political engagement than any type of social involvement, i.e., young people who were willing to believe in the existence of right and wrong, they are more likely to engage in collective behavior such as politics than those who believed that morals are relative. It is important to specify what set of values predict political engagement in order to invest in those values and sustain a healthy functioning political system.

#### *How context matters in the formation of political identity*

From the lens of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective, adolescents' political identity content may be more fully understood by considering the role of the various ecological systems in forming this content. *Schools*, as meso-systems, are considered as major arenas for political socialization (Youniss et al., 2002). The effectiveness of civic education that is demonstrated in adolescents' political participation depends on: the formal curriculum; the culture of the classroom; and the culture of the school (Torney-Purta, 2002). For example, in Northern Ireland, people who attended a religiously integrated school showed a less sectarian stance on their political identities than those who attended religiously segregated schools (Hayes, McAllister, & Dowds, 2007). Female adolescents from public and private schools in England (matched for SES) showed different political engagement, e.g., private school females tended to



be politically committed, either in achievement status (45%) or in foreclosure status (45%), and had significantly greater interest in politics, while nearly half of state school females were in diffusion status (Banks & Roker, 1994; Roker, 1991).

*Socio-economic status* of parents, as an exo-system, influences the development of civic engagement as parents try to inhibit various types of political behaviors according to their SES (Sherrod, 2007). Working class parents pass to their adolescents their political alienation attitudes (Gniewosz, Noack, & Buhl, 2009). Middle class parents discouraged their adolescents from getting involved in political activities that might obstruct their educational or career advancement (Jankowski, 1992). Upper-class parents promote the ability of their adolescents to define democracy (Flanagan, Gallay, Gill, Gallay, & Nti, 2005) and to show greater political engagement, political conservatism, tolerance, and concern for the environment (Bynner, Romney & Emler, 2003).

Research suggests that the particular political situation of each country, as an element of the macrosystem, influences the political involvement of adolescents. For example, studies conducted in Western democracies tend to find that university and college students are diffused in their political identity (Archer, 1982; Goossens, 2001; Jackson, 1990; Kroger, 1993; Meilman, 1979). Similarly, political socialization studies in stable Western societies show that individualism and self-interest in adolescents prevails (Yates & Youniss, 1999). On the other hand, in societies characterized by political instabilities and conflicts (e.g., Cyprus, Northern Ireland), adolescents tend to be more politically engaged and committed, hence are more advanced in their political identity (Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008; Whyte, 1999).

*Greek Cypriot society*, the macro-context of the present study, includes the misfortunes of a partitioned island, a key political issue of everyday life. The “Cyprus Problem” involves a

history of serious confrontations between Greek and Turkish Cypriot inhabitants, who have lived in partition since 1974. This intercommunal conflict remains unresolved and the source of deeply held views. This highly politicized environment is reinforced by the national duties of voting at the age of 18 and army service for all males after finishing secondary school. Moreover, the teaching of Greek History and democratic ideals of Greek culture in schools make political identity particularly salient for Greek Cypriot adolescents.

### *Identity sub-statuses*

The existence of sub-statuses has been identified by many identity researchers (Bourne, 1978; Dellas and Jernigan, 1981; Kroger, 1995; Luyckx, et al., 2008; Marcia, 1966; Waterman, 1988) and indicates the complexity of identity structure. Besides, identity researchers show that less than 50% of participants typically fall into one of the four statuses (Grotevant & Adams, 1984; Jones, Akers, & White, 1994). This poor fit between data and classification system undermines the validity of the four identity statuses. The unclassified participants might belong to identity sub-statuses.

Archer and Waterman (1990), identified six different types of identity-diffused status: (1) Pre-crisis diffusions, also named “passive moratoriums” by Raphael (1975, cited in Kroger, 1995), indicate possible exploration in the future; (2) Apathetic diffusions never express interest in forming any commitments because of a sense of hopelessness, which is quite similar to Dellas and Jernigan’s (1981) concept of the diffused-luck status; (3) Alienated diffusions do not express any interest in forming commitments because of their anger towards society; (4) Pathological diffusions, or “schizoid” (Marcia, 1966), or Diffused Diffusion (Luyckx, et al., 2008) exhibit pathological symptoms; (5) Marginally involved diffusions are characterised by a



minor and loose attachment to identity commitments; and (6) Commitment-avoiding diffusions are exploring but are unwilling to form any commitment. Cote and Levin (2002) identified two further types of commitment-avoiding diffusions: (a) the refusers who develop a series of defences with which to “refuse” entry to adulthood; and (b) the drifters or “carefree diffusion” (Luyckx , et al., 2008) who, although they exhibit some personal resources, similarly lack integration into a community.

