

THE SOCIAL SPACE OF CONFLICT

Multiple Divisions and Everyday Dynamics in the Old City of Nicosia

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to the memory of my mother Niovi Chrysomallidou

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Abbreviations

AHDR	Association of Historical Dialogue and Research
AKEL	Anorthotikon Komma Ergazomenou Laou (Progressive Party of the Working People)
ANT.AR.T.E.S	Antikapitalistiki Aristeri Taksiki Epanastatiki Syspirosi (Anti-capitalist Left Class Revolutionary Coalition)
CCMC	Cyprus Community Media Centre
DISY	Dimokratikos Synagermos (Democratic Rally)
ECB	European Central Bank
EDON	Eniea Dimokratiki Organosi Neoleas (United Democratic Youth Organisation)
EOKA	Ethniki Organosi Kyprion Agoniston (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters)
ERAS	Epitropi gia mia Rizospastiki Aristeri Syspirosi (Committee for a Radical Left Rally)
EU	European Union
H4C	Home For Cooperation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KISA	Kinisi gia Isotita, Stiriksi, Antiratsismo (Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism)
NeDa	Nea Diethnistiki Aristera (New Internationalist Left)
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
PEO	Pancypria Ergatiki Omospondia (Pancyprian Federation of Labour)
PRIO	Peace Research Institute of Oslo
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
TRNC	Turkish Republic of North Cyprus
UNFICYP	United Nations Force In Cyprus

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Mending Wall

[...]

He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'

(Robert Frost, 1914)

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit erhofft sich als Dual-Experiment der Annäherung der Zypern-Frage aus einer räumlichen Perspektive zu dienen und zur Ausarbeitung der Produktion sozialen Raumes durch die Brille des Konflikts im Fall der geteilten Stadt von Nikosia, Zypern beizutragen. In diesem Zusammenhang ist Nikosia das eigentliche "sozialräumliche Labor", das uns die Möglichkeit bietet, unter die sichtbare Stadtmosaik zu "graben", mit Hinblick auf eine Stadt die aus Erinnerungen, Vergessenheit, Traumata, Sinnen, Gerüchen, kollektiven Aktionen, Bestrebungen, Stereotypen, Begeisterungen, Geistern und Träumen besteht. Eine Stadt, in der die alltäglichen Akteure durch Narrationen, Mappings und Handlungen einen Raum erzeugen, während sie uns zu einer neuen "Geographie" einladen, in der sich die Realität und die Phantasie begegnen und in der die Geheimnisse und die Erwartungen der Gemeinden unser Führer im Raum werden.

Aus dieser Sicht ist diese Dissertation grundsätzlich eine alternative Karte des geteilten Nikosia. Während die offizielle Karte der Stadt die physische Narbe der Grünen Linie und der Pufferzone abbildet und somit den türkisch-zyprischen Nordteil und den griechisch-zyprischen Südteil schafft, bin ich der Auffassung, dass es mehrere Spaltungen und Kontakte gibt, die durch die alltäglichen Dynamiken entstehen und die es wert sind auch abgebildet zu werden. In diesem Kontext hoffe ich eine Mapping-Methodologie zu bieten, die unsichtbare Grenzen offenbart, welche sowohl überschritten als auch vermieden werden und welche wahrscheinlich auch nach dem Abriss der Sichtbaren Grenzelemente bestehen bleiben werden. Im Rahmen der breiteren Debatte über die Produktion von Raum, sammle, bewerte, verwalte und erzähle ich von Felddaten, die sowohl als Eingabe für den Mapping-Prozess als auch als Ausgang für die Erstellung des Bildes der Stadt, dienen. Konkreter gesagt, schlage ich zwei Achsen vor: einerseits, den Raum, wie dieser im Bewusstsein der Menschen durch mündlich überlieferte Geschichte und durch mentale Mapping-Prozesse unter Einbeziehung lokaler Akteure reflektiert wird; und andererseits den gemeinsamen Raum der Nachfrage, wie dieser von Basisaktivismus und dem breiteren zivilen Raum produziert wird.

Ziel ist es, verschiedene Aspekte der Teilung zu beleuchten. In diesem Sinne setze ich mich mit den mentalen Repräsentationen von Konflikten, mit der aufstrebenden Suche nach Ganzheit und mit der Konfrontation zwischen

verschiedenen Dynamiken, welche eine Hegemonie über den gemeinsamen Raum verlangen, auseinander. Als Ergebnis schlage ich eine neue Lesung von Nikosia und ein tiefgreifenderes Verständnis der Produktion sozialen Raumes von Konflikten vor.

Abstract

This thesis hopes to serve as a dual experiment to approach the “Cyprus Problem” from a spatial perspective, while elaborating on the production of social space through the lens of conflict, in the case of the divided old city of Nicosia, Cyprus. In this framework, Nicosia is actually the “socio-spatial lab” that offers the opportunity to “dig” under the visible urban mosaic, towards a city made out of memory, oblivion, trauma, senses, smells, collective actions, aspirations, stereotypes, thrills, ghosts and dreams. A city, where the everyday actors produce a space through narrations, mappings and actions, while inviting us to a new “geography”, where reality meets imagination and the communities’ secrets and expectations become our guide in space.

From this perspective, this thesis is actually an alternative *map* of the divided Nicosia. While the official map of the city shows the physical scar of the Green Line and the Buffer Zone, creating the Turkish Cypriot North and the Greek Cypriot South, I suggest that there are multiple divisions and contacts produced by everyday dynamics that are worth to be *mapped*. In this context, I hope to offer a *mapping process* that reveals invisible borders being crossed or avoided, and which will probably remain even after the demolition of the visible ones. Within the broader debate on the production of space, I collect, evaluate, manage and narrate fieldwork data that serve both as an input to the mapping process and as an output for the creation of the city’s image. In particular, I suggest two axes: firstly, space in the mind as presented by oral history and mental mapping processes involving local everyday actors; and, secondly, the common space of demand as produced by grassroots activism and the broader civil space.

The goal is to shed light on different aspects of the division. In this sense, I elaborate on the mental representations of conflict, the emerging quest for wholeness and the confrontation of different dynamics that claim hegemony over common space. As a result, I come up with a new reading of Nicosia and a further understanding of the production of the social space of conflict.

INTRODUCTION

The starting point: Research hypothesis

“Stop solving the Cyprus Problem!” is a popular Greek expression for someone who talks a lot, trying to sort out something that cannot actually be solved. Alternatively, in the same expression, the “Middle East Problem” can replace the “Cyprus Problem” with exactly the same meaning. Two major geo-strategical, ethno-national, socio-political issues that politics, history and social movements seem unable to overcome. The “Cyprus Problem” marks a historical period of ethno-national, geo-strategical and socio-political conflicts, referring to the island and the Eastern Mediterranean as well as to the broader imperialist antagonisms. It is the symbol of the unsolvable conflict, at least in terms of the official diplomatic peace-talks. It represents the perpetual expectation, while confirming the idea that nothing is more permanent than the temporary. Or else it is about a “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005; Benjamin, 1969; Constantinou, 2008; Trimikliniotis, 2010) having already become the normality for the last fifty years¹. Or maybe not?

This thesis places itself among other attempts in the literature to elaborate on the “Cyprus Problem” and the Cypriot landscape of conflict. However, I keep a *spatial approach* supporting the idea that space is the terrain, where social relations are being produced and reproduced (Lefebvre [1974] 1991), while producing space in an ongoing process of *social spatialisation* (Shields, 1999). In other words, I aim to *use* space as a “projection wall” that *receives, represents and reproduces* physical, mental and social aspects of conflict. From this perspective, I keep the ethnic conflict as well as the geopolitical strategies in the background, while letting the ordinary everyday *actors*² tell their stories.

The central thought behind this research is to reveal and mark the multiple divisions and contacts in the capital city of Nicosia beyond the visible ones, in order to tackle a question and its inverse: “Is it possible to reunite the city by demolishing the physical border?” and “Is a physical border enough to

¹ When referring to the “Cyprus Problem” the current dissertation does not refer only to the de facto division in 1974 but rather to the beginning of the intercommunal conflicts in late 50’s and early 60’s.

² I am using the term *actors* in a sense that underlines their role of everyday individuals being active in the process of the production of social space. I will constantly refer to the people involved in this process by the term *actors*, which will only be replaced by the term *participants* that refers to those who have participated within the fieldwork process.

divide a city?" My *central research question*, however, will be:

"Will the city of Nicosia remain a *divided city* even *without borders*?"

This question is provocative, its intention, however, is not to unfold a discussion about predictions and visionary plans. Additionally, I would not underestimate the great value of a future demolition of the border. However, I attempt to put forth the idea that divisions and contacts go beyond the physical level to a *holistic* perception of the production of space, both in real (physical and social) and mental (imaginary) terms.

While the above questions are the starting points and motivations of this research, a central research aim emerges. The *aim* of the thesis is to examine the social space of conflict being the dialectical contradiction of state power and social dynamics (Kotsakis, 2012). This contradiction is treated as central in the production of social space, while being further analysed in the particular landscape of conflict in the walled city of Nicosia. While the "Cyprus Issue" has been mainly studied in terms of inter-imperialist power relations or in terms of local urban conflicts and "geographical divisions", apart from some vital exceptions, I suggest a *space* were these scales, viewpoints and dialectics meet and confront, while being grounded on a terrain that can provide their *image*. From this perspective, I propose a reading of the *common space* being a crossroads of different socio-spatial qualities, while reflecting scales, dynamics, potentials and contestations from a holistic perspective.

Questioning the perception that a landscape of conflict is mainly the product of dominant national strategies and narratives, I elaborate on the social process of Nicosia's transformation into a city of multiple separations and contacts between the two main communities; i.e. the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, and beyond³. The final goals are to "map" those multiple divisions and contacts and create the city's image as "an overlap of the various individual and collective images" (Lynch, 1960:5).

In this introductory chapter, I do not only lay out what I am going to elaborate on in the next pages, but also what I am *not* going to do. I am *not* going to predict what a possible future solution will look like⁴ and what kind of

³ Shortly yet sharply, I elaborate on the *third actor*, providing a *mapping* of the migrants' presence within the old city of Nicosia, who constitute an *invisible* for dominant public discourse, yet significant component for the city socio-spatial life.

⁴ Anna Grichting et al. (2012) offer another viewpoint of a spatial approach, proposing a visionary master of the city in the case of its reunification. However, my study is occupied with an alternative reading of the multiple socio-spatial partition that could be also perceived as an alternative pathway to transcend them.

impacts it will have on urban life. On the contrary, I hope to contribute to the deeper and fuller understanding of the current situation and its various dynamics keeping a holistic approach towards socio-spatial contestations. Secondly, I am *not* going to propose a visionary master plan for a future reunified Nicosia. Although such examples have my full attention (Nicosia Master Plan; Grichting, de Castrillo, Keszi and Frangoudi, 2012), my work is strictly occupied with a new reading of the social space of conflict and the re-conceptualisation of the divided landscape. Finally, I will *not* apply a certain theory to my case study nor follow a delimited theoretical trend. Instead, my plan is to place my work within the broader debate, present theoretical and methodological “imaginary dialogues” among theorists and scholars and finally contribute to theory tackling my research questions.

The question of what: Overview of aims and questions

When living in a divided city, it is almost impossible to avoid one question run through your mind every now and then. When conducting research on a divided city this question becomes inevitable: What is going to happen if the city will be reunified again? This question has not only been a provocative one seeking for solutions, answers and predictions; it has mostly been a motive to work on the divided city of Nicosia in the first place. After my first visit in 2010, I realised that a possible future reunification would cause a new complex rearrangement in a world that although unfair was now taken for granted.

My research hypothesis is what could be considered as “bad news” in the case of a future solution as long as I argue that even after the city’s reunification, Nicosia will remain divided in different terms. That said I have to immediately deny the role of Cassandra or any other role that speaks the word of predicting. Instead, I understand such a hypothesis as a starting point to reveal multiple divisions beyond the physical one that might need other processes or much more time to be healed.

However, before even starting this research work, I had to answer a question to myself in the first place and afterwards share the response. Why have I chosen a divided city anyway? This question had been continuously running through my mind and although it follows each single line throughout

the current book, I will provide a “spoiler” already. The question becomes even tougher, since I strongly support the idea that each and every city has certain visible or invisible divisions. Calame and Charlesworth (2009:2) put it precisely when arguing “since all cities reflect local demographics in spatial terms, each can be located somewhere on a continuum between perfect spatial integration and complete separation”. But still, what makes physically divided cities fruitful case studies for research on socio-spatial conflict?

Divided cities possess the critical factor: they are *actually* divided. They have already transformed the danger of a possible social “explosion” into reality. There is no longer a need to “worry” about a potential disaster since it is already there, before one starts to explore its consequences. The worst scenario has been already realised and things can only go better or at least remain the same. I have chosen a divided city because it is an extreme case or else a socio-spatial lab, where phenomena can be examined in an extreme condition. I support the idea that the truth is always on the edge and therefore I hope to provide methodological tools and research findings that “extrapolate and visualise dangers inherent in normalcy” (Clegg et al., 2006:21; Ek, 2007:11).

It is correct to argue that every city has certain partitions or segregations. The city of Nicosia is not the only example where different kinds of boundaries, beyond the physical border, separate people, neighbourhoods or activities⁵. There are even several cases where physical borders reflect class, cultural, religious, gender or other separations in spatial terms creating *ghettos* or *gated communities* (Blakely & Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003; Marcuse, 1997; Wehrheim, 1999).

Calame and Charlesworth (2009:2) describe partitioned cities as “warning beacons” for all cities where “intercommunal rivalry threatens normal urban functioning and security”. But then again, what are walls and visible physical borders necessary for? Why do they keep on being constructed, when contemporary methods of surveillance could easily replace them? Especially in the city of Nicosia, why should there be a border made of barbed wire or sandbags or barrels in the South and another one made of more stable, permanent materials in the North (Papadakis, 2000), instead of other surveillance and discipline methods such as cameras, alarms or fibre optic

⁵ In my diploma thesis, I have conducted a comparative study between the cities of Berlin, Nicosia and Jerusalem. In this context, I had the chance to have a first taste of urban divisions and extrapolate the discussion to an understanding of contemporary cities worldwide.

sensors?

From the Berlin Wall to the current Israel/Palestine border and from Belfast to the big wall constructed on the border between the US and Mexico, the partition had to be *visible*. As Michel Foucault points out, “traditionally, power was what was seen, what was shown and what was manifested” (Foucault, [1975] 1977:187). Power and dominance are manifested only when they leave their print on a space that is both the product and the (re-) producer of social relations, as Lefebvre suggests (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991). Moreover, in contested places, space becomes a battlefield of conflicting interests where inclusions and exclusions occur in order that the rulers may guarantee a cohesive national, social or cultural identity, or else to protect what Calame and Charlesworth (2009) call a “threatened identity”. Each physical or social partition emerges from the need to define the *self* by defining, at the same time, what it does *not* constitute, so that people “recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places” (Oktay, 2002:261).

The divided city of Nicosia is a *place of discipline*. Not only because of the army forces that control large areas or the UN troops who are placed in the buffer zone⁶ or even the check-points, where everyone is obliged to show his/her ID card or his/her passport⁷. The city of Nicosia is a *place of discipline* where one's *identity* is defined “by space, by the side one belongs to, by the place one occupies, and by the gap that separates one from the others” (Foucault, [1975] 1977: 145). In such a framework, where the *political landscape of conflict* (Kliot & Mansfield, 1997) involves both spatial and social partitions on both a real and mental level, this research wishes to unearth and evaluate these relations.

The theoretical background is formed by an extraction of crucial arguments out of a larger pool of ideas in the existing literature. It constitutes the pivotal frame composed by notions and analysis already suggested by authors and theoretical trends. I invite a large palette of theorists to sit round an

⁶ Cyprus buffer zone is controlled by the United Nations and patrolled by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force (UNPF). It is everyday image in the city of Nicosia to see UNPF troops and vans in the city's streets approaching the UN buffer zone in the middle of the city.

⁷ In order to cross from the southern Greek Cypriot side to the northern part, one has to show his/her ID or passport and complete a form provided by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) check-point, operating as a *visa*, where one completes *name, passport/ID number* and *nationality*. This paper is being stamped and signed by the authorities twice, in the entrance and the exit, while it has no expire date. Since the opening of the barricades was an official decision by the TRNC authorities there is no equivalent procedure in the South, where one just shows the ID/Passport, while sometimes one has to prove that he/she does not carry any supplies from the north (food, tobacco and other products). However, the check-points operate in a quite “comfortable atmosphere”.

“imaginary roundtable” and unfold their conceptualisation regarding certain points. The born framework is the starting point for my own conceptual framework within which I form my own viewpoint to deal with the current study. This conceptual framework will then “communicate” with the certain case study, indicating concrete methodological tools in order to proceed to the core of the research.

In this sense, I firstly clarify the perspective from which I see the case of divided Nicosia, suggesting a *spatial approach* that hopes to furthermore provide a holistic analysis of the Cyprus Problem. Secondly, I enter the realm of theory in order to understand the production of space and the significant contribution of *spatiality* (Castells ([1972] 1977); Harvey (1973); Massey (2005); Soja (1996); et al.) in the understanding of social life. Thirdly, I let the factor of *conflict* enter the debate and therefore construct a conceptual framework that would help socio-spatial contestations unfold. At this point, the specific issue of divided cities reveal another vital gamma in the existing literature that helps to understand physical aspects of the division with respect to urban borders’ mental representations, referring to individual and collective perceptual systems and the construction of socio-spatial stereotypes as well as social aspects of spatial partition with reference to a contested common space that seeks to be reclaimed.

In this context, I argue that the social space of conflict is actually the common space, where contradictory dynamics (state power and the social sphere) claim hegemony over visibilities towards the production of socio-spatial totalities. *Space* is understood within the suggested Lefebvrian triad (1974 [1991]), being *perceived* referring to the concrete, physical space where people live, act, work etc. in their everyday lives; *conceived* referring to the representations of space concerning all mental constructions and ideas of space, usually carried out by experts or rulers; *lived* referring to the *spatialisation* (Shields, 1999) of social order, being not just a passive stage on which social life unfolds, but representing a constituent element of social life (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991; Soja, 1996; Purcell, 2002). Moreover, *social space* is understood as the realm where dialectics of power and dialectics of the social sphere (Kotsakis, 2012) confront, forming or reclaiming *visibilities*: enclosure with respect to state power and reclaiming with respect to the social sphere and the dynamics of resistance. Finally, the *social space of conflict* is perceived as the space of the absent wholeness, since visible borders create the invisible “other”, while invisible

stereotyped images create dominant visibilities.

The above constitute the basis, the motive for research. The way I will further examine how the already mentioned contradictory dynamics confront within the social space of conflict revolves round two main axes: *socio-spatial mental representations of conflict* and *the common space of demand*. In this sense, I organise my fieldwork in two separate rounds that will further “meet” in the construction of joint conclusions.

Firstly, I elaborate on the mental representations of the social space of conflict in a *narrative* and a *mapping* process. I conduct unstructured interviews combined with a mental mapping process that hope to reveal personal stories, attitudes towards the other, traumas, expectations, emotional involvement and the ways all these interact with spatial information and perception. I argue that in this way mental walls unfold confirming the idea that they will replace the physical one after a possible reunification. The findings of the above process could be analysed in five key-elements of perception:

(i) the “home”; (ii) the “border”; (iii) “the symbol of the other”; (iv) the “routines” and (v) the interrelation of emotional involvement and spatial information. Interestingly, this five key-elements can be further linked to the five key-elements introduced by Kevin Lynch (1960) that, according to him, compose the *image of the city*: (i) the “districts”; (ii) the “edges”; (iii) the “landmarks”; (iv) the routes and (v) the nodes, corresponding to the formerly mentioned elements.

I find it quite interesting that the participants narrate and map conflict including those five elements, that accordingly correspond to (i) the private space; (ii) the common space; (iii) the political space; (iv) the public space and (v) the lived space, being critical components of the dialectics of power and the dialectics of the social sphere within the social space of conflict, as I will thoroughly argue.

In this sense, interesting questions emerge: If private space refers to “home”, then in what way is it re-conceptualised in a landscape of conflict, especially in the case of Nicosia, where the *property issue* is a crucial part of the broader Cyprus Problem? If common space refers to the border of the Green Line or to the “edge” in Lynch’s sense, then in which ways does it delineate the actor’s world? If political space refers to mnemonic policies, landmarks and symbols, then what is the symbol of the “other” in a landscape of conflict? If public space refers to the inscriptions one makes through certain routines, then

what kind of crossings and avoidances emerge? Finally, if lived space is the spatial moment of social life, then how do the actors inscribe themselves within the nodes of space according to their emotional involvement with the “other”?

Secondly, on another level, I elaborate on the common space of demand, where action and resolve enter the debate leading me towards collective and civil space as components of the common space. In this framework, I organise my fieldwork round two axes: firstly, I elaborate on the existence of an emerging political subjectivity of grassroots activism that acts within the old city of Nicosia on both sides as well as in a common space. I elaborate on its timeline, perspectives, goals, weaknesses and potentials through the lens of the “Occupy Buffer Zone” movement, while arguing that, although fragile and bitty, it plays an important role for the reclaiming of the common space through an emerging right to the city.

On the other hand, I am interested to explore the institutional level of civil space with respect to inter-communal platforms of cooperation that act in and contribute to the common space of demand. Interestingly, different *shades of common* emerge, while a low interaction of collective and civil space highlights a rather problematic front of resistance towards a transcending of visible and invisible borders.

