Greek-Cypriot Cinema post-1974: The *Akamas* controversy and national cinema. Contesting the 'nation's' time and narrative space. (Lisa Sokrates)

This paper investigates the space of film as a site of contestation, focusing on emerging Greek-Cypriot cinema in Cyprus post-1974. National cinema supported by the state becomes a nation- building project characterised by a homogeneous cultural practice in an endeavour to shape the 'nation's' identity. Greek-Cypriot cinema arguably conforms to what Benedict Anderson has termed an 'imagined community' (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* 1983). What 'counts' as Anderson argues is not that all communities are 'imagined', but the 'style' of their imagining. My paper considers Anderson's notion that a 'nation' is a 'solid community' moving 'up or down' history, which comes together through the fusion of the 'nation's' fraternity with time. Time in Anderson's thesis, is 'calendrical', linear and 'continuist'. My paper extends these ideas to a reading of a film case study entitled *Akamas* (Panicos Chrysanthou: 2006) the first Cypriot film to be selected by the jury at the Venice Film Festival. It was censored locally and banned by the Greek-Cypriot state from its screening with the assertion that it constructed a narrative which opposed the official documentation of recent historical events. As *Akamas* contests aspects of the nationalist movement in Cyprus, it resists the time of the 'nation' as public, linear and homogeneous, creating a heterogeneous narrative space. *Akamas* constructs an aberrant time which imagines an alternative 'Cypriot' identity, located in the same historical events, but from a location of difference. My paper navigates a reading of the off-screen controversies using Homi K Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994). As a counter-argument to Anderson, Bhabha invites its reader to reconceptualise the 'nation's'time and its ambivalent space in the interstices of official history cultural practice. I conclude by asking how far the contested space for the 'nation's' history centres on the relationship between past and present, and the contradictions between what it chooses to remember or forget.

Bio

Lisa Sokrates is currently based at University College London at the Centre for Intercultural Studies and my principle supervisor is Dr. Claire Thomson. My PhD research is an interdisciplinary study which engages with the national cinema of Cyprus and specifically Greek-Cypriot cinema which emerged distinctly since 1974. My thesis examines the theories of Anderson, Deleuze, Bakhtin and Foucault in attempting to conceptualise and theorise the relationship between'nation' and cinema through notions of both space and time.