Foreclosure was also differentiated into five types: (1) Open foreclosed have commitments but they are not opposed to other options; (2) Closed foreclosed are dogmatic about their commitments; (3) Premature foreclosed made their commitments before entering adolescence; (4) Late developing foreclosed made their commitments in early adulthood; (5) Appropriated foreclosed are those who are dedicated entirely to a particular life style, cult, or social group (Archer & Waterman, 1990). Kroger (1995) examined the psychological differences between “developmental” foreclosure and “firm” foreclosure (similar to the open and closed types) and found that “firm foreclosures” had higher nurturance seeking scores and more frequent early memories of seeking security than did “developmental foreclosures,” moratoriums, and achievers.

Recent empirical findings support the existence of sub-statuses. Luyckx , et al. (2005) found four instead of two identity dimensions as a result of Confirmatory Factor Analysis: These dimensions are commitment making (the decision taken), identification with commitment (showing relevant behavior), exploration in breadth (exploring different options), exploration in depth (exploring the particular choice), thus potentially forming the basis for 16 rather than four identity statuses.

### *Aims of the study*

Our first aim is to elicit from the inductive data the salient elements of the content of adolescents' political identity in terms of beliefs, values, and attitudes. Our second aim is to propose an expansion of the four-identity status classification used in our previous work (Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008) by utilizing a person-centered approach. Our third aim was to examine how political identity profiles vary in relation to gender, type of school and SES because these relations were not clearly revealed using ISP.

## **METHOD**

### *Design and sample*

We used a cross-sectional survey of a representative sample of students in the last year of secondary school. A multi-stage cluster and stratified sampling procedure was used to draw a 10% sample of the population (Moser & Kalton, 1977). At the first step, stratified samples were taken from the three different types of Greek Cypriot secondary education institutions (i.e., state, state technical, and private). At the second step, stratified samples were taken from the five different provinces of Cyprus. At the third step, stratified samples were taken from the different school specializations.

The sample was 1038 Greek Cypriot adolescents (449 males and 589 females), from 15 secondary schools, mean age of 16.8. SES was determined from father's and mother's occupations, which were classified according to the 10 broad categories of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (Elias & Birch, 1994) and then collapsed into three categories as a combined function of both parents' occupations (Nash, 1995); 22% of participants were classified as upper class, 37% as middle class, and 41% as working class.

### *Procedure*

The approval from the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture was obtained in order to administer the questionnaire in secondary schools of Cyprus. The questionnaire was voluntary, anonymous and contained no sensitive questions, so we did not use any informed consent procedure. The first author visited the 15 schools by arrangement with the head teachers who helped with the stratified sampling from each school specialization. She introduced the research and administered the questionnaire in 49 different classes to all 1070 students who were present on the day of data collection. Although 32 students (3%) chose not to complete the questionnaire, students were generally enthusiastic participants.

### *Measures*

*Demographics.* Information was collected on age, gender, name of the school, specialization, place of living, father's occupation, and mother's occupation.

*Political identity content.* The participants were asked to write three answers to the open-ended question, "Who are you in terms of your political beliefs?" that was based on the "Who Are You?" technique (Bugental & Zelen, 1950). This technique allows participants to write the things that are most important to them, without being influenced by categories chosen in advance by the researcher. These open-ended textual responses can then be coded in ways that allow for pattern-centered statistical analysis.

### *Analysis*

In the first step, we followed De Vaus's (1996) suggestions for analyzing open-ended questions, and we also employed some features of Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For example, coding categories were generated from reading through all the text provided by

respondents and from conceptualizing responses in term of meaningful units of analysis to “see with analytic depth what is there” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 76). After reading through responses from 100 participants many variables relevant to political values, beliefs, and attitudes were generated. Integration was tried out between similar variables, in order to form the final 7 variables. The meaning of the variables and response categories was discussed with three people familiar with Greek Cypriot adolescents and modifications were completed to form the final variable names and conceptual definitions; the scoring system was formed with the co-authors on the following scale: -1 = opposite relevance, 0 = no relevance, 1= low relevance, 2 = medium relevance, 3 = high relevance. The great majority of participants gave three answers. Some answers contained information relevant to more than one variable and were coded accordingly. Inter-rater reliability analysis, based on 100 random respondents revealed 84% agreement for Interest in Politics, 78% for Commitment to Politics, 76% for Exploring Politics, 77 % for Political Tolerance, and 92% for Political Input.