However, the above aspects hope to reveal both problems and potentials, confirming the initial hypothesis not in a pessimistic way but rather in a way to suggest possible “little rooms” to break through. After all, one could possess the optimistic view that the very existence of a physical border is the most significant manifestation of pre-existing and potential dynamics of freedom.

The question of where: Defining a space of research

One of the first decisions to make was *where* to place the research. The definition of a space of research is crucial in order to handle the data and findings in a specific spatial entity. In the case of divided Nicosia, the research setting should include relatively equal parts of both sides, a variety of land use, a historical significance and a sufficient population sample⁸. To satisfy all of the above criteria, the setting chosen to serve as a space of research is the old city of

⁸ Later I will find out that the old city is a unique entity in terms of its inhabitants, too, with a distinction between the “insiders” and the “outsiders”, forming what I will later call “the Old City’s crowd”.

Nicosia, surrounded by the cyclical Venetian walls.

The old city of Nicosia, surrounded by the cyclical Venetian walls, undoubtedly creates a whole that is divided into two almost equal parts by the Green Line: the Turkish Cypriot North and the Greek Cypriot South. The Venetian Walls constitute a *common historical reference*, which both sides employ in their symbols and maps of the city. As Yannis Papadakis points out, “both sides’ shared Eurocentric outlooks are revealed as long as both regard the Venetian monument as unproblematically ‘their own’ or as part of their heritage linking them with ‘the West’” (Papadakis, 2006).

However, what makes the Walled City most interesting is the fact that the Venetian fortifications constitute the city's first *border*. The first version of the city's walls dates back to the Lusignan period⁹. The function of the wall was basically “to protect from the anarchy of the countryside and from possible invasions and attacks” (Atun and Doratli, 2009). While functioning as a shelter for the ones included, it was also a defensive border from the ones excluded. It defined inside and outside in spatial terms, yet that was never enough to prevent each enemy from finally invading the city. From the Venetian rule to the Ottomans and the British, the cyclical Walls functioned very much like “cell membranes, porous at the gates, but resistant and protective along the other parts” (Atun and Doratli, 2009). Beyond the *visible*, physical wall there were also *invisible* cultural, religious or language “walls”. The walled city was perceived as a safe place *without* and *against* the “others”, while including different divisions and contacts within its embrace. For instance, it is interesting to note, with reference to the contemporary condition that, in the period of the Ottoman rule, the Muslims used to live in the northern part of the city, while the Orthodox in the southern (Kliot & Mansfield, 1997; Papadakis, 2006).

Coming back to the present day, in such a context, the Green Line and the buffer zone between the two borderlines constitute *a wall inside the wall*. However, two different conceptual qualities of the term emerge. Following the thought of Peter Marcuse (1997), walls produce and reflect *fear* as well as *security*. On one hand, the Wall *around* the city and on the other the Wall *inside* the city: the one that includes in order to protect and another that divides and leads to increasing insecurity and absence of trust. The cyclical shape of an embrace and the linear shape of a cut or rupture coexist, turning the Old City of Nicosia from a closed entity in the middle of Cyprus into a contested place on

⁹ It is the period of “Frankish Nicosia”, from 1192-1489.

the edge of two different states and worlds. In this configuration, the borderline represents the peak of both separation and contact between the two sides.

During my research, I stayed in various places in order to experience different neighbourhoods and viewpoints of the area. For a period of eight months, I rented a house in the Old City's quarter of Agios Kassianos¹⁰, named after the homonymous local church. The simultaneous sound of the Muezzin five times a day, giving a recorded call for prayer, and the church bells best describe that liminal neighbourhood. In that neighbourhood, I had the chance to live among locals, who had experienced the days of the war there, but also among newcomers, who are part of the neighbourhood's *regeneration*, and foreigners, either immigrants or people working for the United Nations. From this starting point, I became a *wonderer* in the city trying to “map” its spatial qualities as well as its social functions.

My background as an architect inevitably had its influence on my research. In that sense, while exploring the various social separations, I keep on translating them into my discipline's “vocabulary”. I have wandered a lot in that part of Nicosia, among several different architectural movements “stuck” next to each other forming a unique farrago, where Ottoman buildings stand together with modernist houses, Victorian balconies or colonial architecture. At one and the same time, this environment is a landscape of war and conflict, physically divided by a borderline, whilst also being the only area included in one bi-communal Master Plan with two sections working under the supervision of the United Nations Development Programme, as I will discuss later.

The Old City looks like a colourful urban *mosaic* of different spatial qualities, from gentrified neighbourhoods to ghost-areas and from immigrants' neighbourhoods to commercial, touristic zones. This mosaic resembles a *compressed air can*: history, trauma, “we” and the “others”, past, present and future are all gathered and highly compressed in a rather small space, where one side is just a few steps away from the other. This remarkable proximity of both parts constitutes another reason why the Old City has been chosen as a space of research.

¹⁰ Ayios Kassianos quarter is on the eastern part of the city by the Green Line. As I describe in a next chapter, the city has been divided into 25 quarters since the British rule, in 1878.

The question of when: Defining a period of research

The definition of a research period regards the way this thesis will deal with the past, the present and the future of the case study. It is self-evident that the historical process of Cyprus' and Nicosia's transformation is crucial since "the sense of the past as a collective continuity of experience remains surprisingly important" (Hobsbawm, 1972). By unfolding the origins of the Cyprus Issue "from the era of high Victorian imperialism to the EU enlargement and the transformation of Cyprus into the 'anomaly' of new Europe" (Anderson, 2008) and the involvement of Cyprus within the domino of capitalist crisis, we get a broader picture of the past, which is at the same time "the pattern for the present" (Hobsbawm, 1972).

The question of *when*, however, does not only refer to the historical process of transformation but it is also about the historical context within which the current work chooses to place itself. As part of a spatial approach, *time* is perceived here in relation to *space*. As Lefebvre argues, "*space* is nothing but the inscription of *time* in the world, while the city is the deployment of time... of those who are its inhabitants" (Lefebvre, [1992] 2004; Sields, 1999). Therefore, the social spatialisation of the urban life in a landscape of conflict carries both the load of history and the promise of the forthcoming future. It carries the scars of the past and the potential healing. This thesis perceives space and time in a dialectical relation within a spatialisation process of memory and oblivion.

The period of research and the timeline in which the thesis places itself is the period after the opening of the barricades, i.e., Ledra Palace Crossing in 2003 and Ledras/Lokmaci Crossing in 2008¹¹. The opening of the barricades merged past, present and future, both in terms of space and time. The penetrable Green Line still carries the load of the historical division, while at the same time offering a taste of a future reunification. It resembles a provocative keyhole to the "other" side and a common existence, calling for an imaginary prediction for the future. As Eric Hobsbawm might have insisted "there is, of course, no theoretical necessity for specifying the future, but in practice the demand to predict or to set up a model for it is too strong to be shrugged off" (Hobsbawm, 1972).

Moreover, during the last ten years, crucial changes occurred with

¹¹ However, while the fieldwork was coming to an end, Cyprus entered a new era placing itself within the domino of the capitalist crisis. I perceive this junction point as a new era, still developing and unfortunately only shortly discussed here.

respect to the use and value of land, population characteristics, gentrification and varying urban activities, which create the current image of the contested old city¹². This game between past, present and future takes place within all phases of my fieldwork. During my interviews, for instance, I was interested in the actors' personal stories and memories of the past as present narratives, their desire regarding the future and their actions within the present.

The question of who: Defining the actors

Apart from the interviewing procedure, this work would not have been the same if I had not had the opportunity to live in the old city for a sufficient period of time. In this sense, when I am referring to the participants I mean both selected ones, with whom I have conducted the interviews, as well as friends, neighbours and colleagues with whom I have spent much time talking and developing a more personal relation and a broader "sense of the city". Although I am not in the position to write down in detail every unstructured discussion and personal observation, those elements play the role of the broader atmosphere affecting the pages that follow. My constant will and effort was to develop a closer, more personal contact with people on both sides. However, due to several limitations and obstacles, this was not possible in the way I would have wished. Certain *language restrictions* prevented me from developing an equal relation with both Greek¹³ and Turkish Cypriots, revealing at the same time a first-hand experience of an "invisible border". Thus, the interviewing process, conducted in the equivalent mother tongues, kept a satisfying balance, covering a sufficient spectrum of actors.

The selection of the participants adheres to the research methodology guidelines regarding the fieldwork. All groups of informants act in what I call the *common space*, since they are people who perceive the old city as the collective space, that is, the enlargement of their personal Space; they have a

¹² In the period of my fieldwork, i.e. during 2010-2012, I personally witnessed significant changes in terms of gentrification on both sides of the city and beyond the city's walls. It is safe to argue that Nicosia turns into a contemporary urban sprawl.

¹³ Here I mean that although speaking in Greek was no problem, Greek Cypriots speak the Cypriot dialect, which is often difficult for Greeks (like me) to understand. Additionally, for the Greek Cypriots to speak the Greek language as spoken in Greece can be sometimes an effort. However, after spending efficient time in the city, I was in the position to understand and even speak the dialect, which "released" the Cypriots from "kalamarizo" (Cypriot expression for Greek Cypriots who speak the language with no dialect as spoken in Greece).

certain relationship to or emotional involvement with that part of the city, either because they are locals or shop-owners or regulars etc. Similarly, they compose civil space as a dialectical component of political space as long as they are the certain public body, which forms an entity, without ignoring the national, class, gender, religious and other distinctions.

However, anyone who has ever visited the walled city of Nicosia knows very well that the *actors*, at least within the city's walls, are *not* just two. The 2011 census states that 22,42% of the general population living in the quarters of the old city in the south are immigrants and citizens of third countries, while another 20,32% are non-Cypriot EU citizens. At the same time, the 2006 census for the northern part shows that 56,54% of the general population comes from Turkey, while another 17,32 has double citizenship (Cypriot and other), and finally 1,77% come from other countries. These percentages, together with the everyday experience of migrants' visible presence, suggest that there is a crucial *third actor*¹⁴ within the process of the social spatialisation of conflict.

Most of these people are not emotionally involved with the city's and the island's division; they do not have first-hand experience of the conflict, nor personal or family stories about it. Moreover, in the north, people coming from Turkey and do not possess the Cypriot citizenship¹⁵, are not even allowed to cross the border, and therefore have no perception of the other half of the city:

“While Cypriots and European tourists poured along the newly opened thoroughfare, immigrants on each side of the checkpoints stared with curiosity across a barrier that they remained unable to cross” (Hatay and Bryant, 2009).

The presence of the *third actor*, thus far undervalued among studies regarding the “Cyprus Issue”, is a crucial point in my work. I present a detailed mapping of their presence that leads to the construction of the city's image with new invisible walls and segregations in psycho-geographical terms beyond the visible concrete one.

¹⁴ I am referring to non-Cypriot citizens, either EU citizens or migrants from third countries. Furthermore, I focus on the economic migrants and not to “privileged” migration.

¹⁵ Often there is no distinction between the waves of settlers who came from Turkey and the immigrants. Although I am not in the position to *map* them separately, I underline the distinction.

The outline

The *first chapter* serves as a travelogue in the old city of Nicosia. Cyprus carries one interesting contradiction: it is a small place with a big history. In Cyprus' historical background throughout centuries, invaders and different conflicting interests are protagonists of a constant competition to control the island due to its significant geographical and strategic position. In contemporary times it is part of the imperialist antagonisms, while taking a position in Europe's periphery and the domino of the capitalist crisis. However, as this chapter serves as the historical background against which the current study develops, I mainly focus on what Eric Hobsbawm calls a "sense of the past", still existing and determining present and future transformations.

Moreover, insisting in a spatial approach, I argue that space can serve as a canvas to explore historical inscriptions and erasures of power and everyday dynamics, while forming a thread that links the past to the present and the future. In this sense, I propose a "travelogue" within the walled city of Nicosia, where *historicality* of space contextualises best the current research. From this perspective, I focus on periods, junction points and significant moments that describe best the historical context of the current problematic. Furthermore, this "travelogue" attempts to present the current image of the city through its physical space, while letting some historical elements enter the debate in order to present the city's cultural, symbolic, mnemonic and urban planning transformations to the present. From the Lusignan period to the British, from the anti-colonisation struggle to the division and from the opening of the barricades to Cyprus of crisis, the city of Nicosia is a continuous local witness of global developments. The central thought behind this chapter is to present the actual terrain and provide its image being, however, in constant contact with the current research interests, beyond a detailed, solid historical presentation that has already been written by exceptional authors, whom this chapter draws upon anyway.

In the *second chapter* I provide a literature review based on the crucial arguments I draw upon. I focus on the production of space in a landscape of conflict, forming the background, against which three interrelated theoretical axes develop regarding physical, social and mental aspects of space. A theoretical framework opens the discussion, which is penetrated by the parameter of *conflict* that hopes to add a new factor to the social constructions of

space. In this context, I elaborate on the three different “moments” of *perceived*, *conceived* and *lived* space and their dialectical entity, claiming further that the different notions of the public/private dichotomy in a landscape of conflict and the crucial issue of perceiving space as a whole. Moreover, my conceptual approach regarding the urban division focuses on the construction of perceptual systems with respect to socio-spatial stereotypes of the environment and the pseudo-environment, of the self and the “other”.

The *third chapter* is actually the link between theory and fieldwork. If this thesis has followed a long back and forth journey between theory and fieldwork, then methodology has been surely the vehicle. In this chapter, I actually “translate” the main theoretical arguments, extracted from a larger debate in the existing literature, into methodological tools that helped me proceed to fieldwork. I could say that the methodology chapter is a joint unit of conceptualisation and methodology. In other words, it presents my research *pivots, decisions, paths* and *expectations*.

From this perspective, I approach theory and methodology in an unbreakable interrelation. This is why I choose to follow a quite common structure with the literature review and the following fieldwork chapters, in order to underline the dialectical relation of *literature-theory-conceptualisation-methodology-fieldwork-conclusions*, being a rough scheme of my pathway.

To make that clearer, in this chapter I plan to respond to the questions of why, how and what. Firstly, I elaborate on the main *decision* to follow a *spatial approach* towards my case study. This is the point where I present the way in which literature (*pivots*) turns into employed theory and theory transforms into a conceptual framework (*decisions*) through the selected arguments presented in the relevant chapter. Secondly, I introduce the specific case study in the discussion in order to spot the methods (*paths*) needed in order to answer my research questions and examine the central hypothesis (*expectations*). The case study becomes central in this sense, while I elaborate on my choices to approach it. Finally, I particularise a *design of the fieldwork* coming to details about participants, location, materials and the construction of the interviewer. From interviewing processes to mental mapping and from audio-visual material to participatory research, I hope to describe the vehicle that helped me respond to my research questions and confirm my hypothesis.

The forth and fifth chapters are dedicated to the core of the study serving as a presentation of the fieldwork’s process and findings. In both chapters, I

attempt to unfold an ongoing confrontation within the Cypriot landscape of conflict. On one hand, I argue that power dialectics create certain visibilities of conflict, while on the other I aim to explore this contesting realm through spatial practice, spatial representations and the space of representation. To be more specific, I choose to present a *mapping* of firstly mental representations of the social space of conflict and secondly of grassroots and institutional actions towards a reclaiming of the common space.

According to the above, in *Chapter 4*, I elaborate on a combination of a narrative interviewing process and a mental mapping process in order to present personal and collective space in real (both physical and social) and imaginary terms. As a result narratives, stereotypes and lived experience meet within a process of narrating and mapping the conflict, referring both to the “self” and the “other” in terms of the actors’ own and the other side of Nicosia’s city.

Additionally, in *Chapter 5*, I shed light upon the common space of demand composed by collective and civil space. At this point, I introduce the key-factors of resistance, reclaim, demand and action in order to focus on the emerging dynamics of socio-spatial restructuring. In this framework, I include both grassroots activism and institutional initiatives with reference to bi-communal cooperation, reconciliation and a new radical politics. Additionally, I argue that there is a crucial *third actor* that needs to be highlighted, i.e. migrants. Therefore, I present a mapping of the migrants’ presence according to the latest censuses combined with a site recording I have conducted during my fieldwork.

Finally, the above chapters “meet” in the final chapter, which presents my research *Conclusions* bringing all the above aspects into the same terrain. This final chapter gathers all my elements together, linking the beginning of the research process with its final phase, in a circle that includes the dissertation's motivations, paths, findings and emerging questions to be tackled. In this chapter, I do not aim to simply present my research findings once again but rather I hope to discuss them, while revealing certain gaps that future research might fill them in.

PART I: PHYSICAL, MENTAL, REAL. DISCUSSING THE HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK, THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND METHODS

*Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,
Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place
Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass.
Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,
Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth
(T.S. Eliot, "East Cocker")*

CHAPTER 1: A TRAVELOGUE IN THE WALLED CITY OF NICOSIA

This chapter serves as a *historical mapping* of the Old City of Nicosia. However, this historical mapping looks more like a "trip" to the past from a present starting point. Multiple layers of *time*, either hidden or visible, compose the historical and cultural capital of the city in a space of formal narratives and informal secrets. In this space, we find moments of co-existence and moments of separation; historical data and memories that could appear as "pins" in physical space. In this context, I construct a *travelogue* in space and time, attempting to offer a sense of the past and the present, while contextualising the walled city within Nicosia, Cyprus and the world. This part of the mapping process derives from bibliography as well as personal observation, hoping to elaborate on the time-space relation, tackling the "questions of when and where".

1.1 A "sense of the past"

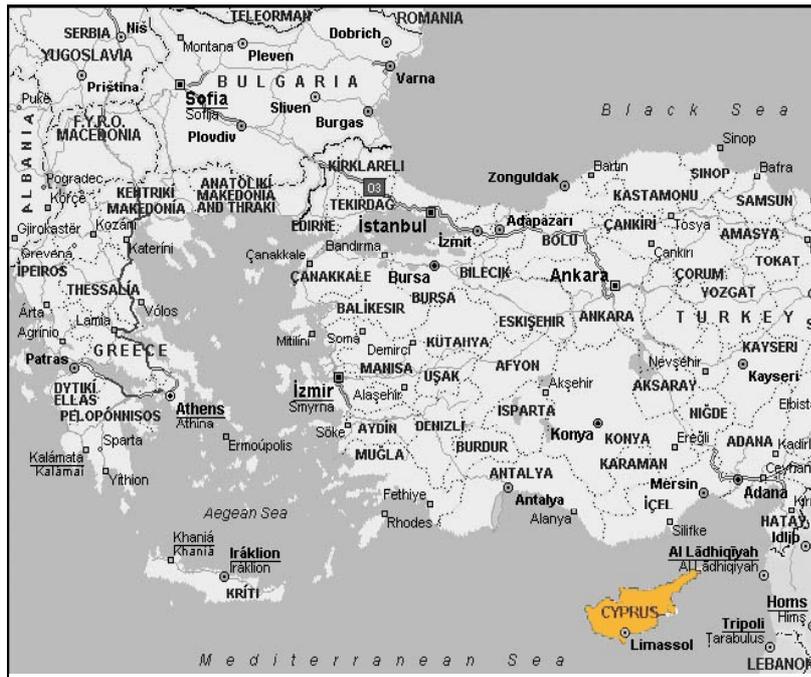
1.1.1 *Geography and population*

Sometimes it looks like memory and historical reference can be summed up in a bunch of dates and chronologies that ring certain bells and let emotions and memory emerge. They can be linked to personal stories, official historiographies or just a day in which "something happened", yet being critical components of a collective narrative. However, space is a rich canvas for those, who like to

unfold historical layers, either hidden or visible. Space is a meeting point of people who have passed by, of their decisions, their birth and death, their personal and collective moments as well as of the mark they had chosen to leave behind, reminiscent of their presence throughout time. Finally, space is a canvas of inscriptions and erasures of power and everyday dynamics, yet constituting an evidence of time's thick and sparse waves that link the past to the present and the future.

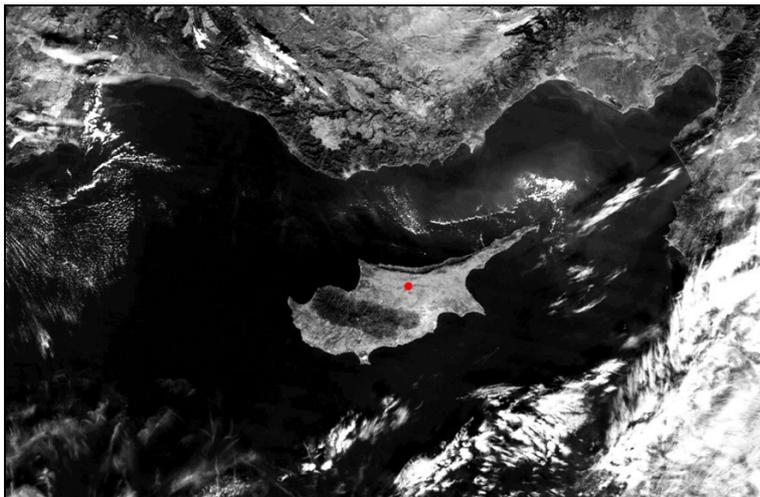
By the very first time I ever visited Nicosia, I compared the city to a "compressed air can", where memory, history, inscriptions and erasures, conflict and contact, blood and commerce seem to be rather packed. Interestingly, in such a labyrinthine place like Nicosia, it is almost impossible to "hide". The place is so small that neither people nor history can remain in shadows forever. However, if we see the broader picture, Nicosia is a "compressed air can" in an already "Lilliputian"¹⁶ context. The whole island of Cyprus extends to an area of 9,250 sq. km, where 5,896 sq. km (63,74%) belong to the government-controlled territories of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), while 3,355 sq. km (36,2%) are under the administration of the internationally unrecognised Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). A linear zone of 346 sq. kilometres that extends from one edge of the island to the other pierces the heart of this compressed area, forming the Turkish Cypriot north and the Greek Cypriot south. This zone is the popular Green Line in Cyprus, which is actually a buffer zone, controlled and patrolled by the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) since 1964 though expanded after the 1974 war (Constantinou, 2008) as a ceasefire zone. Additionally, the British sovereign base areas occupy another 254 sq km of the island.

¹⁶ "Lilliputian" states or "minor-states" are terms used also by the United Nations, referring to states small in size and rather marginal within the global system (see also Trimikliniotis and Buzkurt, 2012:2).



Geographical position of Cyprus (internet)

Probably, much of Cyprus' historical events wouldn't have happened if it weren't for its crucial geographical position in terms of geo-political, colonial and imperialist strategies. Cyprus holds a key-location within the Mediterranean, being the third largest island positioned in a rather hot "Bermuda Triangle" composed by Asia, Africa and Europe, linking –clockwise– Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt and Greece.



Crossroads of three continents: Aerial photo of Cyprus (Google Earth)

With respect to population¹⁷, once again the numbers make the portrait of a

¹⁷ Here I refer to the two main communities, i.e. the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, In section 5.6 I elaborate on the *third actor*, i.e. the migrants coming from Turkey, the EU or

“Lilliputian” society, causing “disturbances” that are not in line with its size, as long as the total population of the island just exceeds one million. According to the latest census conducted in the south, in 2011 the population in the government- controlled areas was 838,897. In the north, according to the 2006 census the population was 256,644 (Hatay and Braynt, 2009). However, the census has been judged as not accurate, while other estimations argue that the population in the TRNC is around 300,000 (ICG, 2010:2) or around 500,000 (Trimikliniotis and Bozkurt, 2012: 3). Additionally, the ICG report (2010:2) states that “Perhaps half the estimated 300,000 residents of the Turkish Cypriot north were either born in Turkey or are children of such settlers¹⁸”. Nevertheless, according to the 2006 census, 178,031 were TRNC citizens, 70,525 were citizens of Turkey¹⁹, and 8,088 were from other countries (Hatay and Braynt, 2009).



TRNC Flag on Pentadaktylos' / Beşparmak's bank (internet)

Coming to Nicosia, two imposing mountains embrace the broader province:

third countries to both sides.

¹⁸ However, as I argue later, usually in the literature settlers from Turkey including the Turkish army and immigrants are all merged in the same category, although there are certain differences in terms of social, political and financial status. There has to be a certain distinction since not all people coming from Turkey to the northern part of Cyprus are settlers.

¹⁹ People coming from Turkey to the northern part are officially handled by the Republic of Cyprus as “settlers” who came in order to change demographic ratios

Beşparmak/ Pentadaktylos²⁰ (Five Fingers) in the north and Troodos²¹ in the south. Apart from an outstanding mountain range, Beşparmak/ Pentadaktylos serves also as a “compass” pointing to the north, extremely helpful when wondering in the old labyrinthine city, while constituting a peculiar canvas. Painted and well-positioned stones²² draw a massive flag of the TRNC on Pentadaktylos'/Beşparmak's bank, in order to be visible to the south even in the dark night due to blinking lights that shape its outline.

The broader region of Nicosia expands within this mountainous embrace hosting around 325,000 inhabitants in the south, while around 85,000 inhabit the northern part. In this broader province, the “gem” of Nicosia is its old walled city surrounded by the popular Venetian Walls that include the lives, activities, needs and habits of around 25,000 on both sides, being only the 6% of the broader region. However, this 6% and its cyclical surroundings is of high cultural, social and historical importance, since it still carries multiple layers of the past, the present and the coming future within its few square meters.

1.1.2 The Walled City: Transformations inside the Walls

While the rest of the province has the actual possibility to expand, spread and multiply in terms of population and the built environment, the old city has a certain unquestionable limit. The imposing Walls delineate the city's limits, while making a first “in and out” distinction. Thus, these Walls have a long story to tell dating back to the Lusignan period (1192-1489) (Fig.1), when they had been functioning as a means “to provide protection from the anarchy of the countryside, protection of the citizens of the city from invasion by foreign armies and the security of those who were charged with maintaining public order” (Atun and Doratli, 2009). However, Nicosia is a good example to confirm the idea that walls are not always unbeatable or at least able to implement their role. That had been made clear already by the 15th century, when the island changed hands coming under the Venetian rule.

²⁰ Both in Turkish and Greek, the name of the mountain actually means “Five Fingers” due to the shape of its peak that resemble a palm. Moreover, according to the myth, in Byzantine era, Digenis Akritas left the imprint of its palm on the peak of the mountain, while attempting to “jump over” the rock.

²¹ Troodos, including many small and bigger villages is a typical destination for vacations for the Greek Cypriots.

²² This flag was painted on Beşparmak/Pentadaktylos during the 80's. Some sources mention that it has been awarded the Guinness Record of the biggest flag in the world.



Handmade map of the old city of Nicosia (sketch and notes by the author)

The Venetian newly built walls (Fig.1) replaced the former ones, while the river that used to flow in the city's heart had been channelled in a newly built moat. Once again, the fortifications were supposed to save the city from a possible external attack, this time from the Ottomans. By 1570, however, the island and the city of Nicosia changed rulers once again coming under Ottoman administration. During the centuries of the Ottoman rule, in almost 300 years, the image of Nicosia changed a lot with respect to both animate and inanimate aspects. While settlers of the Ottoman Empire were arriving in the island in order to occupy key-positions in the administrative apparatus, the built environment was turning into a unique blend of architecture and historical periods, mixing mosques and baths together with older Frankish and Venetian architectural samples, forming its image as the "little sister of Damascus"²³ (Maragkou, 2011).

This unique farrago is in fact what still makes the old city of Nicosia an exceptional place of architectural and historical interest. Different trends sticking next to each other form a façade-patchwork, where Ottoman buildings stand next to modernist constructions and Victorian-style balconies, yet succeeding to compose a remarkable harmony in the ochre colours of the local porous stone.

During the Ottoman rule, the city's walls remained in their former form, while the dry riverbed that had been left after the river's rerouting, turned into a dump, "where rainwater would rush through clearing it temporarily" (Papadakis, 2006). This river had been a "natural" linear border

²³ A discription by Dixon Hepworth. 1879. *British Cyprus*.

that interestingly, as Papadakis (2006) notes, was the first linear border to cut the city in halves, as the medieval maps manifest (Fig.1). In the next years, the river Pedieos or Pithkias or Kanli Dere was meant to give its place to other spatial functions. In the era of the Venetians it had been retoured in order to reinforce the city's defence, flowing in the cyclical moat round the walls. In the Ottoman period it had become a dump as well as an invisible border that was separating the Ottoman administration from the Christian Orthodox centre (Kliot and Mansfield, 1997). This transformation was not only a problem of the city in hygiene and epidemic terms but it also led to severe floods and as a result to the drowning of people and animals (Maragkou, 2011: 144).

I am not sure if nowadays people in Nicosia make the link to the Venetian and Ottoman periods whenever the city still suffers from floods, and its squares transform into urban pools, while young people make fun either by pretending to be on the beach or by publishing "photoshopped" pictures of the flooded squares, where monstrous sharks jump out of the water. However, this often disastrous natural phenomenon is another ring in the city's historical chain that, like almost everything in Cyprus, is also linked to the "Cyprus' issue". The continuous problems of the sewage system²⁴, especially in the old city of Nicosia, had been the main reason for negotiations between the two sides in the late 70's in order to find a common solution and go on with the new infrastructure plans that had already started in the 60's. Interestingly, the physical division on the ground had to find underground infrastructure crossings that continue to be a "headache" for Nicosia's municipal authorities until today.

Coming back to the former river and the later damp, in the period of the British rule it had been covered and turned into the liveliest "bridge", bringing both communities together due to commercial reasons: Ermou Street had been the commercial zone of the city²⁵. It is no surprise that this lively place of contact and interaction was the place that had to be "deactivated" in the period of the inter-communal conflicts and the division of the city. The river, the dry riverbed, the dump and the commercial zone gave their place to the Green Line.

²⁴ For more see <http://www.sbn.org.cy/cgi-bin/hweb?-A=30&-V=about>

²⁵ Anita Bakshi has conducted a significant study in the framework of her dissertation thesis in order to re-construct the buffer zone through oral history. Part of her project shows how Ermou Street used to be before the division that gave its place to the UN-controlled buffer zone.

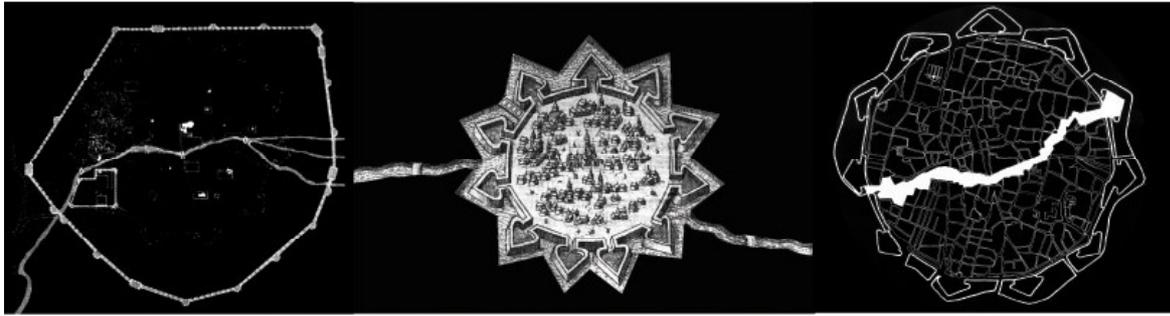


Fig.1.1 The Walled City (Internet and the author)

Lusignan Period

Venetian Walls

Contemporary map/Green Line

Coming back to historical timeline, twenty years before the end of the 19th century and after almost three centuries of Ottoman rule, the turn of the British to rule the island had come. In 1878, in exchange for Britain's contribution to the Russo-Turkish war (Fouskas and Tackie, 2009), the Ottomans ceded Nicosia to the British, maintaining dominance (Sakellaropoulos, 2000), while the former were bringing together a wind of "modernisation" (Hatay and Braynt, 2009; Maragkou, 2011). It was the beginning of a historical route towards the 20th century that was about to bring dramatic events and junction points in a global and local scale.

The British era was marked by strong transformations in the field of population, administration and the built environment. Soon after the declaration of Cyprus as a British colony in early 20th century, Cypriots started immigrating to Britain while being replaced by British and European settlement. Additionally, the combination of the declaration together with the establishment of the Turkish Republic lead many Turkish-speaking Cypriots leave the island heading to Turkey, while the events in Izmir²⁶ and Anatolia caused a sort of population exchange, since Greek-speaking people from Izmir and Armenians took the place of the migrated Turkish-speaking Cypriots to Turkey (Hatay and Bryant, 2009). The Armenian community as well as Greek-speakers from Asia Minor still constitute remarkable parts of the island's population, while the latter do not actually form a concrete community any more.

The island was changing, the capital was changing and new inscriptions and erasures had to compose the new environment. In the old city and especially round the Paphos Gate and the Ledra Palace-crossing one can still see

²⁶ I refer to the events of the "Great Fire of Smyrna" in 1922 and the the Greek and Armenian refugees.

characteristic examples of the colonial architecture introduced by the British. New techniques, organisation methods and, of course, money contributed to new plans for the island and for the old city, too. For instance, the construction of roads and highways, the establishment of a cadastre in order to register properties and territories and population censuses are parts of the broader policy-making, while plans were referring to the old city's transformation and modernisation, too. In this context, the first Municipal Committee was established in 1882 composed by both a Greek and a Turkish councillor, while public street lighting was provided, the first nursery was established and other openings of the city's walls were added to the three gates in order to connect the inner city with the developing parts in the outskirts (Maragkou, 2011). In the direction of upgrading hygiene standards, the dump was covered and parts of the moat were planted with eucalyptus, which are still characteristic trees on Pedieos' banks. Finally, the "modernised" image of Nicosia will later (during World War II) include the first airport of the island.

It was the era in which the old city of Nicosia was starting to transform into a vivid place of commerce, a lot reminiscent of what many quarters²⁷ of the city look like today on both sides, except for the fact that in those days the commercial zones were mixed, while both communities had unquestionable interaction. At the same time, while the old city was attracting commercial activities, many inhabitants were looking for less packed areas with sufficient space to built new, bigger homes. The city had started to expand to districts and areas that nowadays compose the urban area of broader Nicosia outside the walls. Many would still remember neighbourhoods that used to be empty fields, rapidly turning into urbanised areas with big residences and a mixed population including Greek and Turkish-speakers as well as British.

However, the modernisation of the old city that included certain erasures of the former Ottoman period that was supposed to link the city to the "East", was one more factor building on top of the already mentioned situation that lead the Turkish-speakers seek for a new life in the Turkish Republic. According to the report of the "Living together" project published by the British Council (Hatay and Braynt, 2009):

"In 1881, Turkish Cypriots accounted for approximately half of the city's population, but by 1931 had been reduced to only a quarter.

²⁷ Nicosia's old city has divided into 25 quarters since the British period (see 1.2.1 and fig.)

By 1946, the city boasted a population of almost 35,000, of which only 10,000 were Turkish Cypriots.”

If the surrounding walls carry a long timeline dating back to the Frankish and the Venetians until current times, another border has its roots in modern history starting from the 50’s. The Green Line, which is “not really a line, not very visible and not often green” (Grichting et al., 2012) carries the timeline of conflict.

1.1.3 The timeline of conflict

1.1.3.1 1955-1960: Enosis²⁸, Taksim²⁹ and Independence

If violence is the “midwife of history”, then it has given birth to the most significant junction points in contemporary Cyprus’ history. Nicosia was the first to taste the division in 1956, two decades before the rest of the island, while Cyprus was still under British administration. The city has witnessed the timeline of conflict in its squares and streets from the very beginning being the contested place since the 50’s with respect to its modern history.

The 50’s are marked as the decade for *Enosis* or *Taksim*; i.e. the Greek Cypriot request for union with “motherland” Greece and soon the Turkish Cypriot response for partition. Although the quest for *Enosis* is mostly linked to the 50’s, this wasn’t the first and only period that Greek Cypriots had such a demand. The economic crisis in 1929 together with sharpening social contradiction and increased taxes imposed by the British would lead to a revolt in 1931 and would already prepare the condition for the anti-colonial movement (Sakellaropoulos, 2000).

In any case, Nicosia was the place to host mobilisations for *Enosis* and against British rule since April 1955 and the official beginning of the armed struggle by the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA). These days the labyrinthine city had become a big battlefield between EOKA and the British but also of inter-communal conflicts. It was the yard of Pancyprian Gymnasium³⁰, right opposite the Archbishop’s palace in Ayios Ioannis quarter, where the uprising of the students calling for *Enosis* emerged; it was the city’s

²⁸ *Enosis* is a Greek word for “unification”.

²⁹ *Taksim* is a Turkish word for “partition”.

³⁰ The Pancyprian Gymnasium was founded in 1812 by Archbishop Kyprianos. (see Maragkou, 2011: 239 and Fig.)

squares that were “hosting” mobilisations, while it was the city’s corners and streets that were soon been painted by blood during the first inter-communal hostilities, since the period was not only marked by the an anti-colonial struggle but also by a quest for national cleansing.

In this period, the action of EOKA found a response by the establishment of the Turkish Resistance Organisation (TMT), who mainly expressed the Turkish Cypriot *Taksim*, against the Greek Cypriot quest for *Enosis* (with Greece). Among the targets of these two paramilitary nationalist organisations, however, there had been also Cypriots from both communities, who were supporting friendship and co-existence. Provocations, executions and ambushes were everyday incidents for the island and the city of Nicosia, while democratic people and communists³¹ had been the organisations’ target, too.

These inter-communal conflicts were getting more and more intense and uncontrollable by the British authorities. At the same time they constituted also a sufficient excuse in order that the British could put in function the popular proverb “divide and conquer”. As a result, the first division between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots took place in 1956, while roadblocks and barricades, including Ledra Street³² formed a Turkish Cypriot north and a Greek Cypriot south. Two years after, the first separate municipality of Lefkoşa (Nicosia in Turkish) had been proclaimed.

However, the division was meant to take much more harsh and solid forms than the first one, which soon became penetrable, while Cyprus was following the path towards its independence proclamation. In 1960 after the Zurich and London Agreements, Nicosia seemed to take a breath hosting this time, at least officially, celebrations for the independence and the declaration of the Republic of Cyprus. Archbishop Makarios was the first president of the Republic, while Fazıl Küçük was sworn in as vice-president. These two men were meant to become symbols of this declaration and at the same time of an exceptionally short-living Republic in its initial form.

The Republic of Cyprus was born actually against local demands as a “realpolitik compromise that was especially bitter for the Greek Cypriots” (Constantinou, 2008). In such a context, only three years after the celebrations in

³¹ Derviş Ali Kavazoğlu and Kostas Misiaoulis, both members of AKEL and PEO were fighting for peace and co-existence against the nationalist attacks of EOKA and TMT. They were both found killed by TMT, embraced in a car and since then symbolise peace, solidarity and friendship among the two communities (at least for the Left).

³² Today Ledras Street is the street that leads to the open barricade of Ledras/Lokmaci in the heart of the old city (see Fig.)

the city of Nicosia, blood painted its streets again, giving its name to the brutal December of 1963: Bloody Christmas/ Kanlı Noel (in Turkish).

1.1.3.2 Bloody Christmas/ Kanlı Noel

There is hardly any history book taught at school in either Greece or Cyprus that refers to the “Bloody Christmas”. However, one of the two National Struggle Museums³³ existing on both sides of the old city, underlines this part of history. I refer to the National Struggle Museum in the northern part of city that presents the Turkish Cypriot narrative regarding the events while the synonymous museum in the south tells a different story. Interestingly, both museums refer to the same time period, highlighting however different events and moments that help to construct the desirable narrative. As a result, while the museum on the Greek Cypriot south highlights the anti-colonial struggle and the proud fight of EOKA, the Turkish Cypriot Museum reminds the locals and informs the tourists about these past Christmas in 1963.

Everything started when in the early hours of the 21st of December in 1963 a Greek Cypriot police patrol in Nicosia stopped a group of three Turkish Cypriots to check their IDs. They were two men and a Turkish Cypriot prostitute, called Cemaliye Emirali. It was late and the three of them had been already drunk. Moreover, in an atmosphere of the declaration’s disapproval on behalf of the Greek Cypriots, the general pressing and provocative attitude of the Greek Cypriot police towards the Turkish Cypriots was being intensified and causing the Turkish Cypriot reaction beyond the incident. However, Cemaliye and her company resisted and denied to show their IDs, leading to the burst of a fire exchange that in turn caused Cemaliye’s and one of the two men’s death.

It was the beginning of a massive revolt that got even more intense when police forces tried to restrain the reactions. Nicosia’s old city became once again a battlefield, while people were killing each other during some of the city’s harshest days. The blood that once more flew in the city’s streets gave its name to those days, while the “Turkish Cypriot rebellion” had become a fact.

The brutal events only three years after the declaration of the independent Republic of Cyprus were a “blow” for the Republic and the reason for Nicosia’s second division that will never be cancelled until today. Ten years

³³ In this old city in a quite “mirror” position there are two “National Struggle” Museums; one in the north a few meters away from the Kyrenia/Girne Gate and one in the south near the Archbishop’s Palace (see Fig.)

before the division of the island, Nicosia had been already divided and remained as such after the establishment of the UN-controlled buffer zone.

However, as long as the events question the dominant “myths”, the Greek and Greek Cypriot narratives have “erased” Bloody Christmas from the history books, ironically describing the events through the popular saying “a whore died and a state collapsed”. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriots employ the events in order to justify their quest for partition³⁴. Additionally, the period after the brutal days of December, finds the Turkish Cypriots living in packed enclaves, which do not exceed the 5% of the whole islands’ area. According to the “Living Together” (Hatay and Braynt, 2009) report:

“In addition, approximately 25,000 Turkish Cypriots fled their villages during this period and took refuge in armed enclaves, where they would remain for the next ten years. The largest such enclave was Nicosia, which included the northern half of the walled city as well as the suburbs that emanated from it. [...] Although restrictions on movement eased in 1968, almost no Turkish Cypriots living in the enclaves returned completely to their villages at that time. Many of those who took refuge in Nicosia would remain there”.

The Bloody Christmas left the old city of Nicosia divided, the two communities –and especially the Turkish Cypriots- in a general sense of distrust, and the Republic hurt until ten years later, when tension boiled up to the 1974 war that followed a military coup d’état against the president Archbishop Makarios and the Republic of Cyprus. 1974 is the date of intervention and invasion.

*1.1.3.3 1974: The coup and the invasion/intervention*³⁵

From 1967 until 1974 Greece had been under the rule of a military junta that had followed the military coup d’état on 21 April 1967. People in Greece often refer to this regime as the “regime of colonels” or “the seven years”. The last act

³⁴ I refer to the dominant narrative, according to which Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have proved unable to co-exist, and therefore there is a certain distrust towards reunification and a partition is preferred by the Turkish Cypriots..