In a second step, a four-stage process of cluster analysis was performed using a pattern-centered approach described by Peck & Roeser (2003) (cf. Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). Stage one involved selecting five of the variables that are important elements of political identity to be included in cluster analysis (see Table 1). Stage two involved the empirical identification of subgroups. Variables were standardized at the sample level and then cluster analyzed using Ward’s method on squared Euclidean distances to identify subgroups. The final cluster solution was based on the examination of the dendrogram as well as considerations of theoretical meaningfulness, within-group homogeneity, between-group heterogeneity, and parsimony. For example, increasingly complex solutions were considered where the profiles made good theoretical sense and were supported statistically by the dendrogram. Theoretically



meaningfulness was evaluated in relation to the following questions: Does the pattern of variables in each cluster group look meaningful? Are these groups of people recognizable in terms of identity theory (i.e., identity statuses), political socialization characteristics (e.g., political engagement, tolerance, anti-politics), and profile patterns reflecting recognizable Greek Cypriot political types. Due to the high degree of heterogeneity the 9-cluster solution was considered parsimonious relative to the actual degree of complexity.

In stage three, the groups were described, named and re-ordered. They were described in terms of how the political identity dimensions cohered within individuals as unified profiles. They were named on the basis of the meaning of the profiles and in relation to the four ISP identity statuses. They were re-ordered from the most to the least “advanced” political types, where “advancement” refers to richer political engagement characteristics (Bynner, et al., 2003; Frazer & Emler, 1997). In stage four, the concurrent validity of the cluster solutions was explored by reference to theoretically related variables. For example, we tested concurrent validity between the 9 political types and the theoretically related EOMEIS-2 (by Adams, 1999) variable reflecting the four ISP political identity statuses (Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008). Finally, we used separate chi-square test to examine the associations between the political identity types and each context variable (i.e., gender, type of school, and SES).

## **RESULTS**

### *Political identity content*

Greek Cypriot adolescents focused on Cypriot political matters. They described their political identity content as a combination of different levels of Political Interest, Political Commitment, Political Exploration, Political Tolerance and Political Input (i.e., influence from



parents). Table 1 shows the percentages of participants' responses that were classified into each variable category. Approximately half of the participants (54%) showed interest in politics, whereas the remainder (45%) showed either low interest or indifference to politics. Political commitment was mentioned by nearly half of the participants (48%): 10% considered political activity as a duty; for example, "I believe that every citizen should be pre-occupied with politics and they should not remain indifferent," (ID672, male); 38% were committed to a specific party; for example, "I support the political party that I think is the best and express my opinions" (ID12, female). The remaining 52% of adolescents, who were not committed to politics, consisted of three groups: 16% were thinking of politics but were undecided, for example, "I have not decided yet whom to support" (ID507, male); 11% had anti-political views, for example, "I am against the political parties because they separate people" (ID265, male); and 22% had no political views. Approximately half of the adolescents indicated some level of political exploration, either past exploration (9%); present exploration (33%); or future exploration (8%); and of the 40% who showed an absence of exploration, 13% declared that they took a political position without exploration. Political tolerance was expressed by four different political attitudes. Fourteen percent of adolescents were having a democratic political attitude; for example, "I try to respect and listen to all the opinions of the other political parties" (ID12, female). Twenty-three percent of adolescents showed a liberal, open-minded political attitude; for example, "I try to learn as much about the different political parties as I can, so that I can select the one I believe is right for me" (ID62, male). Only 6% were maintaining a fanatical political attitude. Thirty-eight percent showed an avoidant political attitude; for example, "I am not involved with politics in any way" (ID218, male). Regarding Political Input, 15% derived

their political beliefs from their parents, 5% critically considered the political beliefs of their parents and 5% chose their own political beliefs.