³⁵ *Intervention* is the term mostly used by the Turkish Cypriots to imply that Turkey intervened in order to save the Turkish Cypriots from the organised coup d’état and the attempts to cancel the declaration of the Republic and unify Cyprus with Greece. *Invasion* is a term mostly used by Greek Cypriots (and Greeks) in order to highlight the following occupation by the Turkish army.

of the Greek dictatorship, organised together with the Greek Cypriot nationalists of EOKA B, was the realised coup d'état against the Republic of Cyprus and its president Archbishop Makarios III on 15 July 1974. This led to the intervention/ invasion of the Turkish army almost a week later on 20 July 1974.

Once again, the old city of Nicosia was a central scene, where the events were taking place. The city had been already divided and its borderline meant to be extended from one western corner of the island to the east, forming a pure Turkish Cypriot north and a pure Greek Cypriot south especially after the displacement of people to the opposite side. Nicosia became one capital in halves or a double capital with respect to two different narratives. For the Greek Cypriot side as well as according to the international avowal, the Republic of Cyprus refers to the island as an entity, in which 37% of the territories are occupied by the Turkish army and by the de facto TRNC (after 1983). For Turkey and the official position of the TRNC there are two separate states that could only function under the umbrella of a bi-communal bi-zonal federation or a con-federation of two states. These two official narratives are reflected in minor and major moments of the socio-spatial life in Nicosia and the rest of the island.

The 1974 war left behind a partitioned land, a sense of distrust and insecurity, a sense of multiple betray, killed people from both sides, hundreds of still missing persons and a traumatic displacement that turned Cypriots to refugees in their own land (Hadjiyianni, 2002). Around 142,000 Greek Cypriots were forced to abandon their cities and villages in the north, while around 60,000 were the displaced Turkish Cypriots³⁶.

1974 is the chronology that creates a “before and after” for the Cypriot reality. Its very existence raises the quest for reunification and for a solution of the Cyprus’ problem. Nowadays in Nicosia, you can still read the inscriptions of both the war and the emerging need to turn a next page, thus between the lines of the modern urbanisation. Among modern shops, malls and gentrified neighbourhoods in the south and among bazaars, coffee-shops and lively, yet sometimes blighted areas in the north, one can still read the historical layers, within a “sense of the present”.

³⁶ See also 4.1.1

1.2 A “sense of the present”

1.2.1 The opening of Ledras/ Lokmaci crossing

1.2.1.1 The horizontal rupture and the vertical bridge

Undoubtedly, five years after the first opening of the barricades in 2003, the additional opening of Ledras/ Lokmaci crossing in the heart of the old city was a big change for the city’s image and life. It is the narrowest crossing, where one side has eye contact with the other, while crossing opposite takes only a few steps.

This proximity of the two sides creates new interesting socio-spatial qualities. The crossing turns the border into a door towards the other side, where one can either pass or at least experience a glance of the “other”. Interestingly, after the opening of the barricades, present reflects both past and future: the opening offers poignant images of a future re-unified city, while at the same time being mere small breaks along the borderline, which serves as a constant reminder of the traumatic past.

Moreover, a re-conceptualisation of the buffer zone itself emerges. Yannis Papadakis, in his work on Nicosia's divided Old City, refers to Marc Augé's *non-places* (Augé, 1995) in order to define the spatial characteristics of the buffer zone. Papadakis argues that if “*places* carry the traces of social relations, history, personal and collective experience inside a city, then *non-places* produce space without such characteristics” (Papadakis, 2001). In this sense, the buffer zone between the two borderlines was a newborn *non-place* produced by the division. However, this definition of the buffer zone reflects its perception before the opening of the barricades. It represents a period when the crossing from one side to the other was extremely difficult, while nationalist attacks as well as punishment executions have taken place. The period marked by the execution of the Greek Cypriot Solomos Solomou³⁷, while trying to lower the Turkish flag, no longer characterises the status of the area. There is a need for a new understanding of the buffer zone as a space both public and private (Papanikolaou, Sakelaridou & Filippidis, 2006), turned from a military zone into

³⁷ On 14 August 1996, Greek Cypriot Solomos Solomou tried to lower the Turkish flag in Derynia barricade during riots between the two communities, mainly nationalists from both sides. Turkish snipers killed him while he was still hanging on the flagpole. This incident took place in the same place, where some days ago another Greek Cypriot, Tassos Isaak was killed during inter-communal riots after the rally organised by Cyprus Motorcycle Federation against the Turkish occupation.

a zone of relative comfort, often leisure³⁸ and potentially of common demands.

It is not surprising at all the fact that, in “disreputable” neighbourhoods of the city on both sides, Cypriots might feel much more uncomfortable than in the place of the buffer zone. For instance, Greek Cypriots express certain avoidance towards places frequented by immigrants or streets with “nightclubs” performing live shows or the “neighbourhood of brothels” near the Green Line. At the same time, Turkish Cypriots do not feel that comfortable in neighbourhoods inhabited by Arab-Turks or other rather blighted areas of workshops and garages that look like ghost-areas during the night. In terms of comfort, I argue that these zones inside the city constitute the new “buffer zones” both in space and the mind; spaces that one hesitates to cross.

However, the opening of Ledras/Lokmaci barricade has created a vertical crossing. If Ermou Street, which now belongs to the no man’s land, was once a horizontal bridge bringing people from both communities together due to commercial activity, nowadays a vertical bridge has emerged. However, this bridge has not actually brought people together in the same place but round a common imaginary axis that forms a commercial pedestrianised route (Fig.2). The axis moreover joins two different “atmospheres”, one linked to the West and one oozing an eastern aroma. Although not actually seamless, since one has to stop by the checkpoints and show his/her passport, this axis shares common visual escapes.

³⁸ I am arguing so, since in the heart of the UN-controlled buffer zone round Ledra Palace crossing there are inter-communal NGO offices and a restaurant where people enjoy meals, cocktails and coffee breaks.

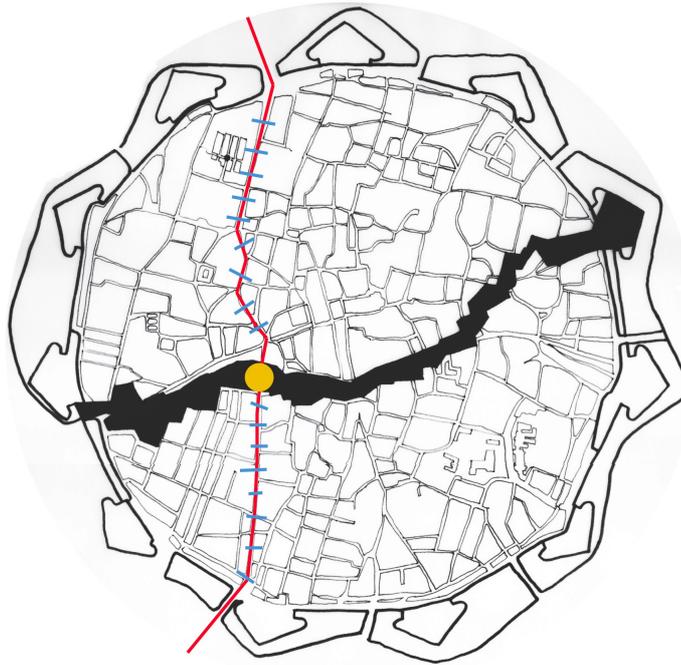


Fig.1.2 Ledras/Lokmaci Crossing and the vertical “bridge” (sketch by the author).

However, the dominant narratives of the two sides are not absent along this vertical bridge. I argue that while the southern side seems to create an unencumbered visual escape pointing to the north; i.e. to the rest of the city that will soon be part of the urban entity again, the northern part seems to “turn its back” to the south forming an autonomous, partitioned entity. However, either seamless or ruptured, the vertical bridge is the visual and physical link between the two sides.

1.2.1.2 Mirroring: reflections across the divide

Apart from the vertical bridge that pierces the Ledras/Lokmaci Crossing, there is a certain “mirroring” across the divide. This mirroring creates an interesting “dialogue” between similar use of land that “stitch the Green Line” (Grichting et al., 2012) beyond the actual crossing. As shown in Fig. 3 similar spatial qualities and uses participate in common duets, while the three gates of the Venetian Walls create an inscribed triangle that links north with the southwest and the east.

Two important religious places (Phaneromeni church in the south and Selimiye Mosque in the north) constitute a first reflection, being close in actual space, yet distant in terms of cultural and socio-spatial reference. Two “National Struggle Museums” narrate different narratives of a shared historical

background composing another reflection in space that does not follow their contradictory function. Furthermore, two municipal markets are a third mirroring in space, being extremely close to each other, yet simultaneously far away, since goods do not cross this small distance. Moreover Büyük Hamam finds its reflection on Omerye Hamam, both reminiscent of a common historical period when the city wasn't physically divided. Finally, Haydar Paşa School and Pancyprion Gymnasium create a mirroring of education that concomitantly constitutes a crucial division between the two sides, due to the lack of an educational process that would link new generations to the common past of the communities as well as to a common future.

I suggest that the above notes underline the great difference between the ways of “reading” space and the ways of “writing” space, since this mirroring cannot be perceived, while one wanders through the city of discontinuity. This is exactly what I mean when referring to the *cry of visibility* that the social space of conflict expresses.

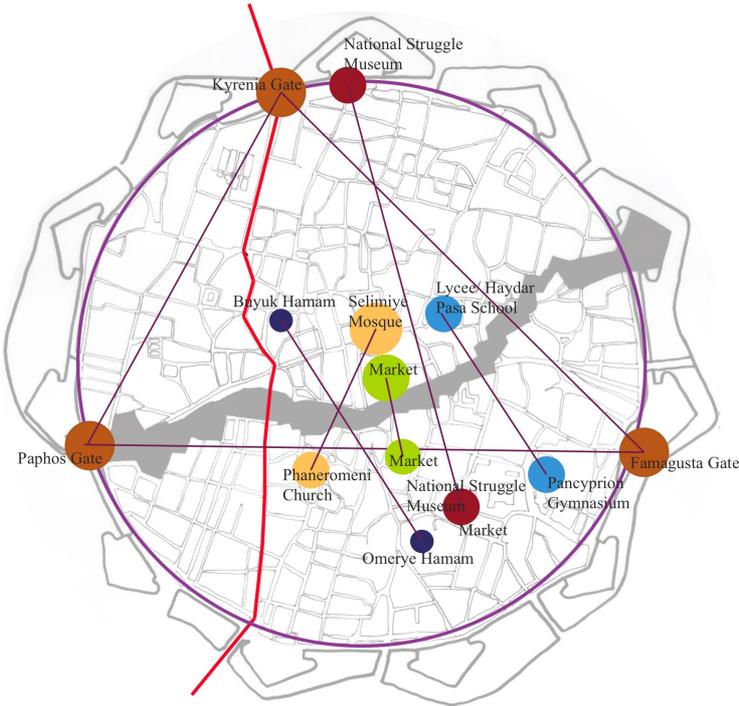


Fig.1.3 “Mirroring across the divide” (sketch by the author)

1.2.2 The old city’s quarters: a patch-work

The map of the cyclical old city of Nicosia resembles an artistic patchwork. It is not surprising that beyond other reasons many use it as a symbol, from the municipal authorities to groups of people that refer to the city. Its symmetrical

star-shaped form with eleven beautifully designed and constructed bastions and three gates (and eight added openings) leading to the three cities of Kyrenia (north), Famagusta (east) and Paphos (south-west), compose a unique architectural product and a beautiful symbol. However, if one draws the invisible lines that separate the city's quarters, the image of a mosaic is revealed.

During the British rule, the old city of Nicosia had been divided into 25 quarters each keeping its original name either Ottoman or Greek until now. Starting from the northern Kyrenia/ Girne Gate the city's quarters are: Akkavuk; Abdı Çavuş; Ayia Sophia/ Selimiye & Bazaar; Ayios Loukas; Yeni Cami; Haydar Paşa; Ayios Kassianos; Chrysaliniotissa; Taht El Kale; Ayios Ioannis; Ayios Antonios; Omeriye; Ayios Savvas; Tripiotis; Phaneromeni; Tabakhane; Nöbethane; Tophane/ Ayios Andreas; Karamanzade; İplik Pazarı & Korkut Efendi; Arabahmet; Mahmud Paşa; İbrahim Paşa³⁹.

Each part of the mosaic has its own character and history. For instance, some of the quarters used to be mixed ones (e.g. Taht El Kale), while others were exclusively Christian-orthodox or Muslim areas. Other quarters had been abandoned soon after 1974 and re-inhabited during the next decades. There are "disreputable" neighbourhoods with brothels and nightclubs of "ill fame". There are ghost-areas of untended workshops and garages that create a rather uncomfortable atmosphere during the night mostly leading to dead ends formed by the border.

However, the old city of Nicosia is the emerging new hip on both sides. Buildings are being restored, new coffee shops and bars pop out in former abandoned places along the borderline and the rents are getting high. Gentrification policies create the city's new image that hopes to function as an attraction place for regeneration and tourism. I argue that this might function as a new enlarged buffer zone though, since new erasures and inscriptions create a new spatial narrative, "dehydrating" the city with respect to memory. New actors and new uses create a newborn terrain, where financial interests seem to play a leading role. On the other hand, one might argue that this can function as a link, too. Locals and older actors remain sceptical though, since the city

³⁹ Today the quarter of Bazaar is included in the quarter of Ayia Sophia/ Selimiye and the quarter of İplik Pazarı is together with Korkut Efendi quarter. Moreover the quarters of Tophane, Arabahmet, İbrahim Paşa, Yeni Cami, Taht El Kale, Ayios Antonios and Tripiotis include also areas just out of the city's walls.

develops too rapidly to follow up.

In any case, new borders and “buffer zones” emerge, while the actual one becomes a hot spot for tourists, who like to take a picture in front of the “sense of the past”, under the sign on the southern part that weakly reminds that Nicosia is “the last divided city in Europe”. Which are the actual walls though?

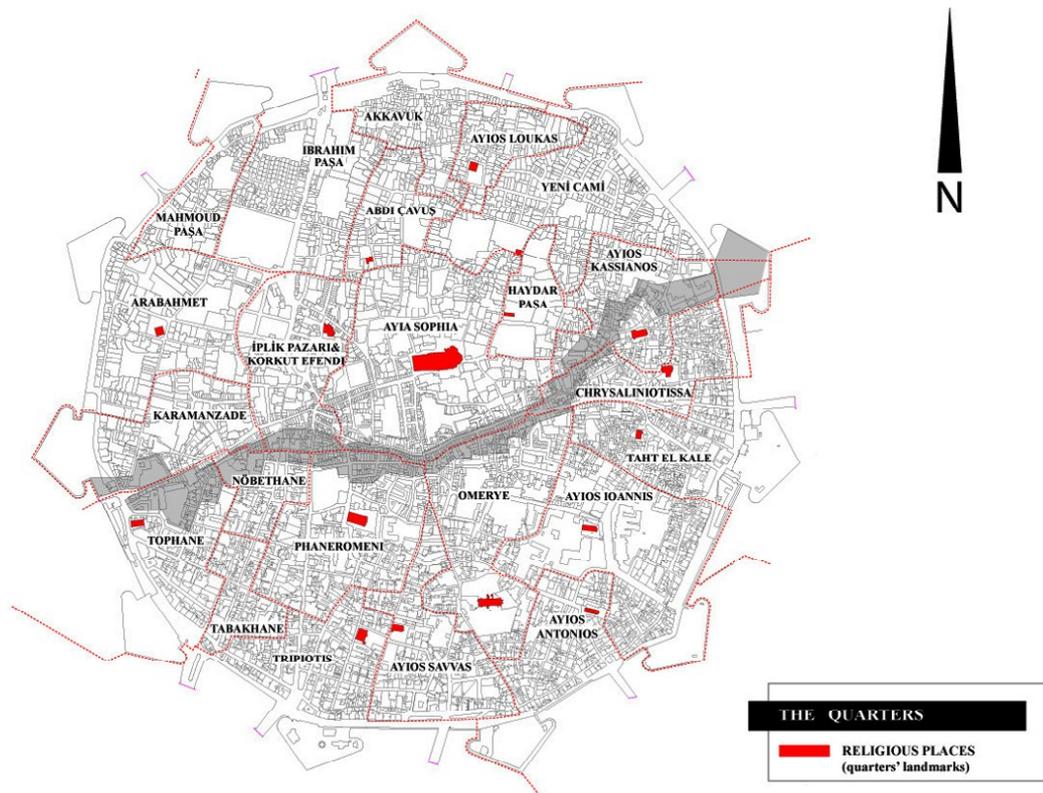


Fig.1.4 The Old City's Quarters (by the author)

1.2.3 The negotiations table: Formalities and informalities

Beyond other incidents, the latest history of the Cyprus Issue is marked by the *Annan Plan* double referenda in 2004, when Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were asked to vote for the proposed solution or against it. In a nutshell, the plan proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Atta Annan, had derived from the concept of the bizonal, bicomunal federation consisting of two politically equal communities (Fouskas and Tackie, 2009). This concept, however, was not unfamiliar to the negotiations table regarding the Cyprus Problem since its very birth in the 70's. If Archbishop Makarios was the first to support the idea of a “bicomunal federation”, many

governments would follow that embraced this concept, yet with no result, obviously.

On 31 March 2004 the final version of the Annan Plan (No.5) was submitted and both communities were asked to decide whether the Plan could represent their will for a solution, related to a “new state of affairs”. The proposed newborn United Cyprus Republic would actually be an independent federal state composed by two equal constituent states, i.e. the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot State. Within this broader concept, there were detailed axes referring to the government and its structure (referring to the new government's constitution, territory, representation, equality etc), the property issue , security arrangements (referring to defence and international obligations), external relations (for instance, referring to the European Union), finances (referring to the state's currency, banks, monetary policy, taxation etc).

Trying to keep a socio-spatial approach to this period, too, I would suggest that the referenda and the possible solution of the “Cyprus Problem” caused a certain change in terms of “distance” perceptions. Firstly, the final decision was in the hands of the people, bringing the negotiation table closer to everyday actors. It is important to note that in this period the “Cyprus Issue” became an everyday debate leaving for a while its macro-geopolitical context. In this sense, the political space and its final form became a matter that concerned the personal and collective space of individuals, who would decide one way or another. Secondly, the political debate and the possible change of the status quo brought the other side closer, since the other community's decision became a crucial factor no one could ignore. From this perspective, it was an open question, whether a new common space would emerge or not, while Cyprus was turning over a next historical page.

Finally, the referenda resulted with a NO from the Greek Cypriot side (76%) and a YES from the Turkish Cypriot side (65%), while the overwhelming majority of both communities (89%) took part in this crucial poll. As a result, the Annan Plan was rejected and I argue that this might be perceived as the starting point for a new era in terms of reconciliation processes.

The rejection of the Annan Plan is one, yet critical, component of that period, which was marked by the first opening of the barricades in Ledra Palce Crossing, the accession of the RoC to the EU and the broader developments in a global context. Within this socio-political framework, I argue that the negotiation table changed a lot, introducing a new subjectivity that would

attempt to develop a new collective space in the next decade coming to the “Occupy Buffer Zone” movement in 2011-2012. The disappointment regarding the peace-talks and the mainstream politics as well as the possibility to cross the border and have a direct taste of a possible reunification, gave birth to a political subjectivity referring to grassroots urban activism (for more see 5.2).

Nicosia has been once again the perfect place to host various actions, while its shape and size can *spatialise* the emerging need for a *communal* identity in contrast to *bi-communalism*. In Chapter 5, I offer thorough analysis of the emerging subjectivity and its significant moments. Here, I content myself to highlight the way, in which the urban space of the Old City becomes the new “negotiation table”, while different *shades of common* attempt to reclaim both space and life.

1.2.4 In times of crisis: a Cypriot bubble burst

On 17 March 2013, the new-elected President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades⁴⁰, gave a historic, televised Sunday-night speech⁴¹ to the Greek Cypriot people, announcing his plan, being “the least catastrophic option”, which basically referred to the haircut on people’s deposits (Tsiehli, 2013). A month earlier, Anastasiadis had won the first round of the presidential elections, while after the second round, a week later, he became officially the new President of the Republic, replacing AKEL's Dimitris Christofias⁴². I argue that this Sunday night carries a particular significance; it concentrates elements of the historical path of socio-political transformations, while turning a page in the Cypriot history, rearranging both dominant as well as antagonistic discourses.

For the first time in its modern history, Cyprus finds itself in the centre of international publicity⁴³, not because of the “Cyprus problem”, the division of

⁴⁰ Leader of DISY (Democratic Rally) and President of the Republic of Cyprus since 2013.

⁴¹ An English transcription of the Presidential Proclamation can be found here: [<http://www.enetenglish.gr/?i=news.en.article&id=326>]; Speech of President Anastasiades, Video from National TV Channel RIK,

uploaded by enikos.gr: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owpi0RMg_Ok].

⁴² Former President of the Republic of Cyprus in the period 2008-2013 and former General Secretary of AKEL.

⁴³ Some of the articles we draw upon are BBC News Europe, 17 March 2013: ‘Cyprus Bailout: Parliament Postpones Debate’: [<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21819990>], accessed on 8 February 2014; RTE News 17 March 2013, ‘Cypriot President says Bankruptcy was Alternative to €10bn Bailout Terms’: [<http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/0316/376965-cyprus-bailout/>], accessed on 10 January 2015.

the island and the continuous peace-talks, but for its position within the domino of the capitalist crisis. Yet, the “Cyprus problem” is still a crucial reference point both for the formal narratives and the public opinion. “We are experiencing the worst moment after 1974”, “this is the ‘Cyprus Problem No. 2’” are some of the reactions to be common among people after the Presidential Proclamation. Moreover, President Anastasiades links the current situation to the “tragic events of 1974”, claiming that the country is in “a state of emergency”.