### *Cluster analysis of the content of political identity*

The 9-cluster solution is presented in Figure 1. The True Achieved (21%) political type exhibited the values of high interest in politics, commitment to politics (either as a duty, or to a political party), past or present exploration; and the democratic attitude. For example, one respondent said:

I am an individual with a very strong political background. I am well informed and politically conscious but not a party activist. The ideals of the political party I support are based on the same ideals as my own and express my views the most (ID141, female).

The Achieved in Progress (6%) adolescents showed the values of interest in politics, commitment to a political party, present exploration; a liberal attitude; and their political beliefs are independent from their parents'; for example, one respondent said:

I am politically independent. I believe in what I want to believe and not what my parents believe in. I disagree many times with the words and actions of the political party that I support. I am not influenced by what the politicians say (ID78, male).

The Foreclosed-Achieved (6%) adolescents were in transformation from foreclosure to achievement. They presented the values of interest in politics, commitment to a political party/ideology, and present exploration. They exhibited a democratic attitude, although they were following their parents' political beliefs; for example, one respondent said:

Concerning my political beliefs, my family has generally influenced me, but I still keep myself informed about politics, and I listen to all the different ideologies of the other political parties, and I am not a member of a party (ID61, male).

The True Moratorium (9%) adolescents showed the values of interest in politics, present or future exploration; and a liberal attitude. For example, one respondent said, “I have researched thoroughly into politics. I have discussed with my family their political beliefs. I have not decided yet whom to support” (ID507, male).

The Progress Foreclosed (7%) adolescents seemed to be progressing from foreclosed into moratorium-like characteristics. They had the values of interest in politics, somewhat low; a low commitment to a political party; and present exploration; although they were following their parents’ political beliefs. For example, one respondent said, “I am not very sure about my beliefs. I am still trying to find out. At present though, I follow what my parents believe in” (ID474 female).

The Fanatic Foreclosed (9%) adolescents showed the values of interest in politics, high commitment to a political party without exploration; and the intolerance attitude. For example, one respondent said, “I am interested in what the politicians say. I strongly believe in the ideologies of my party. I am very involved in politics” (ID300, male).

The Beginning Moratorium (7%) adolescents presented the values of low interest and future exploration. They were just making a step from diffused types (just entering moratorium), thus they are considered less advanced than Progress Foreclosed and Fanatic Foreclosed. For example, one respondent said, “I am not that interested in politics. I simply watch it on the news. I do not belong to any political party” (ID581, male).

The Advanced Diffused (13%) adolescents exhibited only the anti-political attitude; For example, one respondent said:

I do not belong to any political party and I am not interested in the politics of my country. I do not like people who are fanatics about politics, especially adolescents of my age, who

have not studied the history and are fanatics based on what they have been told by their parents. I do not like the politicians of my country at all, because the politicians are all play-acting and they do nothing good, unless they can get a benefit out of it (ID46, female).

The Indifferent Diffused (22%) adolescents did not show any political values, they were avoiding politics. For example, one respondent said, “I do not believe in any political party. I have never been interested in politics; simply the subject doesn’t interest me” (ID1033, male).

#### *Validation of the nine political types and comparison to identity statuses*

Table 2 shows that there is a statistically significant association between the four political identity statuses reported in Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry (2008) and the nine political types revealed in the present study ( $\chi^2=426.97$ ,  $df=24$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Although a degree of fit to ISP is captured in the names of the nine types, the range of variation of the nine political types show that this is a more meaningful classification. For example, 32% of the two “advanced” types (i.e., True Achieved and Achieved in Progress) were represented in the EOMEIS achievement status group but, interestingly, more than half of them were also represented in the EOMEIS moratorium status group. The three foreclosed types (i.e., Foreclosed-Achieved, Progress Foreclosed and Fanatic Foreclosed) were more likely to be classified as EOMEIS foreclosure status; but the Fanatic Foreclosed types were also significantly represented in the EOMEIS achievement status, probably due to their strong commitment.

#### *The nine political types and social context*

There are statistically significant associations between the contextual variables of gender ( $\chi^2=62.49$ ,  $df=8$ ,  $p<.01$ ), type of school ( $\chi^2=54$ ,  $df=16$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and SES ( $\chi^2=48.29$ ,  $df=16$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and the nine political types (see Table 3). Male adolescents were more likely to belong to Fanatic



Foreclosed political type, and to the Indifferent Diffused type. Female adolescents were more likely to be classified as Achieved in Progress and Progress Foreclosed types.

Private school students were more likely to belong to the Fanatic Foreclosed type and to the Beginning Moratorium type. State school students were more likely to belong to Achieved in Progress and Progress Foreclosed types. Technical school students were more likely to belong to the Indifferent Diffused type.

Upper class participants were more likely to belong to either True Achieved or True Moratorium; middle class participants were more likely to belong to Achieved in Progress; and the Indifferent Diffused type was reported significantly more frequently among working class participants.

## **Discussion**

The primary aim of the present study was to use participants' own words to define and classify the content of their political identity. This inductive approach revealed that Greek Cypriot adolescents described their political identity content in terms of political values, beliefs and attitudes such as political interest, political commitment, political exploration and political tolerance, mainly concerning Greek Cypriot political matters. Our second aim was to explore an "alternative" approach to the narrow four-identity status classification that can reveal the content and the context of political identity. The cluster analysis of the political identity content elements resulted in nine identity types, which resemble identity-sub-statuses. Thirdly, we show that the nine political identity types are significantly associated with the various ecological-systems such



as the macrosystem of Greek Cypriot society, the meso-system of type of school and the exo-system of SES and gender.

### *Political identity content*

A basic set of political values, beliefs and attitudes underlie the political involvement of around half of Greek Cypriot adolescents. As a True Achieved male expressed: “I am interested in the political developments in my country, I worry about my country; I believe that everybody should be interested in the political happening” (ID955). This political responsibility is echoed one of the basic assumption of the 5th century BC Athenian democracy: “We regard the man who takes no part in public affairs, not as one who minds his own business, but as good for nothing” (Thucydides, 1966: 37). Political engagement is not an option for these adolescents but rather a duty.

These Greek Cypriots adolescents showed interest in politics, had a political commitment and reported political exploration. Less than half of the participants showed indifference and lack of political exploration. Similarly, Nie et al (1996) and Bynner et al (2003) identified a dimension called “political engagement” that includes interest in politics and other forms of political participation on one end and political alienation of the other end. The politically engaged group of Greek Cypriot adolescents either maintained a fanatical political attitude (6%) or show political tolerance (37%), the apolitical group had an avoidant political attitude. According to Youniss and Yates (1999) in contexts of political conflict, adolescents have to choose whether to sustain the historical conditions on which the tensions are based, to seek a resolution that will lead to a peaceful future or to become apolitical. The latter group might reflect the Western individualism (Yates & Youniss, 1999) that has been promoted by the affluent economic situation and the widespread Western life-style of Cyprus. Another reason for

avoiding political involvement that was articulated, was the disappointment with the long and unsuccessful talks between the two communities and the inefficiency of politicians. Clearly the 11%, who declared anti-political views, justified it on these grounds.

### *Political identity types or political identity sub-statuses*

The nine political types were associated with theoretically and empirically related political identity statuses of EOMEIS-2 classified from the same sample in an earlier study (Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008). However, the nine political identity types gave a more elaborated picture of political identity statuses, reflecting the specific content and context while also supporting the utilization of identity sub-statuses. True Achieved seems to resemble exploration in depth and identification with commitment, while Achieved in Progress seems to resemble exploration in depth and commitment making (Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Beyers, & Vansteenkiste, 2005). True Moratorium and Beginning Moratorium types seem to resemble exploration in breadth but True Moratorium showed commitment to an interest in politics. Foreclosed-Achieved type is similar to open foreclosed (Archer & Waterman, 1990). These individuals have commitments but are tolerant to others' positions. The Progress Foreclosed type is similar to Kroger's (1995) "developmental" foreclosure, individuals who are willing to enter into a moratorium. The Fanatic Foreclosed type is similar to "closed foreclosed" (Archer & Waterman, 1990), or "firm" foreclosure (Kroger, 1995), individuals who are dogmatic about their commitments. Finally, Advanced Diffused Greek Cypriots avoided exploring or being committed to politics because of their anti-political attitudes; similar to Archer and Waterman's (1990) "alienated diffusion," which represents anger towards society. The Indifferent Diffused type is similar to the "refuser" (Cote & Levine, 2002) who refuses the entry to adulthood. The

nine political types apart from fitting all participants, add a deeper, more valid meaning to the four original categories.