Although politics includes also the arts of distorting memory and lethe, it is hard to forget another Presidential Proclamation almost three months before the one mentioned above. Dimitris Christofias, being the elected President of the Republic of Cyprus, gives a televised Tuesday-night speech on 4 December 2012 to the Greek Cypriot people. He announces that the Republic of Cyprus has applied for financial support from the European Stability Mechanism due to “the exposure of Cypriot banks to Greek bonds, the disastrous expansion of Marfin Popular Bank into Greece and the insecure bank loans”. Christofias relates the current situation with the “1974 events”, when “our country was destroyed by the Turkish invasion and occupation”, while calling for a broad national unity to overcome the hard financial situation. The link between the current economic crisis and the 1974 events suggests that there is a common external enemy, a national threat that only the national unity can beat. The reference point of “1974” re-emerges discourses of “victimization, unity, and national purity” (Demetriou, 2013), while Greek Cypriots are asked to “persevere through austere welfare cuts” (Demetriou, 2013) in the way they managed to overcome the 1974 disaster.

In this context, Nicosia is again the spatial terrain to receive both the political developments and the social indignation. Soon after the Presidential Proclamation, the southern part of Nicosia experienced some of the most massive rallies in recent history not straightly referring to the national issue but to the economic policy. Thousands of people were gathering every day out of the House of Representatives or the Presidential Palace.

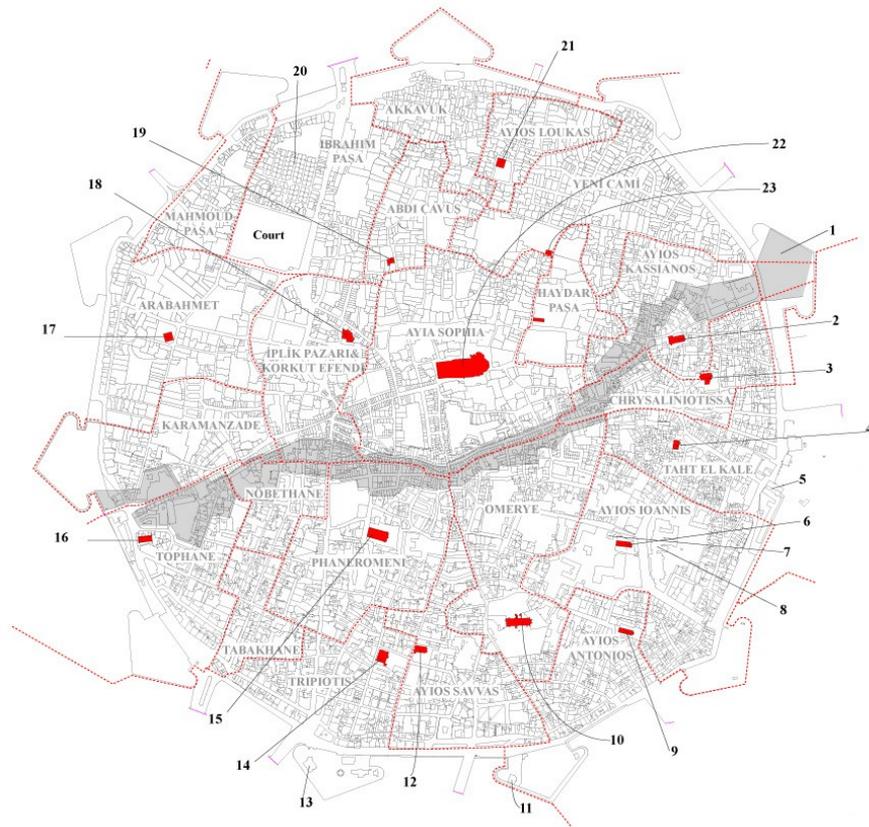
However, the junction point of March 2013 cannot be seen out of the broader picture of the particular socio-political and of course financial situation in the case of Cyprus. In this sense, if we critically examine the specific case of the Cypriot crisis, we can link it to the economic model adopted by the Cypriot capital (Christodoulou, 1992) and its position within the inter-capitalist

competition as well as to the broader systemic crisis with special reference to the Eurozone, which Cyprus joined in 2008.

After the 1974 war the island found itself crushed not just by division and death but also from a serious economic disaster, with unemployment and hunger reaching high levels. The making of the “economic miracle” the years following the war was not a heaven-sent gift or coincidence but a series of choices and social alliances for the advancement of capitalist interests in a devastated place with crucial geopolitical importance. Providing a short picture I argue that, indeed, the development of the post-war Cypriot economy (based mainly on banking-finance, tourism and construction) is constituted by capital flows initially from the Middle-East, mainly from Lebanon, and from the countries of the ex-USSR after the collapse, mainly Russia and ex-Yugoslavia.

But this is one side of the story, while the other side of the story points to the cheap and harsh labor of the refugees after the 1974 war, the massive waves of Cypriot migrants and emigrants in overseas industries, the long and brutal exploitation of immigrant labor. On top of that came the breaking of agricultural production for the benefit of real-estate and the tourist industry and the choices of the local bourgeoisie to make an economic bubble for the furthering of its interests, handing over crumbs of prosperity to the working people who, shattered as they were by war and division, were ready to embrace a new life.

In this context, the Green Line has separated two different economic pathways, while nowadays constituting the eastern EU-border that defines the European periphery in times of crisis. This is definitely an important “wall”...



1. UN-Controlled Buffer Zone
2. Ayios Kassianos Church
3. Chrysaliniotissa Church
4. Taht El Kale Mosque
5. Famagusta Gate
6. Ayios Ioannis Church
7. Archbishop's Palace
8. Pancyprian Gymnasium
9. Ayios Antonios Church
10. Omerye Mosque
11. Bairaktar Mosque
12. Ayios Savyas Church
13. Town Hall
14. Tripiotis Church
15. Phaneromeni Church
16. Tophane
17. Arab Ahmet Mosque
18. İplik Pazari Mosque
19. Laleli Mosque
20. Saban Paşa vakuflar
21. Ayios Loukas Church
22. Selimiye Mosque
23. Haydar Paşa Mosque

CHAPTER 2: DIVIDED CITIES AND THE PRODUCED SOCIAL SPACE OF CONFLICT

The second chapter serves as the *literature review* of the current thesis. Translating this into the vocabulary of the present study, this chapter is actually a *conceptual mapping*. In the following sections, I invite theoretical trends and theorists round a common table, constructing an imaginary dialogue that helps me define the theoretical and conceptual framework of my work as well as the tools to collect, evaluate and manage my fieldwork data. At the same time, this chapter provides certain theoretical “decisions”, which I aim to enrich, while further contributing to theory. What is the social space of conflict? How is it being produced? How does physical space interact with mental space? Finally, which is the central point that lets this thesis find its place within the broader theoretical debate? In a nutshell, this chapter deals with the “question of what”.

2.1 The Social Space of Conflict

2.1.1 *The spatialisation of social life: a “trialectics” of space*

Since his book *The Production of Space* ([1974] 1991), Henri Lefebvre has linked his name to a significant contribution regarding the social constructions of space. It is safe to argue that, among other issues, this book is a milestone with respect to spatial practice, imagination and experience. From its more than four hundred pages, I glean some key-points of Lefebvre’s conceptualisation that constitute a significant theoretical and methodological basis for the present study.

I begin with the idea that space is the terrain, where social relations are being produced and reproduced, while producing space, in a process, where the production and the product cannot be separated:

“[t]he social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence” (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991:129).

This approach suggests a grounding of social relations from an abstract sphere

to materiality; it goes beyond the ideological realm of representations towards a “materiality of the immaterial” (Prigge, 2008: 58), i.e. social relations and contradictions. I argue that this is one of the first and crucial “decisions” in the Lefebvrian thought, introducing the *spatiality of social life* in dialectical contrast to *a sociology of space* (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005; Soja, 1996; Shields, 1999; Purcell, 2003; Prigge, 2008; et al). In other words, a “spatial turn”⁴⁴ is introduced in social theory and the perception of social relations. Commending on this “spatial turn”, Walter Prigge (2008:47) mentions that there is a

“significant capacity of spatial structures to symbolize, in a seemingly natural way, something that cannot be visualized and, therefore, cannot be perceived: social relations and the distribution of social positions and roles”.

Verifying the spatial existence of social relations of production, the proposed theoretical approach introduces the *spatiality*⁴⁵ of actions, concepts and practices. Spatiality becomes actually an approach to knowledge, notions and certain cases. It is the *spatial approach* that brings on surface new, yet interesting, aspects of social life, dissociating them from “the realm of verbalism, verbiage and empty words” (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991:129), in order to give the *image* of what Fredric Jameson (1990) calls the “unrepresentable” world (the world of ideology).

On the other hand, spatiality offers critical hints of the production of space itself; space is not produced in a social vacuum by any means. Christian Schmid (2008:28) puts it precisely:

“space ‘in itself’ can never serve as an epistemological starting position. Space does not exist “in itself”; it is produced”.

Extrapolating this argument to theory, Manuel Castells ([1972] 1977:115) argues that “there is no theory of space that is not an integral part of a general social theory, even an implicit one”, yet warning that without digging further this approach, “one runs the very great risk of imagining space as a white page

⁴⁴ See more in Tally R. (2013: 11-43)

⁴⁵ *Spaciality* is used here with respect to space as a social product, very much in the way Manuel Castells([1972] 1977); David Harvey(1973); Doreen Massey (2005); Edward Soja (1996) et al. see it.

on which the actions of groups and institutions are inscribed". In other words, one runs the risk to reduce social relations to a physical/ geographical "naturalisation" (Schmid, 2008: 47-48). Exactly at this point, an important dichotomy emerges between the "objectified" representations of social life in terms of dominant politics, economy, class, inter-capitalist and imperialist contradictions etc. versus the "subjective" social relations among individuals and their every-day socio-spatial experience. The lack of a dialectical synthesis of the above -that could turn the dichotomy into a reciprocal relation- creates "a crisis of both representation and meaning" (Schmid, 2008:58). This crisis can be thoroughly analysed within its reflection on total vs. partial, micro vs. macro, conscious vs. unconscious, public vs. private, personal/cognitive vs. social/political dichotomies⁴⁶ etc (Ek et al. 2007; Jameson, 1981; 1990; Kotsakis, 2012; Sassen, 2011; Sartre, 1960, et al).

Thus, Henri Lefebvre would repeatedly support the need to define a broader umbrella, under which all these perspectives would be dialectically united (Shields, 1999: 289), producing what he defines as a social space:

"[s]ocial space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder" (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991:73).

In this sense, space is much more than a concrete three-dimensional model composed by axes, distances and points. On the contrary, it is a system that combines multiple levels of human life. Among other theorists, Edward Soja elaborates on the keystones of Lefebvre's thought, which he draws upon in his work on the *Thirdspace* (1996). I especially refer to his introductory chapter, where he thoroughly provides a "mapping" of his conception on the *thirdspace*, mainly drawing upon Lefebvre. It is made clear in the very first pages that Soja (1996:3-6) understands space in its

"simultaneity and interwoven complexity of the social, the historical, and the spatial, their inseparability and

⁴⁶ In section 2.1.4, I elaborate on the private/ public dichotomy, suggesting new distinctions and a conceptual framework with reference to the social space of conflict. Here, I refer to the dominant dichotomy of private vs. public referring to the existing literature

interdependence”, using “historicality, sociality and spatiality⁴⁷ in a strategic balanced and transdisciplinary ‘triple dialectic’”.

Contextualising his conception of “thirdspace”, Soja argues that there are two basic notions referring to physical and mental space. On one hand, there is material space, referring to the physical environment that can be quantifiably measurable, which Soja calls the *Firstspace* (historicality). On the other hand, there is *Secondspace* (sociality); the imaginary space of mental constructions “entirely ideational, made up of projections into the empirical world from conceived or imagined geographies” (Soja, 1996:79). In this framework, he suggests that there is also a “thirdspace”, “a space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange” (Soja, 1996:5). He actually denies the binary⁴⁸ logic of physical versus mental, introducing a space where physical and mental meet, while being transcended towards a “triple dialectic”, where all spatial moments function in/as an inseparable whole.

Thus, this “triple dialectic” is linked to the Lefebvrian conceptual triad. By introducing this triad, Lefebvre moreover transcends the binary theoretical schemes based on polarised dichotomies and as Soja (1996:7) commends, his triple consciousness operates as a “deep critique not just of his oppositional dichotomy of power but of all forms of categorical or binary logic”. Lefebvre’s conceptualisation proceeds to a definition of this “trialectics” of space based on the idea that space is both real in physical and social terms and imaginary in terms of mental constructions and ideologies. Moreover, none of the parts of the triad can operate alone, in itself, but instead they all have equal value in the understanding of space as a dialectical whole⁴⁹. To be more specific, this “trialectics” defines space in three different interweaving moments⁵⁰: *perceived space* or else the moment of *spatial practice*; *conceived space* referring to *representations of space*, being actually the imaginary space of experts,

⁴⁷ *Historicality, Sociality, Spatiality* constitutes a conceptual triad introduced by Edward Soja (1996) linked to the Lefebvrian trialectics of space regarding spatial practice, representations and lived experience.

⁴⁸ Edward Soja mentions that, according to Lefebvrian thought, “two terms are never enough”. I suggest that the conceptual scheme of a triad resembles a “spatial” scheme, forming a conceptual space, composed by three axes that function inseparably together.

⁴⁹ Following the dialectical rule that a whole is much more than the sum of its parts. This notion penetrates both spatial and social realm, suggesting that space as well as society is much more than the sum of its components. It introduces a conception of the inseparable whole (see 2.1.2).

⁵⁰ I use Rob Shield’s (1999) term of spatial “moments”. I find this term particularly sharp for space-time dialectics. Time is much more the sum of its moments; space is much more than the sum of its spatial moments.

philosophers and policy makers; and *lived space*, which is the significant spatial moment of action, lived experience and the “spatialisation” (Shields, 1999) of social life in the *spaces of representation*.

In this “trialectics”, Lefebvre offers a new spatial dialectics and a sharp methodological approach, while introducing one more key-factor that completes his conceptualisation: *time*⁵¹. For Lefebvre time is a social product. He goes beyond a quantitative perception of time that is measured by watches and calendars towards an understanding of time that, as any other product,

“divides and splits itself into use and use-value on the one hand, and exchange and exchange-value on the other” (Lefebvre, [1992] 2004:74).

In *Rythmanalysis. Space, time and everyday life* (Lefebvre, [1992] 2004) he elaborates on the various “rhythms” of physical and social bodies in everyday life, which are inscribed in social space, while conversely, social space constitutes the inscription of time, produced by social bodies through their produced “routines” (in the way Michel de Certeau [1980] 1984 sees it). While suggesting that the production of space is bound up with the production of time, it is also made clear that space is perceived as an ongoing *process*. It is both a “moment” and therefore an “object to touch” and a process, an unfinished product (Shields, 1999; Soja, 1996). In this sense, Rob Shields (1998) commends that the term *space* does not reflect the notion of a space continuously under construction. Therefore, he suggests the term “*spatialisation*” of social order (see for instance, Rob Shields, 1985; 1999:288) in order to ascribe the idea of a space being here and there, in terms of time, scale and quality.

Attempting to thickly summarise the above, I come up with a fundamental understanding of social space⁵² as an inseparable entity of spatial practice, representations and lived experience. This triad functions as a spatial dialectics of moments and as a continuous process of “spatialisation” of social

⁵¹ Doreen Massey(1994) as well as David Harvey (1990) have significantly contributed to an understanding of space in dialectical relation to time as well as an understanding of time as a social product. Harvey introduced the term “time-space compression”, arguing that this exact compression (referring to the way the increased speed of financial activity has annihilated physical distances) is in the core of capitalist globalisation, which as Massey argues, merges places, communities and identities within a high acceleration of activities in human life.

⁵² I attempt to built upon a conceptualisation of the social space of conflict, starting by an understanding of space, of spatialisation and of social space towards the social space of conflict.

relations throughout time. I call this a *spatial approach* that manages to explore certain applications, as for instance the case of *divided cities*, beyond the dichotomy of macro-geopolitical and micro-scale approaches; beyond separating political aspects from economic, economic from social and social from cultural (Trimikliniotis and Bozkurt, 2012: 5-6).

The need to transcend this dichotomy and other binary schemes towards a dialectical synthesis is furthermore interestingly underlined in the case of divided cities, where the perception of space and social life is physically, mentally and socially distorted. In divided cities, conflict takes spatial characteristics in terms of physical space and spatial representations as long as the division derives from policymakers as “a measure of their own failure to fulfil a basic political mandate [...] solving a profound, longstanding problem in a superficial, temporary way” (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009:5). At first sight, these spatial representations of conflict, physically appearing in the form of barbed wire fences, check-points, military troops etc, gain certain hegemony over other moments of social space, being pivotal for the development of a divided physical landscape, while determining the symbolic space. They narrate historiographies in their own way, while developing certain ideologies, socio-spatial stereotypes, mnemonic policies and nationalisms.

At the same time, divided cities are examples in which physical space is too strict to easily let other moments of space equally influence its dominance. How could we ever expect a perception of space in its totality, since the spatial entity is disrupted in an absolute way by walls and borders? The physical disruption of the urban entity of Nicosia, for instance, has not created a “divided” entity as many might argue. Instead, it has formed two new entities that may potentially hope to function together. Even if physical space and the spatial representations of urban planners manage to form a spatial urban unity, it is not sure at all that a social unity, in terms of a thirdspace of lived experience, or even more a perception of this socio-spatial *wholeness* will be realised.

In this sense, if social space is conceived as a spatial whole combining physical, mental and social aspects, then the social space of conflict is the distorted or absent spatial totality.

Moreover, the social space of conflict manifests a distortion with respect to *time*. An interesting example is the place of Nicosia’s buffer zone, also known as a “dead-zone” and a “no-man’s land”. The buffer zone produces its own,

unique rhythms that are actually unknown to the inhabitants of the city, since no one can enter it. In the words of Constantina Zanou (2014), the buffer zone constitutes “another city, a city within the city, a parallel and independent universe with its own everyday life, rhythms, its own language and its own memories”. Zanou (2014) published a report on her chance to visit Nicosia’s UN-controlled buffer zone. In the report she notes that the buffer zone, which she formerly considered to be an empty place, is not a “frozen” place in temporal terms at all. On the contrary, it is rather the “land” of the UN troops: “a heterotopy, a unique ‘land’ laying between the other two”. On one hand, the buffer zone freezes time and reserves everything in the condition just before the division, as if space is eternally waiting to “defrost”. On the other hand, although invisible for the inhabitants on both sides of the city, the buffer zone produces parallel rhythms; it freezes historical time⁵³, while producing its own new micro-rhythms. As Zanou (2014) puts it:

“[t]he local micro-rhythms of this ‘land in-between’ coordinate with the macro-rhythms of the international world of the UN and they barely communicate with the reality of the outer city”.

In this sense, the social space of conflict develops in a distorted process of spatialisation; it manifests spatio-temporal discontinuities.

However, is the problem or the *quest of wholeness* an important issue and an emerging task? I argue that despite significant obstacles, perceiving social space as a whole is of great importance with respect to an analysis and a re-definition of the social space of conflict being a crucial precondition for its restructuring.

2.1.2 Beyond dichotomies: space as a whole

Divided cities produce spaces of conflict. Regarding a divided city, the harshest effect of the physical division by a concrete material border is the disruption of the spatial *whole* with respect to physical space and its perceptions. This disruption precludes the possibility of recognising the divided space as a whole as long as the newborn, partitioned world is taken for granted as a “necessary evil”. This lack of physical and mental spatial *mapping* is one central starting

⁵³ There are places within the Buffer Zone, where one can see from outside this sense of “frozen” time. There are houses, tables and chairs perpetually “waiting” to be inhabited or set again.

point to explore the spatialisation of conflict with respect to “spatial alienation” (see for instance Debord, [1967] 1994: thesis 161).

In his characteristic work on the *Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch (1960) makes a great effort to elaborate on the image of the city, arguing that the incapability to map urban space as a system composed by different elements is in the core of urban alienation. Employing Boston, Jersey City and Los Angeles as case studies, he introduces five elements into which the city's images can be classified: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. Using those elements, the cities' inhabitants produced *mental maps* of their own city, proving the absent perception of the urban totality. Lynch (1960:5) claims that it is rather rare for most people to become completely “lost”, since supported by maps, signs and other way-finding devices. However, if such a misfortune finally occurs, the vital role of spatial mapping is revealed, reminding that being “lost” affects personal balance and self-definition according to certain psycho-geographical coordinates. The absent spatial totality, the lack of *legibility* and *clarity* (Lynch, 1960:3-6) and the lost “broader picture” and its particularities, are responsible for people's weakness to understand the world around them, while they are unable to distinguish their environments from their pseudo-environments. This crucial gap, as I argue below, is filled in by the construction of stereotypical socio-spatial perceptions, manifested by discourses and mental representations⁵⁴.

However, Fredric Jameson's (1990) introduced aesthetics of *cognitive mapping* targets in the centre of the discussion linking spatial mapping to the social realm:

“the incapacity to map socially is as crippling to political experience as the analogous incapacity to map spatially is for urban experience” (Jameson, 1990:350).

There are two points nicely tidied up in the above quote. Firstly, Jameson provides a link between spatial and social realm, while secondly underlining the significance of *wholeness* on both levels. This link of the social to the spatial sphere is further highlighted, when Jameson (1990:350) argues that Lynch's spatial analysis could be extrapolated

⁵⁴ See section 1.2.2 and chapter 5.