### *Political identity in context*

The nine political types are the product of a relatively homogeneous macro-context but the different layers of context such as gender, type of school, and SES appear to have their own impact on the formation of these identities. Political EOMEIS-based identity statuses, on the other hand, are only associated with gender but not with type of school or SES (Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008).

The finding from EOMEIS-2 (Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008), that males belong to a foreclosed identity status was supported for some males, whereas others showed political indifference. The Fanatic Foreclosed male adolescents are distinguished by strong dedication to a political party or ideology accompanied by political intolerance. Males' dispositional agency and separateness (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001) seem to be reinforced by social expectations of political involvement, long army service, and the responsibility for defending Cyprus. The Fanatic Foreclosed type represents a recognizable political type in the Greek Cypriot political context that has been identified and studied in other contexts. For example, Bernstein (1996) identified the fundamentalist identity that reflects traditional values and beliefs. Rokeach (1960) found that people who have a "closed belief system" (not keen to change) are more likely to embrace ideologies that are based on authoritarianism and intolerance.

In contrast to the EOMEIS-2 results that showed females to be diffused in their political identity (Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008), using a person-centered approach, the same sample of females adolescents were significantly represented in Achieved in Progress and Progress Foreclosed. These contradictory results demonstrate the implications of the different

methods of data collection and analysis. EOMEIS-2 classified participants in four statuses on the basis of responses to a limited number of fixed statements. When the same female adolescents were asked to explain their position in their own words, and these responses were then grouped into nine more precise types, the resulting categories were more valid. The results can be also explained by the specific context. Both Greek Cypriot female and male adolescents grew up in a traditional political context, where party affiliation is a family tradition, but females perhaps due to their relational self (Gilligan, 1982) were more open to explore others' opinions and were more tolerant.

The nine political types vary across type of school. The difference between the politically engaged private school students (Fanatic Foreclosed or Beginning Moratorium) and politically alienated technical school students (Indifferent Diffused) might be due to their educational attainment, different school ethos and different SES. The private school students show high educational achievements and they are most commonly coming from the upper class, while students of technical schools are usually those with the poorest grades, usually coming from working class families. Similarly, Banks et al. (1992) showed that interest in politics was substantially higher for students in the higher attainment groups and substantially lower for those in the lower attainment groups. On the other hand, the humanistic education of state schools mediates the qualities of Democracy such as exploration of various political positions and tolerance, which characterize the Achieved in Progress and Advanced Foreclosed types, significant amongst state school adolescents. According to Frazer and Emler (1997) the range of educational experiences and accomplishments in adolescence has been shown to be strongly linked in a variety of ways to political outcomes.



There was a noteworthy political distinction between upper and working classes. Upper class adolescents were the most politically engaged group; they were classified into the True Achieved and the True Moratorium. In contrast, working class adolescents were classified into the Indifferent Diffused type. A similar diversity in levels of political engagement has been found among British and German adolescents; political engagement was highest among the adolescents from the upper class (i.e., professional families) (Bynner et al., 2003); while “building operative lads” were rather apolitical (Banks et al., 1992) or lower school track adolescents were politically alienated (Gniewosz, Noack, & Buhl, 2009). This finding for working class students echoes the notion that the educational system contributes to social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

#### *Limitations, future directions and conclusion*

The analysis of the open-ended questions exhibited some weaknesses. The open-ended questions were scored by the researcher, who is a member of the Greek Cypriot community and, thus, potentially biased in some of her judgments. Moreover, it is not possible to be confident that a respondent does not act in a certain way or believe things merely because they do not mention it. The patterns of predictive validity we observed suggest that even though this cluster solution might not be the optimal that could be achieved, it nevertheless capture enough systematic variance across people to reveal how such people tend to differ on a wide range of study variables (and that these differences were predicted by theory). Finally, a longitudinal design, would offer more complete knowledge of the transitions of participants’ identity types; factors that might influence the flexibility or stability of these identities types; and of the role of social processes within natural contexts that influence political identity formation.



These nine political types, emerging from an inductive analysis, provide meaningful, instantly recognizable types. They capture both the content (values, beliefs, attitudes) and the process, aligned to ISP. Their greater validity makes clearer the relationship between political identity and contextual factors. Most importantly, healthy political participation amongst Greek Cypriot adolescents is cultivated by their high interest in politics, active exploration, democratic attitudes and commitment to politics as a duty.

Table 1 – *Conceptual and operational definitions of political identity content variables*

Category name	%	Interest in Politics	Value
High interest	10	Dealing with politics with dedication, holding a clear political position, being well informed about political matters and viewing political activity as an essential part of their identity.	3
Interest	44	Dealing with politics, either holding a political position or being inclined to form one, and viewing political activity as a part of their identity.	2
Low interest	24	Dealing with politics as part of general social activity with no real political position, and viewing political activity as an insignificant part of their identity.	1
No interest	22	Not dealing with politics at all, having no political interest, or being anti-politics. Politics does not make up part of their identity.	0
Commitment to Politics			
Committed to politics as a duty	10	Pre-occupation with the politics, especially the politics of their country, active involvement by forming and expressing political views. Commitment to a particular party could be present, but this is not the priority.	3

Committed to a party	39	Supporting the political views and directions of a particular Greek Cypriot political party.	2
Undecided	17	Considering the political views of a party or political views of various parties, but not decided yet about supporting a particular party.	1
Anti-politics	11	Being actively against politicians, political parties and politics.	-1
No political commitment	22	Holding no political views, or any political involvement, or any intention to be involved with politics.	0*
Not mentioned	1	No mention of any of the above categories.	0
Exploring Politics			
Past exploration	9	Taking a political position after a process of comprehensive exploration. Clearly, the exploration was done in the past.	3
Present exploration	33	Currently, either exploring a political position, or exploring different political positions.	2
Future exploration	8	The mention of an intention to explore political positions in the future.	1
No exploration	41	Either the adoption of a political position without exploration, or no political position, and no exploration of any political position(s).	0*
Not mentioned	9	No mention of any of the above categories.	0
Political Tolerance			
Tolerant	14	Support a political position, but accept that other people's political positions are of equal worth. Respect when they discuss different political positions with other people. This is a democratic political attitude.	3
Open-minded	23	They are open to other people's political positions, which inform their own political choices. They are, either, exploring political positions, or they have just chosen one. This is a liberal political attitude.	2
Not tolerant	6	Support a political position, but do not accept that other people's political positions are of equal worth. They do not show respect when they listen to and discuss different political positions with other people. This is a fanatical political attitude.	1
Avoiding politics	39	Avoid discussing anything concerning politics, either because they do not want to reveal their political position, or because of disinterest in politics, or because they are anti-politics.	-1
Not mentioned	18	No mention of any of the above categories.	0
Political Input			
Not follow family	5	They do not follow their parents' political views. They either adopt a different political position within their parents' political ideology, or they support a different political party.	3

Questioning family	5	They follow their parents' political views, but they question them, or they are sceptical on several issues.	2
Follow family	15	They follow their parents' political views.	1
Not mentioned	75	No mention of any of the above categories.	0

Note=1038, Missing=13

\*The "no mention" category was given the same value as the "no political commitment" / "no exploration" category, which is zero, because the participants who did not mention the category showed that political commitment / political exploration was not a salient element in their political identity content.

Table 2 - *Political types and political identity statuses*

Nine Political Types	Political Identity Statuses					N			
	Achievement	Moratorium	Foreclosure	Diffusion					
True Achieved	32%	8.1*	53%	3.4*	13%	-2.8*	2%	-8.1*	215
Achieved in Progress	30%	3.6*	62%	3.2*	6%	-2.8*	2%	-4.1*	64
Foreclosed-Achieved	9%		33%		50%	6.3*	8%	-2.9*	64
True Moratorium	7%	-2.3*	67%	4.9*	17%		9%	-3.3*	92
Progress Foreclosed	7%		21%	-4*	47%	6.1*	25%		72
Fanatic Foreclosed	25%	2.8*	31%	-2.3*	37%	4.2*	7%	-3.6*	86
Beginning Moratorium	10%		62%	3.3*	11%		17%		71
Advanced Diffused	4%	-3.6*	40%		14%		42%	6*	137
Indifferent Diffused	5%	-4.8*	30%	-4.6*	13%	-2.7*	52%	12.1*	224

\* Only those Adjusted Standardized Residuals that indicate significant types at the .05 level (equal or higher than +1.96 or -1.96) are presented