“to the realm of social structure, that is to say, in our historical moment, to the totality of class relations on a global (or should I say multinational) scale”.

He suggests a mapping of more complete and higher forms of perceiving the world and human experience, a mapping of social life as a whole. Thus, the “problem of wholeness” opens an interesting yet too large debate to be thoroughly negotiated here. However, I draw upon Jameson’s *Political Unconscious* (1981:50-55) and Jean Paul Sartre’s *Critique of Dialectical Reason* ([1960] 2004:45-47) in order to provide some useful yet brief remarks.

In his book *The Political Unconscious* (1981), Fredric Jameson devotes a significant part to a (re-) conceptualisation of totality, especially responding to the critiques on Hegel’s thought. He suggests that totality is not a conception, where contradictions “are presumably annulled, the gap between subject and object abolished, and some ultimate and manifestly idealistic form of Identity is established” (Jameson, 1981:50). In other words, the “problem of wholeness” does not seek to reduce complexities into holistic entities but rather attempts to find more complete forms to express them. From this perspective, employing György Lukács’ analysis on Hegel in *History and Class Consciousness* ([1923] 1971), Jameson argues that the conception of totality is mostly a methodological standard:

“[the critique] argues not merely that the concept of "totality" is here a code word for Absolute Spirit, but that a whole vision of history is herein perpetuated, in which Utopia (read: communism) is understood as achieving its ultimate identity by the obliteration of difference through sheer force.

[...]

As far as Lukacs is concerned, the conception of totality outlined in *History and Class Consciousness* must be read, not as some positive vision of the end of history in the sense of Schelling’s Absolute, but as something quite different, namely a methodological standard” (1981: 50-52).

Jameson conceives totality as something that is more than the sum of its parts; as a space that dialectically transcends its partial elements towards a

systematically “totalising” operation of history, society and existence. This totality remains *unrepresentable* as far as it does not constitute a notion of an *absolute truth* or else an absolute form. However, according to him, it manifests its presence on one hand through its very absence as a concrete form and on the other as a continuous process, a methodological direction. In his essay on *Cognitive Mapping* (1990) he employs the example of capital in order to make that statement clear:

“The conception of capital is admittedly a totalizing or systemic concept: no one has ever seen or met the thing itself, it is either the result of scientific reduction (and it should be obvious that scientific thinking always reduces the multiplicity of the real to a small scale model) or the mark of an imaginary and ideological vision. But let us be serious: anyone who believes that the profit motive and the logic of capital accumulation are not the fundamental laws of this world, who believes that these do not set absolute barriers and limits to social changes and transformations undertaken in it such a person is living in an alternative universe; [...]

Because if capital does not exist, then clearly socialism does not exist either. I am far from suggesting that no politics at all is possible in this new postMarxian Nietzschean world of Micropolitics that is observably untrue. But I do want to argue that without a conception of the social totality (and the possibility of transforming a whole social system), no properly socialist politics is possible” (Jameson, 1990: 351).

From this perspective, totality is mainly seen as a *process* of totalisation (the way Sartre sees it, [1960] 2004:45-47) that “continues that synthetic labour which makes each part an expression of the whole and which relates the whole to itself through the mediation of its parts” (Sartre, [1960] 2004: 46). In other words, Sartre goes beyond a conception of totality as a product, for this presents totality as a “vestige of a past action”, towards a conception of totality as an activity; the process of totalisation. In this sense, totalisation is a method, an unfinished project; a direction against both alienation and reformism:

“In this sense, Hegel’s great dictum, ‘the true is the whole’, is less an affirmation of some place of truth which Hegel himself (or others) might occupy, than it is a perspective and a method whereby the “false” and the ideological can be unmasked and made visible” (Jameson, 1981:53).

Summarising the above, I come up with an interesting link. I have already underlined that the absent sense of totality leads to spatial alienation and a distorted understanding of the socio-spatial environment. This is both a personal/cognitive and a social/ political problem for those, who seek to find adequate understandings. However, I keep a *spatial approach* in this debate, arguing that the “problem of wholeness” is actually a *quest* to understand all spatial aspects and act beyond a claim for reform (partial) towards a radical restructuring (total) of social and urban life. Combining the above, to the Lefebvrian conceptualisation, as it is negotiated in the first section, I suggest that the conception of totalisation finds its spatial grounding in the idea of social spatialisation, as long as the latter represents the continuous process of spatialising social relations in an inseparable whole of perceived, conceived and lived space. In this sense, I come up with a definition of social space being the spatial totality of interweaving spatial moments continuously under construction as an unfinished process of totalisation.

This is the way I am dealing with the *social space of conflict* in the current thesis. For instance, Nicosia’s division is much more than a problem of physical space that could be solved after the physical border’s demolishment. It should not be neither perceived just as an inevitable consequence of abstract, far away macro-geopolitical interests and foreign policy motives nor as a “naturalised” expression of social, cultural, ethno-national, religious contradictions. Instead, I propose a synthesis towards a socio-spatial “quest for wholeness” being the core of a new understanding of the social space of conflict; a multilevel synthesis “aware of walls, the glowing stump of a cigar, familiar faces” in the words of Sartre (Jameson, 1981:55).

In other words, I suggest a mapping of the conflict towards a new *imageability* (in Lynch’s sense) of hidden or distorted aspects in terms of spatial practice, imaginary and experience. Lynch’s (1960:9) conception of imageability, being “that quality in a physical object, which gives it a high

probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer” is here extrapolated to all spatial moments, addressing a quest for *visibility*, beyond real and mental “walls”.

2.1.3 Visibility

Following this thread, *visibility* is a crucial term and notion referring to the “quest for wholeness”. Again, I conceive the “quest for wholeness” as a component for adequate understandings and radical restructurings in a strategic sense, while introducing *visibility* as an alternative notion for Lynch’s *imageability* referring to tactics (resistance). In the study’s case, it responds to a main characteristic of divided cities, where walls and buffer zones make the “other” side *invisible*, while bringing to *visible* light representations of the “enemy”.

Put simply, in the public realm, reality is what is made visible; in Hannah Arendt’s ([1958] 1998:50) words “appearance manifests reality”. This public reality includes both what is exposed and what remains hidden. At the same time, there is also an invisible reality; the individualised reality of privacy. In a rough way, we could then argue that public is visible, while private is invisible, in the way home is a private reality offering a shelter against public exposure. Simon Susen (2011:39) uses the distinction between *polis* and *oikos* in order to elaborate on the dichotomy between public and private realm:

“According to this view, the sphere of the *polis* was strictly separated from the sphere of the *oikos*: whereas the former described a *public* sphere based on *open* interactions between free citizens in the political realm, the latter designated a *private* sphere founded on *hidden* interactions between free individuals in the domestic realm” (see also Habermas [1962] 1989: 3).

Thus, once one shares one’s thoughts, feelings, even the most hidden aspects of the self, private reality becomes de-individualised and therefore visible and public. Arendt ([1958]1998: 50) uses the example of expressing sharp bodily pain in order to explain this de-individualised reality of a subjective borderline between life and death; through expressed bodily pain, life and death enter the public realm. Thus, who decides what becomes visible

and therefore real and what remains concealed?

Michel Foucault would reply: *power*. For Foucault ([1975] 1977), visibility is a product of power, exercised by examination and contributing to discipline and control. From this perspective for instance, the militarised city of Nicosia, is a place of visibility produced by power; the conflict is the “objectified” visible reality manifested by material borders, barbed wire fences, guards, troops, walls etc. Moreover, it is a place of continuous “examination” that “transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power” (Foucault, [1975] 1977: 187). The military troops, the watchtowers, the check points and the visible border are some of the elements of the potential “gaze” that would possibly judge a subject’s movement or action anytime:

“The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them” (Foucault, [1975] 1977: 184).

However, whilst the division and control are visible and present, certain *invisibility* is needed in order to assure *discipline*. To link this argument with the above, we could then argue that power “invades” private, invisible reality; the disciplined subject “accepts” power in his/her private (both personal and collective) realm. Moreover, the same visible products and components of power need to be somehow invisible and therefore *everywhere*, determining public reality and private attitude. Particularly in the case of divided cities, the invisibility of the “enemy” due to walls, barricades and buffer zones as well as the consequent invisibility of the “guard” reproduce insecurity and absence of trust and therefore contribute to disciplinary power. At the same time, the more invisible disciplinary power is the more visible subjects and their actions are:

“Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them” (Foucault, [1975] 1977: 187).

However, I go beyond that, towards a conception of visibility as “a necessary component of resistance” (Gordon, 2002:126). Thus, visibility is used here in multiple, yet contradictory ways. It is used as a product of power (the way Michel Foucault sees it) and concomitantly as a demand of the social sphere.

That said I choose to employ and commend on Foucault and his conception of power, discipline and control for in his book *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of Prison* ([1975] 1977) he seems to support power’s ubiquity (Gordon, 2002). In this sense, whatever is visible and can be perceived as the surrounding reality is produced by power. For Foucault, the subject’s attitude, actions and will are dominantly formed by power, which in turn is exercised upon the already passively formed subject. This dominance suggests that power is everywhere, defining individuals’ decisions even when they seem to be freely taken. But then, what is the use of power’s operations if subjects are not somehow *free* in the sense of having the possibility to break power’s walls? I suggest that the very function of power is completely dependent on the subject’s possibility to resist. Sharing Neve Gordon’s (2002) perspective, I draw upon his essay *On Visibility* (2002:126), where he suggests that “freedom, conceived ontologically, is power’s condition of possibility”, while arguing that “the very same power that produces visibility is concomitantly dependent upon it”. Put simply, freedom is the precondition of power, existing within constructed norms as a potential condition of subjects, the condition within the “realm of freedom” (Arendt, [1958] 1998:45&104).

In this framework, *visibility* is a key word that needs to be re-conceptualised. I note four elements of visibility that hope to shortly wrap up the above arguments: firstly, visibility constitutes reality in the public realm (in collective and political terms); secondly, it is produced by power manifesting at the same time freedom within social sphere; thirdly, it becomes the means of power towards the subject’s individualisation under the visible and unverifiable “gaze”, while finally exposing subjects to absolute publicity.

Foucault ([1975] 1977:200) argues “visibility is a trap”. Arendt supports that this trap is the manifestation of the possibility to break through the visible “iron cage” (in Max Weber’s words). In this sense, visibility is a product of power and concomitantly a demand; a quest to (re-) enter the “realm of freedom”. With respect to divided cities, as I argue below, the borderline

between public and private realm is blurred and therefore visibility is the manifestation of things and subjects hidden. The visible wall creates invisible people, while two visible rhythms of social life exist as such due to each other's invisibility.

From this perspective, visibility becomes a quest and a tactical tool towards the establishment of the socio-spatial totality. Since I attempt to build upon the notion of the social space of conflict adding new arguments to the former, I sum up the above in the following proposal: the social space of conflict constitutes the absent spatial totality of the interconnected aspects of physical, conceived and lived space, seeking a new process of totalisation through visibility in order to re-establish a "realm of freedom".

However, to turn the Wall into a Door you need a Keyhole. But who holds the Key?

2.1.4 The Common Space: State power and the social sphere

I have intentionally raised the above question in order to open the discussion towards a final definition of the space of conflict, of what a physical and socio-spatial division is actually distorting. I have already suggested that divisions distort spatial totalities, while producing spaces of discipline and control, where subjects are at the same time individualised and exposed to publicity under visible representations of power or its invisible "gaze"; either the "enemy's" or the "guard's". However, I argue that there is a need to dig a bit further towards the definition of the actual socio-spatial contestations, especially with respect to divided cities.

I start with a clear statement: in a space of conflict, common space is in contest; power seeks to enclose (in the way de Angelis⁵⁵ (2013) sees it) it, while resisting dynamics attempt to reclaim it.

In order to justify the above argument, I need to elaborate on common space and its various contestations. I draw upon Dimitris Kotsakis' conception of common space. Kotsakis (2012; 2013) argues that social space is the entity of

⁵⁵ For Massimo de Angelis (2010; 2013), capitalism encloses *commons* "from community land and water resources to entitlements, to welfare benefits and education; from urban spaces subject to new pro-market urban design and developments to rural livelihoods threatened by the externalities' of environmentally damaging industries, to development projects providing energy infrastructures to the export processing zones. These are the processes referred to by the group Midnight Notes Collective as "new enclosures" (Interview to Stavros Stavridis (2010) in e-flux Journal, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/on-the-commons-a-public-interview-withmassimo-de-angelis-and-stavros-stavrides/>)

the social system and its social dynamics required to reproduce its subjectivities and realise their relations. According to him, the popular dichotomy between public and private space gets further analysed –if not rejected- suggesting two interrelated reference points in order to understand primary and secondary distinctions and analyse social space: human communication within social sphere and dialectics of power with respect to state power.

With respect to social sphere, social space is the interrelation of personal and public space (collective space, civil space and state), while in terms of state power social space is the composition of private (personal and collective) and political (civil space and state) space. In this framework, a fourfold understanding of social space is introduced, composed by *personal space*, *collective space*, *civil space* and *state*. Moreover, *common space* (being both collective and civil) emerges as the terrain, where these two dynamics meet, compete and claim hegemony.

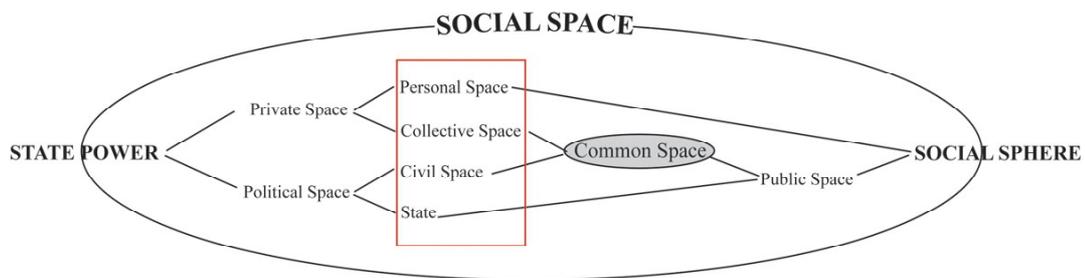


Fig.2.1 Social Space (diagram by the author, drawing upon Kotsakis, 2012)

Interestingly, Simon Sassen (2011:40) sums the above in the most adequate way, when suggesting that

“[t]hree different meanings commonly attached to the public/private distinction can be identified: *society versus individual* (‘collective’ versus ‘personal’), *visibility versus concealment* (‘transparent’ versus ‘opaque’), and *openness versus closure* (‘accessible’ versus ‘sealed’)”.

In this context, I turn the reviewed theoretical framework drawn out of the literature into a conceptual framework regarding the social space of conflict indicative to the way I perceive it throughout the current thesis:

The social space of conflict is the common space (collective and civil), where different dynamics (state power/ social sphere) claim hegemony over

visibilities (enclosure/ reclaim) towards the production of socio-spatial totalities (in physical, mental and social terms).

2.2 The Wall in the Mind (Die Mauer im Kopf)

"[...] the citizen is like the hero of a magnificent scene in a play by the best mimic of our times, Marcel Marceau: On an empty stage, little man 'Bip', stands all alone, frozen and anxious. After a while he makes some reserved steps to the right and stops; he has hit against an invisible wall. He touches it; he tries to find the exit. No luck. After a while he steps on the left. No exit. He steps forth and back. Invisible, solid walls everywhere. Employing his unique skills, Marceau 'draws' his imaginary narrow cell. He tries to exit again and again but his steps get more and more limited. Every wall has come closer; the cell has become tighter. The prisoner tries again and again but the cell gets smaller till the moment that the invisible walls smash poor 'Bip's' head"
(Marios Ploritis)

2.2.1 Constructing the space of conflict

We are supposed to live in the era of the globalised world, where goods, news, people, ideas and of course money travel fast. Mottos such as "open society" have been the response against totalitarianism, while "without frontiers" remains in fashion during the last decades accompanying different contents. However, this openness has cost much enclosure.

Although other control methods would easily replace them, material walls are used in order to resolve conflict and reduce violence. One obvious point is that walls are the cheapest way to control violent confrontations quickly and temporarily. Calame and Charlesworth (2009:5) claim that "walls, whether illicit, scandalous, or ugly, tend to curb intercommunal violence more cheaply and effectively in the short term than police surveillance". However, I would go beyond that argument insisting that walls are products of unsolvable conflict, while producing landscapes of conflict. They are parts of a vicious circle that constantly rearranges what is visible and invisible, while territorialising conflict.

Moreover, at some point, they lose their tight connection with the reason why they have been created, gaining their own dynamics in terms of “naturalising” their existence. “One of the more affective ways to control a population is to convince people that certain phenomena are normal and/or natural”.

In order to create a certain new reality, urban divisions and landscapes of conflict employ elements in order to create a new urban text. Kliot and Mansfield (1997) have thoroughly elaborated on the political landscape of partition with respect to the case of Cyprus. In a nutshell, according to them, there are five elements that compose the political landscape:

- (i) boundaries and frontiers, i.e. walls, fences, barrels etc.
- (ii) public landscape, i.e. meeting places, parks, squares etc.
- (iii) landmarks and monuments, i.e. statues, graveyards, symbolic elements etc.
- (iv) roads and networks, which integrate or separate people
- (v) institutions, from parliament to local government linked to state power

I find these five elements significantly useful and pretty much linked to the understanding of the social space of conflict I have already suggested, especially with respect to power dialectics: public landscape could be linked to the proposed private space including both meeting places and landmarks; roads and networks could refer to the public space being both as part of the “commons” (common sources) and as infrastructure produced by the state; institutions could be understood as the suggested political space being both linked to state power and the civil society; and finally boundaries and frontiers as well as buffer zones constitute the contested common space, which power dialectics seek to enclose, while resistance dialectics seek to reclaim (e.g. partition vs. reconciliation).

However, focusing especially on the symbolic space of landmarks and symbols, the symbolic space can be seen as a composition of places of *continuity* and *transformation* with respect to place-names, the cultural landscape (religious places, monuments etc) and the mnemonic policies followed in the post-conflict period (de Certeau, 1988; Kliot and Mansfield, 1997; Papadakis, 2006).

In the case of Cyprus two different policies emerge referring to the two different official narratives and the two different official expectations regarding the Cyprus problem. These two different policies refer to either preservation

(continuity) or transformation. The first aspects refer to the Greek Cypriot community, who handle the present situation as temporary and therefore perpetually “wait” for the land to reunite. In the symbolic space this idea is reflected on the freshly painted road signs pointing to occupied Kyrenia and Famagusta, on the preserved street and place-names in the Turkish language and on the well maintained mosques. On the other hand, as long as the Turkish Cypriot side insists in a separation in terms of two distinct zones and communities, it follows a policy of discontinuity and transformation leading to a sort of “turkification” (Kliot and Mansfield, 1997) of the north. In this sense, place-names, streets, villages and cities are all renamed not necessarily preserving their former Turkish Cypriot names but instead getting new, post-war ones. Additionally, greek-orthodox churches turned into mosques or museums and hotels or simply ruined.

However, if these elements are employed by power dialectics in order to construct the social space of conflict, it is rather interesting to explore the impacts.

Is it possible to reunite the city by demolishing the physical border? And is a physical border enough to divide a city?

2.2.2 Mental representations of the social space of conflict

“The imaginary is what tends to be real”, says André Breton. In a divided landscape, in a city of multiple divisions, the visible border creates the “invisible” other, a spatial discontinuity affects every day life and defines access, while a unique yet interesting social imaginary is being constructed. Inaccessible places stimulate imagination, while the “unknown” takes legendary dimensions. As American novelist Joseph Campbell notes “myths are public dreams, dreams are private myths”. In this sense, collective fantasies of the “unknown other” emerge, while the borderline between the real and the imaginary is blurred. There are numerous examples throughout human history showing that the “incomprehensible” has been always the core of legends and myths as metaphors of the “unknown”, influencing history, religion, politics or even art, while creating what Karlins, Coffman and Walters (1969:1) call “a vast cultural matrix in which images can develop and persist irrespective of the reality they are supposed to represent”.

Furthermore, divided space is concrete as long as visible barricades forbid

or allow mobility, while being imaginary as long as the other side is an inaccessible place, occupied by the invisible, hostile, unknown “other”. As Calame and Charlesworth (2009:6-7) state “the ignorance of the unknown but stereotyped 'other' behind urban partitions is a core ingredient for future conflict”.

But what happens when the “other” is no longer inaccessible or unknown? In the particular case of Nicosia, the border was sealed until 2003, when the first barricades opened and the borderline became a penetrable one. Almost ten years after the first opening, it is quite interesting to examine in which extent do people on both sides interact with each other and how such interactions affect the production of social space as well as the altered social imaginary, being also the pivot to define problems “and thus influence the sort of solutions that are thought of as being possible and achievable” (Shields, 1999:164). However, by the term interaction, I mainly focus on the actors’ mental representations of space within a period of more than ten years, in which they have been able to freely visit the other side. In other words, I am interested in exploring how actors, who live, act, work and hang out in the old city of Nicosia keep their own town in mind. This socio-spatial knowledge they possess is informative about the interrelation of trauma, memory, experience, stereotypes and the current production of space. At the end of the day, it presents how urban conflict penetrates socio-spatial perceptions in a multi-scale perspective throughout time, resonating the role of dominant discourses with personal/cognitive knowledge.

In this regard, in the relevant fieldwork chapter I elaborate on the “mental representations of spatial relations” (McNamara, 1986) as part of the production of the social space of conflict and the reproduction of social relations. Put simply, I suggest that mental representations of space are informative about the variety of divisions and interactions with respect to both space and social relations. How are socio-spatial perceptual systems constructed? How do we perceive the world through images and stereotypes?

2.2.2.1 Perceptual systems: Images and stereotypes

At first, it is of great importance to set a conceptual framework. I suggest a dialectics between images and stereotypes, which forms socio-spatial perceptual systems on two main dialectically connected levels: the personal/ cognitive level and the social/political level. Jacquelin Burgess

(1974:167) puts it precisely introducing a distinction between stereotypes and images, noting “stereotypes are images containing distorted or erroneous information”. Back to the proposed dialectics, the personal/cognitive level refers to the socio-spatial perceptions of individuals formed by images and stereotypes, which are both formed by first-hand or second-hand experience (Collison and Kennedy, 1981) and socio-political constructions imposed by dominant narratives, the rulers or the media.

Back to the role of stereotypes in the construction of perceptual systems, Walter Lippmann introduces the term and concept of stereotypes in his work on the *Public Opinion* back in 1922. According to Lippmann (1922:90),

“We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception. They mark our certain objects as familiar or strange, emphasizing the difference, so that the slightly familiar is seen as very familiar, and the somewhat strange as sharply alien”.

Following his words, I recall moments of my fieldwork, when informants seemed to be in the position to define the “other” even when they had never had an experience of their own. Lippman would build upon that: “for the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see”.

In this sense, apart from directly experiencing a certain place, people form images regarding environments they have never been to, experiencing a kind of “self-fulfilling prophecy”. In other words, there are socio-spatial images with reference to an existing first-hand experience, while there is others that function more like stereotypes of a certain place. Collison and Kennedy (1981) would call these two different images “primary” and “secondary”.

Furthermore, stereotypes are part of the personal and social imaginary without being strictly “untrue” as long as they represent certain perceptions, unique experiences and the correlations within the ideological battlefield. In Joshua Fishman's (1956) words, “stereotypes become autonomous precisely because their validity cannot be assessed”. We cannot strictly define the

borderline between “truth” and “distortion”, between imaginary and reality. When referring to fictions, Lippman (1920:) argues that “by fictions I do not mean lies. I mean a representation of the environment which is in lesser or greater degree made by man himself”.

I argue that there are three main factors behind the construction of personal and collective perceptual systems including images and stereotypes: the need of the rulers to sustain their power through dominant narratives and ideological constructions; the need to define the “self” in contrast to the “other”, or else to protect one's “threatened identity” (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009) as well as one's value system and beliefs; the need to gather groups or experiences under certain umbrellas that provide immediate and common understandings. These factors demonstrate the interrelation between the personal/cognitive and socio-political level, on which the stereotypes function as significant elements of our environment and our pseudo-environment. Tad Brunyé et al. (2008:419) claim that

“we learn about environments in a variety of ways; we can explore environments on foot, listen to verbal descriptions of places and spaces, study maps, and even build expectations for locations we have never seen”.

2.2.2.2 *The role of fear in the construction of stereotypes*

The role of fear is central in the construction of perceptual systems and in the stereotyping process. When using the term *fear*, I refer to the socially constructed feeling of fear, excluding metaphysical and existential aspects. I am interested in those aspects that refer to fear as both a product and a producer of certain social behaviours focusing on people's perceptual systems and particularly in socio-spatial terms. From this perspective, I treat the “afraid” like the “prisoner” in the Foucauldian ([1975] 1977) sense, being a subject created by certain concepts (fear, criminality, terrorism, death etc), institutions and professionals (state power, police, media, etc.). It is about this kind of fear that becomes a useful tool for surveillance, obedience and social control. Moreover, linking it to a Marxist conception of professions' productivity and especially referring to crime, I would argue that fear is the pivot for a whole trade. It produces security systems, safety and prevention

plans, suppression forces, defence systems or even wars. It gives life and support to a sustainable “economy”, while guaranteeing order, values, ideology and of course its own self. It is in the core of mass social control, while introducing discourses and methods towards a stable superiority of state and capital power.

However, I add the factor of social space in the debate in order to discuss about the ways that fear is being produced and employed with reference to certain areas. Sorin Matei et al. (2007:198) claim that

“socio-spatial stereotypes create feelings of ‘desirability’ and ‘avoidance’ toward specific components of an urban area. These feelings can propel stigmatised regions into a vicious circle of public disinvestment, social degradation, and more stereotyping”.

Regarding these components, they introduce five features in order to explore the production and influence of fear in urban areas: physical, psychological, sociocultural, economic and technological features of social space⁵⁶. These five features reflect levels of fear and comfort in the context of *communication action* pinpointing that “geographic images carry cultural images in a discursive community” (Matei et al., 2001:434).

In their long-term research work, Matei et al. have combined the above spatial features together with personal and social aspects of communication channels among urban actors. In this framework, they have focused on the communicative aspects of stereotyping, exploring the degree, to which people are perceived as threatening and dangerous linked to certain neighbourhoods of post-conflict regions and urban areas of unrest. The findings of their research suggest that there is a colour-coded stereotyping process of urban areas, where fear does not match the highest levels of crime. In other words, people perceive neighbourhoods as the most dangerous ones due to color-coded ethnic stereotypes rather than objective crime rates. In their conception I recognise a significant claim that the dialectics of space and the dialectics of

⁵⁶ Physical features refer to the area's layout including streets, built environment, and public places that bring people together, such as parks, stores or cinemas. Psychological features refer to the levels of comfort or avoidance or else to the extent of people's communication and interaction. Sociocultural features reflect the degree and the qualitative characteristics of the development of social relations among different ethnicities, cultures, classes and other sociocultural references. Economic features refer to economic resources available in order to engage in everyday conversation and finally technological features refer to the access to communication technologies and digital social networks.

communication create a sort of “mental mapping” of the surrounding reality, while, as they mention, they “absorb memories of conflict and shape social reality by ordering it along a number of spatial stereotypes”.

2.2.2.3 *Stereotyping the “other”*

The second factor with respect to the construction of stereotypes is the construction of the “other”. I underline the thought of Homi K. Bhabha (1983), who thoroughly elaborates on the construction and function of stereotypes within colonial discourse in his essay *The other question*. He critically analyses other approaches, while introducing a reading of stereotypes as a process of subjectification in discursive terms and as a key-factor of discrimination, prejudice, surveillance and oppression in the hands of power. For Bhabha (1983:18) the stereotype

“is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place’, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated”.

The ruling class and the global capital construct dominant discourses and a certain normativity that produces stereotyped images of the self and the other, through which the rulers exercise power. Bhabha offers an understanding of the representations of the other in colonial discourse, while going beyond that towards a reconsideration of the West. A dominant, unquestionable “truth” is born that blurs racial, cultural, sexual discrimination engaging the notions of “differentiation” and “respect” regarding the other’s identity; everything perfectly developing within a contemporary multiculturalism.

This multiculturalism, as Slavoi Zizek (1997:44) sees it, constitutes the ideal ideology for global capitalism “that treats each local culture the way the colonizer treats colonized people— as ‘natives’ whose mores are to be carefully studied and ‘respected’”. Zizek (1997:44) goes as far as linking multiculturalist ideas to a

“disavowed, inverted, self-referential form of racism, a ‘racism with a distance’—it ‘respects’ the Other’s identity, conceiving the

Other as a self-enclosed 'authentic' community towards which he, the multiculturalist, maintains a distance rendered possible by his privileged universal position".

In other words, stereotyping the "other" is a process of constructing normativities either threatened by or co-existing with "differentiations" that have either to vanish or respectfully exist so that they repeatedly confirm the superiority of the dominant.

This is the core of the construction of the "other"; it constitutes a simultaneous construction of an object exposed to attraction or avoidance; "it is that 'otherness' which is at once an object of desire and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity"(Bhabha, 1983:19). This process does not only refer to people but it also refers to spatial stereotyping. It is behind each and every spatial image that individuals possess regarding an area and its characteristics.

The function of stereotypes is held to be a way to reduce complexity of information and create categorisations of individuals, places, experiences, attitudes or feelings, yet underestimating their role as a factor of prejudice and racism, which both preserve social injustice and inequality. However, in the social space of conflict stereotypes replace invisibilities and create distorted totalities that remain as mental walls even when every physical boundary is demolished. Is this the actual wall in the case of Nicosia?

CHAPTER 3: DESIGNING THE RESEARCH. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, METHODOLOGY AND AIMS

This chapter operates as a *master plan mapping*. At this point, I clarify my conceptual framework in a nutshell and I choose the methodological tools in order to design the fieldwork and collect, evaluate and manage my fieldwork data. The following sections constitute the continuous link between theory and fieldwork, since they translate the conceptual framework into concrete methodological tools, while receiving feedback from the research process. In this context, they present the research steps, restrictions and aspirations, while tackling the “question of how”.

3.1 From literature to theory and from theory to conception

3.1.1 *Approaching space and the spatial approach*

As long as I have already dedicated a former chapter (Chapter 2) in order to thoroughly elaborate on specific arguments drawn out of a broader pool in the literature, at this point I refer in a nutshell to the theoretical framework that these arguments form. The viewpoint from which I approach the current study lies in the core of the research process becoming my first methodological tool: I choose a *spatial approach*. In order to understand that, it has to be firstly clear how *space* is approached and subsequently why a spatial approach has something to offer to this study.

I argue that space resembles a projection wall; it receives, represents and reproduces. However, what does this projection wall receive, represent and reproduce? -*Social relations of production*. On this projection wall, social relations of production leave the abstract realm of verbalism towards “grounding” and a “materialisation” (Prigge, 2008: 58) of practice, imagination and experience. From this perspective, space is *perceived*, in terms of a concrete materiality; *conceived*, referring to imagination, mental constructions and representations and finally *lived*, in terms of socio-spatial experience (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991). The reception, representation and reproduction of social relations within a spatial grounding, is furthermore understood as an ongoing process, an unfinished project throughout time (Shields, 1999; Soja, 1996). Therefore, I suggest that

space embodies actually the continuous process of the *spatialisation* (Shields, 1999:288) of social relations within a dialectical whole of spatial practice (perceived), representations of space (conceived) and the space of representations (lived).

The above are indicative of how space is approached, offering, moreover, a taste of why space could also function itself as an approach to certain applications. I argue that a spatial approach sheds light upon aspects that would otherwise be left in the realm of “empty words”, while highlighting the need to approach them within a broader whole. Which is this broader whole? -*Social space*. Social space is this exact *totality* of interweaving moments, continuously under construction as an unfinished process of *totalisation* (Jameson, 1990). A *holistic* approach of social space and a holistic socio-spatial approach resemble the view from the highest floor of a skyscraper, where one can “read” space, rhythms (de Certeau, [1980] 1984; Lefebvre, [1972] 1977) and life through their compositional parts and simultaneously beyond them. In this sense, I choose “reading” instead of “writing”, seeking higher forms of understanding beyond dominant *visibilities* towards a revealing of the invisible.

Why is a spatial approach important and helpful in examining a social space of conflict with respect to a divided city such as Nicosia? Before replying to this crucial question, I firstly respond to its inverse, arguing that spaces of conflict are fruitful case studies in order to approach and understand the production of social space. They constitute extreme cases and therefore their examination allows us to extrapolate findings to broader and various visible and invisible urban divisions, according to the idea that “if you can say something about the extreme you can say something about normalcy”.

In this sense, spatial knowledge has something to gain from the divided cities, while the latter have much to gain from spatial approaches. Why? I argue that the divided cities intensively manifest a *lack of visibility* in all socio-spatial moments. A physical border (walls, fences, barrels) bereaves physical visibility constructing the “invisible”, other. The other’s “invisibility” creates *mental walls* of stereotypes, representations and a collective imaginary. Finally, the lack of visibility and the produced space of discipline, examination and surveillance (Foucault, [1975] 1977) manifests pre-existing as well as potential dynamics of freedom, breaking through, reclaiming and the construction of new visibilities (Arendt, [1958] 1998). Therefore, spaces of conflict constitute a *cry and a demand*⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Quotting Lefebvre’s (1996) perception of the right to the city being “a cry and a demand”

for visibility and for the production of a socio-spatial totality in contrast to disruption and separation.

From this perspective, social space becomes a “battlefield”, where different dynamics claim hegemony over visibilities towards the production of socio-spatial totalities. Which dynamics compete within the social space of conflict? -*State power and social sphere* (Kotsakis, 2012). State power is both private (personal and collective) and political (civil space and state), while the social sphere is both personal and public (collective space, civil space and state), introducing a fourfold understanding of space composed by personal space, collective space, civil space and state (Kotsakis, 2012). Within this framework, *common space* (collective and civil) emerges as the terrain, where these two dynamics meet, compete and claim hegemony.

As a result, the social space of conflict examined here is the common space (collective and civil), where different dynamics (state power/ social sphere) claim hegemony over visibilities (enclosure/ reclaim) towards the production of socio-spatial totalities (in physical, mental and social terms).

This summary presents in a nutshell the suggested theoretical scheme, while introducing a conceptual approach regarding the social space of conflict and particularly the divided city of Nicosia, while already providing a taste of what and how is going to be examined. In other words, *this common space is my field of research*; it is the space where I explore and extract research findings following a certain research design. Before elaborating more on that, let us firstly gather the above within the diagram below:

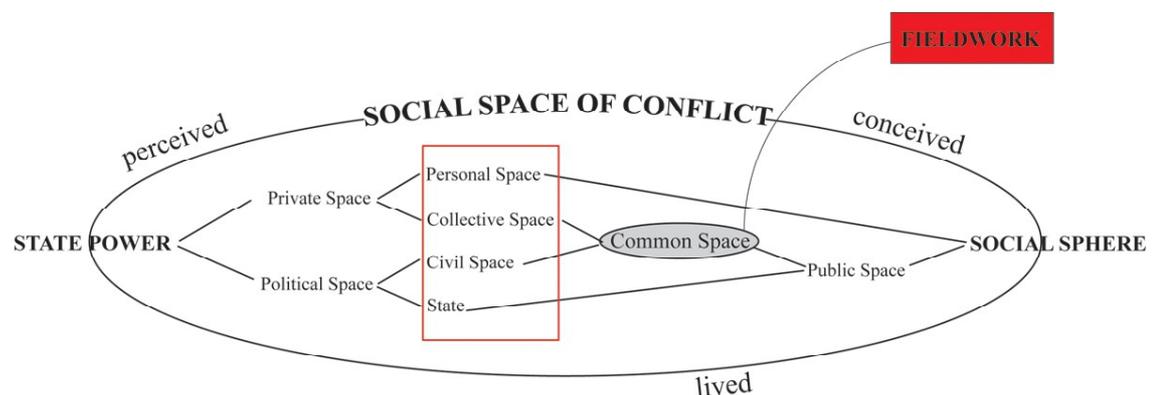


Fig.3.1 Conceptual Framework (diagram by the author drawing upon Kotsakis, 2012)

(see also Purcell, 2002).

3.1.1.1 *Common space: the space of fieldwork*

As presented in the above diagram, I suggest that the common space is the selected space, where the fieldwork is conducted due to its dual function: on one hand it is both collective and civil with reference to private and political space, while on the other hand its interrelation with public space introduces the dynamics of the social sphere that aim to re-claim it. Put simply, common space contributes to an understanding of how actors transform themselves into individual and social bodies carrying the central contradiction within all moments of socio-spatial life.

However, this individual and social “battlefield” exists in real and imaginary aspects, while space can operate as the canvas in order to explore it, revolving round two main axes: firstly, I explore the *fourfold* social space of conflict through its *mental representations* and secondly I elaborate on the *common space of demand*, being both collective and civil. In this way, I hope to further understand why divided cities are a cry for visibility, while confirming the idea that a physical division does not only exist in material space but it rather expands to representations and experience.

Why is such an approach necessary and suitable for the case of Cyprus and divided Nicosia? I argue that there are roughly two main approaches regarding the Cypriot landscape of conflict. The first approach could fit under the title of the “Cyprus Problem”, while the second one could be represented by studies on “divided landscapes”. These two main categories respond to two main perspectives from which the Cypriot condition is being examined and could be summarised within micro/ macro or global/ local dichotomies. Trimikliniotis and Bozkurt (2012:4) correctly pinpoint that the Cypriot condition has two basic sets of readings:

“Cyprus is either perceived as a problem of historic enmity between Greeks and Turks, manifested as an identity conflict over control of a state, or alternatively as the manifestation of geopolitical conflicts reflected in the externally imposed rigid constitutional structure, which imploded into fragments due to foreign machinations. The first approach is the liberal conflict resolution model and the second is the global/regional geopolitics model”.

These two readings end up either approaching “Cyprus problem” in terms of macro-geopolitical, inter-imperialist power relations or in terms of local characteristics of urban conflicts and “geographical divisions”, leading to either conflict resolution plans for the broader picture or visionary master plans for the narrower picture of the urban realm. I argue that both approaches, although carrying fruitful arguments and estimations reproduce a global/local dichotomy that lacks a reading of the particular case in a holistic way. Therefore, I suggest a space where these scales, viewpoints and dialectics meet and confront, while being grounded on a terrain that can provide their *image*. From this perspective, I propose a reading of the common space being a crossroads of different socio-spatial qualities, while reflecting scales, dynamics, potentials and contestations.

The question of how the actors represent the world around them with respect to narrative and mental mapping processes, is a question of how the competition of power and social relations is reflected in people’s minds producing ideologies, stereotypes, symbols, representations and the public discourse. The question of how a common space of demand is produced lets the factor of “reclaiming” enter the debate in order to “leave little room for manoeuvre or choice in terms of the struggles for a common future transcending the ethnic/state divide and the partitionist status quo” (Trimikliniotis and Bozkurt, 2012: 5).

3.2 Mental representations of space: exploring the “walls” in the mind

3.2.1 The broader Picture

The first part of the fieldwork refers to mental representations of space with respect to both *narrative* and *mapped* representations. In other words, I firstly explore how the actors store, code, organise and represent the social space of conflict through primary and secondary experience, or simply through first-hand personal stories and stereotyped narratives. Secondly, I employ a mapping process in order to visualise certain aspects as they are brought out of

the participants' minds onto a blank piece of paper. Both parts can be perceived as "mental maps", either narrative or drawn, however I make a distinction in order to separate them and bring them together again in a common analytical framework.

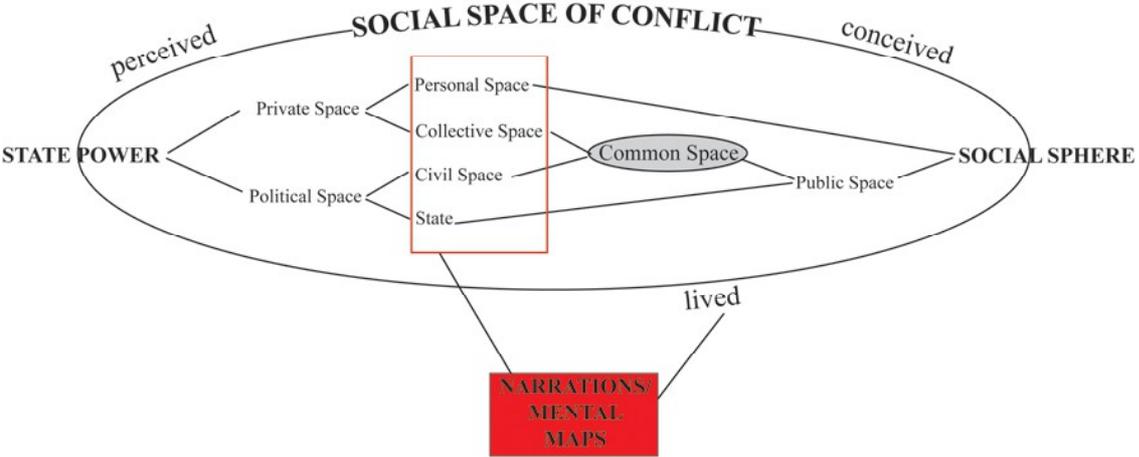


Fig.3.2 Narrative and Mental representations of space (diagram by the author, drawing upon Kotsakis, 2012)

Coming to the point, every experience, direct or indirect, is stored, coded and organised in various ways in the individuals' minds in the form of primary or secondary images. However, this stored knowledge on individuals' "action space" (Horton and Reynolds, 1971), where the objective, physical environment meets with encoded information and lived spatial experience, is a *mental map*. These mental maps are nothing more than conceptual schemes and systems indicative of mental representations or "figurations" in Fredric Jameson's (1990) words. By the time these mental maps exit the mind, in order to function as a way to communicate and share perceptions, map-like products are born. These products can be sketches, diagrams, key-definitions or verbal descriptions and narratives, informative about "personal geographies" (Collison and Kennedy, 1981).

Timothy Mc Namara (1986:116) mentions "spatial knowledge does not exist in a vacuum. In addition to our knowledge about the locations of objects, we often have extensive non-spatial knowledge about those objects". This extensive knowledge of the world around us can be what Stanley Milgram (1973) describes as "formal schemata of it as represented in maps and atlases" (Killworth and Bernard, 1982: 312). On one hand, spatial knowledge as the reflection of personal stories and experience in space and on the other hand,

spatial knowledge as mapped representations of the world around us. At the point where those two notions meet, I hope to provide multiple images of the divided city of Nicosia and the produced social space of conflict, bridging the environment with the pseudo-environment through post-traumatic narratives, spatial practices, secondary experiences and the *mapped* relation of emotional involvement with spatial information.