Table 3 - Political types across gender, type of school and SES

Nine Political Types	N	Gender		Type of School			Socio-economic Status		
		Males N=441	Females N=584	State N=804	Technical N=147	Private N=74	Upper N=225	Middle N=383	Working N=417
True achieved	215	22%	20%	21%	20%	19%	28% 2.9*	20%	18%
Achieved in Progress	64	3%	8% 3.3*	7% 2.1*	4%	1%	6%	9% 2.4*	4% -2.1*
Foreclosed-Achieved	64	6%	7%	7%	5%	3%	8%	5%	6%
True Moratorium	92	7%	10%	10%	4% -2.2*	12%	13% 2.6*	4% -4.2	11%
Progress Foreclosed	72	4%	10% 3.7*	8% 2.5*	3% -2.2*	4%	5%	9%	6%
Fanatic Foreclosed	86	14% 5.7*	4%	7% -3.4*	11%	20% 3.8*	8%	9%	9%
Beginning Moratorium	71	5%	8%	7%	5%	14% 2.3*	8%	6%	7%
Advanced Diffused	137	14%	13%	13%	13%	11%	12%	14%	14%
Indifferent Diffused	224	25% 2.1*	20%	20% -2.7*	35% 4.1*	16%	12% -3.9*	24%	25% 2.0*

\* Only those Adjusted Standardized Residuals that indicate significant types at the .05 level (equal or higher than +1.96 or -1.96) are presented

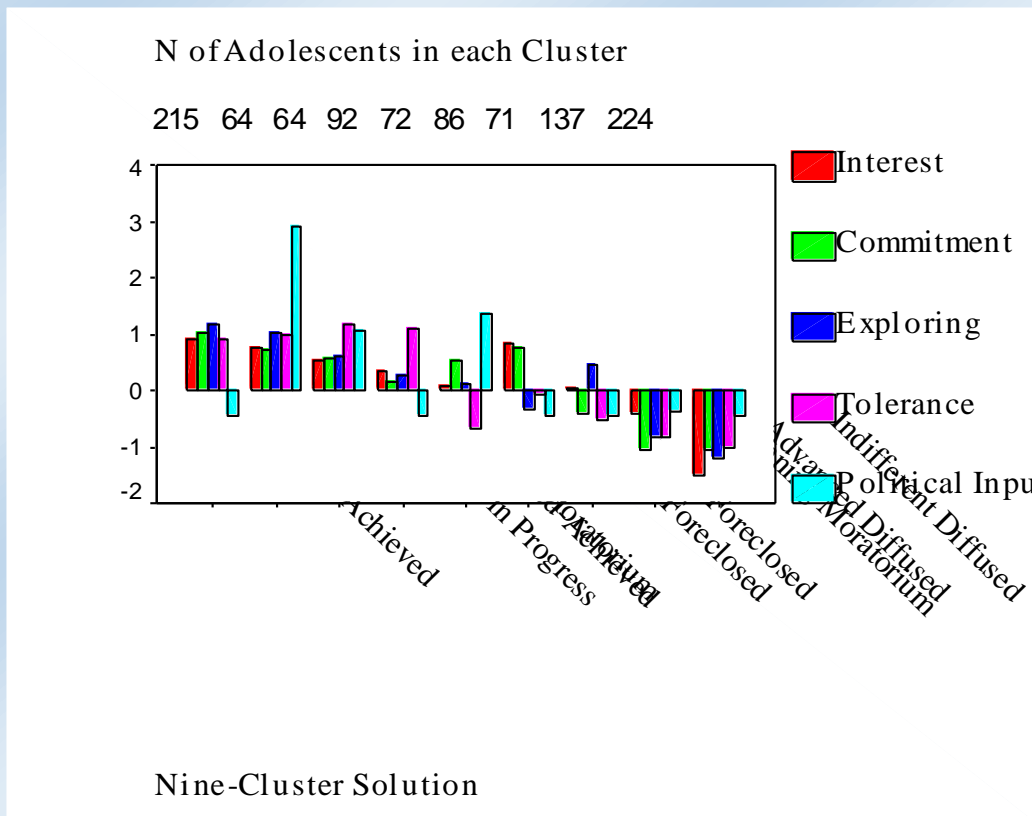




Fig. 1. Nine political types of Greek Cypriot adolescents

Note: The nine-cluster solution presents z-score means on the clustering variables by subgroup.

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