3.2.2 A discussion on methods: tools and reservations

Referring to the *mapping* process, various methods have been employed in order to explore spatial mental representations. However, I focus on parts of the larger debate that have affected my decisions regarding the methodological tools employed (Allen and Hatchett, 1986; Bell, 2009; Collison and Kennedy, 1981; Kitchin, 1997; Lynch, 1960; Matei, Ball-Rokeach and Qiu, 2001; McNamara, 1986; Newcombe, 1981; Thill and Sui, 1993; Tversky, 1992; et al.). The main methodological tools include distance estimations, map drawing, descriptions of location, orientation and navigation, each being significantly informative in different ways about the actors' spatial perceptions and therefore providing key-elements to elaborate on the personal and social imaginary.

However, among all above techniques, I choose to focus on the map drawing method following Killworth and Bernard (1982: 307) when arguing, "pencil and paper techniques do produce a great deal of inferential data". Thus, the actual task of asking participants to draw a map is almost always connected to some certain elements that these maps will finally represent. For instance Killworth and Bernard (1982) asked participants to draw maps of their social networks finding out at the end that people link their networks to space and geography. In this context, although the product was actually a map-like one, the research findings showed the relation between locations and stored knowledge about the participants' social networks. I mainly highlight that because it constitutes one of the basic starting points of my employed methodology suggesting that there have to be *variables linked to the task* and certain prisms in the analysis process.

However, reservations regarding the validity of map drawing tasks are not out of the blue. The common ground of criticism is whether the ways in which people respond to a certain task are indicative of their mental

representations without being distorted by certain *performance restrictions* that affect the accuracy of the process (McNamara, 1986; Siegel, 1981; Newcombe, 1981). To the above, I would moreover add the parameter of *originality* in terms of where spatial information derives from. How can we check and find out whether narrative or mapped representations derive from external spatial knowledge or represent original experience, if this is the case? Additionally, how can we safely come to conclusions without bearing in mind that not everyone can draw a map and represent his/her mental world on a blank piece of paper?

Timothy P. McNamara (1984; 1986:92), who raises the question whether “patterns of performance in a particular task are produced by the structure and contents of the mental representation or by retrieval and inference processes acting on the representation”, introduces a task to minimise performance demands and overcome the above obstacles, when studying spatial knowledge. He suggests “*priming* in spatial memory”, or else a task that explores how people represent mental knowledge after being asked to *learn* certain maps. Such a method is informative about how knowledge is stored, coded and organised in memory, while minimising performance demands. For instance, priming would suggest that participants are asked to learn a map, or a group of objects or a group of meanings. Moreover, it can also refer to processes where participants are provided with a clue in order to respond to certain tasks instead of a blank piece of paper.

Although a method like *priming* seems to be informative and accurate about spatial knowledge, reducing performance restrictions, I argue that it does not let us explore the contradictory, distorted, yet significantly fruitful era of direct and naïve, yet original, spatial representations.

This *map cognition* tool is on one hand informative about how mental functions facilitate the acquisition and integration of spatial knowledge (Freundschuh, 1991), yet overlooking one basic argument that I fully support in the current case: *space is not the aim; it is the means*. In other words, I clearly claim that in my mapping process I do not aim to have accurate spatial representations but I rather *use* space as the “projection wall” in order to explore the participants’ perception of conflict, separation and contact. From this perspective, I insist in a pencil- paper method combined with certain variables that additionally compose the analysis framework. In this sense, I

suggest a *mapping* of the participants' mental representations of conflict, reflected on and interlinked to space, referring to a psychogeography of their real and mental environment in the way Guy Debord ([1955] 2008:23) has conceived it:

“Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals. The charmingly vague adjective *psychogeographical* can be applied to the findings arrived at by this type of investigation, to their influence on human feelings, and more generally to any situation or conduct that seems to reflect the same spirit of discovery”.

3.2.2.1 *Key- elements in narrative and mapped processes*

In a nutshell, the aim is to explore how the two dynamics of social space (state power and social sphere) are being reflected on the “mental representations of spatial relations” (McNamara, 1986). This means that space and its perceptions are actually the means in order to elaborate on multiple conflict (referring both to separations and contacts) representations. I stick to the idea that I need two parameters in order to respond to these questions. Firstly, I need a lens through which I will “read” and ask the participant to “draw” the image of the city, while secondly I need key-elements that apply to the certain case study. Furthermore, I need these two aspects to construct both the narrative part and the mapping process, which I handle in an unbreakable unity of “mental representations” of conflict.

I choose to adopt the five key-elements introduced by Kevin Lynch (1960), while translating them in order to suit the study and my approach towards social space of conflict. Interestingly, this translation does not exclusively constitute a conception of my own but it is further confirmed by the interviewing process and the elements that the participants employ in order to “map” the landscape of conflict in a narrative way.

Lynch has already made the first step towards the definition of the elements/ variables, when he argues that the image of the city can be analysed

in five key-points: *districts, edges, landmarks, routes and nodes*. In his analysis, however, Lynch fails to grasp the interrelations of space with power relations, political agency or historical process (Jameson, 1990: 350). Therefore there is a need to rephrase his notion through the conceptual framework of social space as already proposed. Finally, this leads to comprehensible key-elements that organise the participants' tasks. In this context, I come up with the diagram below:

1. *Districts* → Home (as well as shops, neighbourhood, haunts etc) (Private Space)
2. *Edges* → Green Line / Buffer Zone (Common Space)
3. *Landmarks* → The symbol of the "other" (Political Space)
4. *Routes* ^ Routines (Public Space)
5. *Nodes* → Involvement / Spatial information (Lived Space)

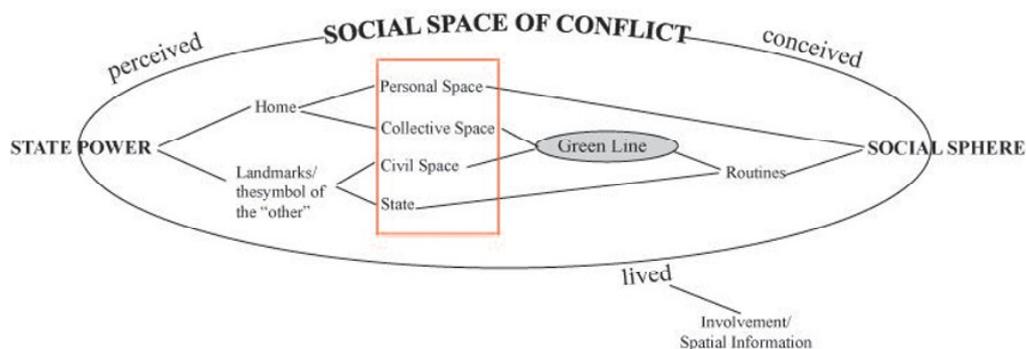


Fig. 3.3 Mental representations / methodological framework (diagram by the author)

The above elements penetrate both the narrative and the mapping processes, while the participants *spontaneously narrate*⁵⁸ and are asked to *draw* their "home", the "border" (the Green Line), the "symbol of the other", the "routines" and the ways in which their "involvement" with the "other" influences the range of their "spatial information", including them within the nodes of lived space.

3.2.2.2 Emotional involvement/ spatial information

In their study regarding former divided Germany, Carbon and Leder (2007; 2005) investigate whether the former border between both countries still exists

⁵⁸ To make that clearer, I mean that the participants, within their narrations of their personal first-hand or secondary stories regarding the conflict, include narratives of the five proposed elements. In this sense, Lynch's conception is further confirmed, while the image of the divided city is analysed and recomposed by the elements and their suggested "translation".

as some sort of “mental wall”. The path they choose to tackle the above question is to examine how and in which extent does informants’ attitude towards Germany’s reunification affect distance estimations between cities across the divide. In other words, they elaborate on the power relation between physical and psychological distances showing that there is a systematic distortion that indicates a “mental wall”, which is rather resistant to political change. According to the conclusions of Carbon and Leder, the more negative the attitude towards Germany’s reunification the more pronounced was the overestimation of distances. The authors conclude that this still existing mental wall is a sign for the failure, at least in some respect, of the German (re-)unification (Carbon, 2007).

Extrapolating the above argument as well as the general idea that emotional involvement somehow influences spatial information especially in spaces of conflict, I attempt to examine this relation in the case of Nicosia. The other side is no longer inaccessible since the opening of the barricades in 2003 and the “other” does not have the image of the unknown enemy, since crossing from one side to the other takes no longer than a few minutes on foot. In this framework, examining the range of spatial information constitutes an investigation of interaction between the two sides. However, I adopt Carbon and Leder’s idea in order to explore the link of spatial information to emotional involvement.

In this sense, I suggest that the more involved with the “other” the participants are the more spatial information about the “other” they possess. On one hand, emotional involvement is extracted from the interviewing process and on the other, spatial information is checked within the mapping process. Finally, the suggestion hopes to be informative about the participants’ lived space, following the idea of Clayton and Woodyard (1981:116), when arguing “spatial knowledge evolves from an autobiography of experiences that happen to take place in space”.

3.2.2.3 The participants’ profiles: variables and scales

According to the above, I examine next how emotional involvement with the “other” is reflected on spatial perceptions and information. In other words, I explore *if* and *how* the emotional involvement of my participants is drawn on the blank piece of paper, when they are drawing their mental representations of

space. However, in my study I am not interested to conduct a quantitative research and come to general conclusions about the Cypriots' emotional involvement. On the contrary, I attempt an "experiment" to see how the participants' involvement influences spatial information as being reflected on drawings of space in their mental maps. By the term "emotional involvement" I refer here to the participants' *profiles* as being narrated by them round four axes⁵⁹:

1. Their personal and family stories with respect to the inter-communal conflicts, the war and Cyprus' division. In this aspect apart from the free, unstructured narrative part, specific questions are also included referring to: 1.1 Displacement; 1.2 Former home (where it was, if it was a mixed one); 1.3 Missing or killed family/ beloved persons; 1.4 Role in the war (have you killed people from the other side); 1.5 Abandoned property and its current condition (who lives in it); 1.6 Current home and property ownership (if it used to be a refugee's home); 1.7 Place of work (Nationality of employer/ employees).

2. Their personal relations with the other side, also including particular questions regarding: 2.1 Frequency of travelling to the other side (also including the reasons, the last and next time of planned visit and the crossing used); 2.2 Personal relations (friends or the will to make ones, partners and colleagues on the other side, lovers and potential love affairs of their own or their children); 2.3 The crucial points of separation and contact; 2.4 Knowledge of the other's language; 2.4 Exposure to the other's culture (music, news); Potential move to the other side (if they would ever move to the other side if possible).

3. Their attitude towards Cyprus' reunification linked to the specific aspects of: 3.1 Vote for the Annan Plan; 3.2 Support of and involvement in bi-communal cooperation; 3.3 Expectations regarding the reunification (if they believe that it will ever happen); 3.4 Their opinion about the "actual" reasons why the island is still divided; 3.5 Favourite political party; 3.6 Frequency of visits to the corresponding "motherlands" (Greece and Turkey) and personal relations there; 3.7 Attitude towards the opening of the barricades.

⁵⁹ See Annex II

4. Their relation with the old city of Nicosia with reference to: 4.1 Their current home (also including property status, years of residency –before or after the division-, if they ever abandoned their home); 4.2 Frequency of visits to the old city on both sides (also including favourite places on both sides).

These four “keys” unlock three aspects regarding the construction of the informants’ profiles with respect to their emotional involvement. They refer to their first-hand or constructed *past*, the ways they perceive or experience their *present* and finally the visions they possess regarding the *future*.

However, there are also certain “hard variables” (Sitas et al., 2007) that play a vital role in the understanding and analysis of the participants’ profiles: *their nationality; age; gender; displacement experience; education*. I draw a lot upon Sitas et al. (2007), who have conducted one of the most important qualitative studies on prospects of reconciliation in Cyprus, providing a thorough view of which hard and soft variables matter regarding the attitude of Cypriots towards reconciliation, co-existence and forgiveness. This study offers a general and particular sense of variables that play a role in the construction of the actors’ profiles, however, the goal of my research is to pinpoint those variables that play a role in spatial knowledge, perception, representation.

3.3 Common space revisited: collective, civil space and the “third actor”

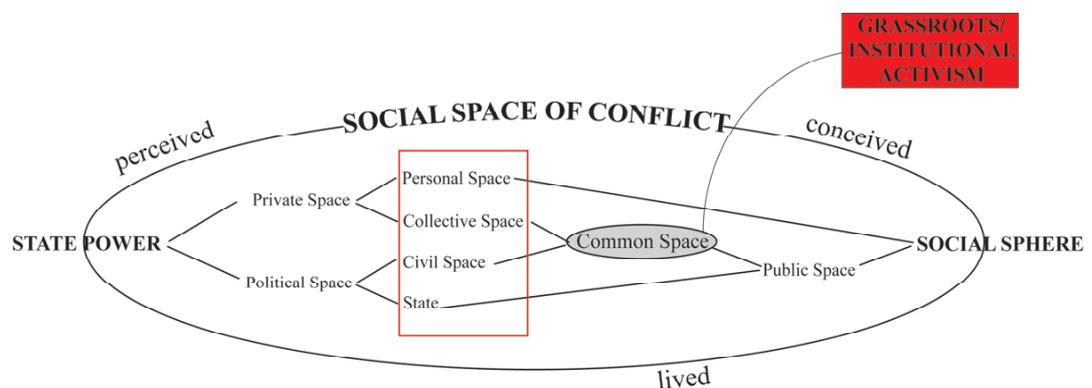


Fig.3.4 Common space of demand: collective/ civil space (diagram by the author, drawing upon Kotsakis, 2012)

In the second round of the fieldwork I deal with the common space of demand. This part includes participants, who participate in grassroots activism with reference to *collective space* as well as participants who refer to the *civil space* of NGOs and bi-communal cooperation platforms.

3.3.1 Grassroots activism in three concentric circles

Regarding the first aspect, I choose as a case study the “Occupy Buffer Zone” (OBZ) movement in 2011-2012, organising the fieldwork round three axes referring to three different target groups or else three “concentric circles”. These three focal groups are “the bufferers”, “the neighbours” and “the public discourse”. I conduct long interviews and discussions with key-organisers, activists, locals, and shop-owners, while examining aspects of the public discourse presented by the mass media as well as by social media and networks. In order to explore various socio-spatial practices, I employ audiovisual material in order to record assemblies, events and actions, while participating myself as an activist in the movement’s initiatives. Moreover, Internet, social networks and social media are also involved. I have joined several digital platforms of political initiatives and inter-communal communication.

Referring to the participants involved, as already mentioned, I choose three concentric circles as follows:

“bufferers”: The first group includes key-persons who organised the “Occupy Buffer Zone” (OBZ) movement or participated in it as activists. This group is subdivided into smaller units for Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots and others involved who have been interviewed individually or in small groups. Self participation in some of the movements' actions and discussions helped a lot in gaining personal trust with the “bufferers” as well as to understand their aims and attitude between the lines.

“neighbours”: The second group refers to the “neighbours”. The included informants of this category are the locals, the inhabitants and shop-owners who live and work in the old city near and across the Green Line as well as the local authorities of the police. This group represents the local dynamics emerged as a direct reflection of the grassroots movement’s action just a step out of the

concentric circle of the “bufferers”. In other words the neighbours represent the *reception* and the ways in which grassroots activism has communicated its goals and actions.

“public discourse”: The third concentric circle refers to the “public discourse”. By the term “public discourse” I refer to the communicative and virtual space composed by mass media, social networks, blogs and websites controlled by both official institutions and the grass-roots initiatives. From the extended variety of sources in the Internet I select some of the most reliable and mostly visited that represent the opinions of both the supporters of the OBZ and the opponents. In this framework I record the movement’s timeline as presented in the mass media together with official narratives regarding the mobilisations. Keeping in mind that official public discourse and formal narratives together with police brutality and parastatal organisations often construct “moral panic” (Cohen, 1973) presenting urban movements as a threat for social order, I examine how that functioned in the particular case. Additionally, subscribing in social networks such as Facebook groups and Twitter and observing the links and debate among activists, I study how virtual/digital space contributes to the development of an urban movement that re-claims urban life bringing “global” to “local” and vice versa.

3.3.2 Common space through the eyes of NGOs

In this section I give the floor to the civil space of demand. In other words, I let actors who are actively involved in the broader civil society elaborate on how they perceive the common space of demand.

In May 2012 I interviewed significant members and co-founders of three active organisations referring to the “civil society” and the broader inter-communal cooperation. The interviews include discussions with a member and co-founder of the Home for Cooperation (H4C) based in the UN-controlled area of the buffer zone next to the Ledra Palace crossing; a member of the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC), based in the same area, and a partner of the project “Nicosia European Capital of Culture (ECC) 2017”, which was located in the southern part of the old city, near the walls and opposite the Town Hall (Fig.) and refers to the Nicosia’s application for the ECC 2017.

In that period the OBZ movement was coming to an end and one could

have the broader picture of the movement, its goals, its timeline, its junction points as well as its failures, criticism and prospects. In this sense, the interviews, apart from a discussion about the organisations' perspectives, goals and actions was also linked to the OBZ movement in order to bring civil space together with collective space in a *common* "imaginary dialogue". Interestingly, the participants offer new understandings of the interaction between collective and civil space, while unfolding a palette of different shades of "common".

3.3.3 The third actor: population censuses and site recording

It is more than common that the Cyprus issue and Nicosia's division are treated as a problem that refers exclusively to the two main communities, i.e. the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. This might be a problem for my thesis, too, since I intentionally focus on the two main communities. The main reason behind this decision is that the two main communities have clear involvement with the Cyprus problem, the island's and Nicosia's division. As long as I am not exactly conducting a pure ethnographical or anthropological research, I decided to focus on and employ the two communities as the central actors who (re-) produce the social space of conflict within a physical, mental and social common space. However, I do not forget that this is a conscious reduction for the needs of my research, while other actors play a role in Nicosia's social space of conflict, too, as for instance the Armenians, the Maronites or the Roma and for sure the migrants, who turn out to be a significant actor within the city's neighbourhoods.

However, as long as I elaborate on the social space of conflict in the particular case of Nicosia, it would be a misleading gap to exclude migrants' presence from the image of the city. The quantitative data derived from the latest censuses, both in the north and the south, as well as the qualitative socio-spatial characteristics underline the need to include this significant *third actor* within the research framework. Moreover, as long as I make an effort to discuss about multiple divisions and contacts beyond the physical one, I cannot leave out of the discussion a crucial invisible "division" between locals and immigrants in social, political, class, religious and ethnic terms.

In this context I conduct a *mapping of migrants' presence* combining the quantitative data derived from the latest censuses on both sides with a site

recording of migrants' presence in the old city, according to the following methodological steps:

1. Construction of an analytical plan of the city that includes all building lines in detail. I asked colleagues working for Nicosia's Master Plan to give me detailed maps of each side, which in turn I joined together into a complete detailed map of the city's quarters and building lines.

2. Quantitative data derived from the latest censuses on both sides including population with reference to smaller census sections, i.e. the cities quarters. With respect to the northern part I draw upon Hatay and Bryant (2009), who have published the corresponding data. With respect to the southern part I draw upon the published data of the 2011 census.

3. Personal observation and site recording. I mark on the detailed map the residences and shops owned or rented by migrants as well as their presence in public space. My recording is based on shop labels, names written on entry-phones and information offered by the locals.

4. Comparing site recording to quantitative data. As long as I have certain percentages of migrant population from the censuses, I can crosscheck if my site recording corresponds with the data.

5. Creation of a detailed mapping of migrants' presence in the old city of Nicosia.

6. *Restrictions*: In the northern part it was often difficult to distinguish migrants from Turkish Cypriots. Therefore, I have mapped neighbourhoods and shops about which I had sufficient information derived from interaction with local people.

PART II: MAPPING THE CONFLICT. MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS AND THE COMMON SPACE OF DEMAND

*Albert Szent-Gyorgi, who knew a thing or two about maps,
By which life moves somewhere or other,
Used to tell this story from the war,
Through which history moves somewhere or other.
From a small Hungarian unit in the Alps a young lieutenant
Sent out a scouting party into the icy wastes.
At once
It began to snow, it snowed for two days and the party
Did not return. The lieutenant was in distress: he had sent
His men to their deaths.
On the third day, however, the scouting party was back.
Where had they been? How had they managed to find their way?
Yes, the man explained, we certainly thought we were
Lost and awaited our end. When suddenly one of our lot
Found a map in his pocket. We felt reassured.
We made a bivouac, waited for the snow to stop, and then with the map
Found the right direction.
And here we are.
The lieutenant asked to see that remarkable map in order to
Study it. It wasn't a map of the Alps
But the Pyrenees.
Goodbye.*

(Brief reflection on Maps, Miroslav Holub, 1982)

CHAPTER 4: MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE. NARRATING AND MAPPING THE CONFLICT

Chapter 4 presents the “first round” of the fieldwork, serving as an *oral history and mental mapping process* (including a *sensory mapping*), which operate inseparably. I choose five elements drawn upon the study of Kevin Lynch (1960) that compose the *image of the city*, which I translate into the conceptual vocabulary of my research work. In this context, I explore the narrated and mental space of the actors', evolved round five axes:

(I) the “home” ^ the “districts” ^ the “private space”

(II) the “border” ^ the “edges” ^ the “common space”

- (iii) the “symbol of the other” ^ the “landmarks” ^ the “political space”
- (iv) the “routines” ^ the “routes” ^ the “public space”
- (v) the interrelation of “emotional involvement and spatial information”
^ the “nodes” ^ the “lived space”.

The aim is to provide an alternative *city map* beyond the visible, physical mosaic that manifests multiple divisions, mobile borders, emotional barriers, expectations, ruptures and seams.

4.1 My home is on the other side; the other side is not my home

4.1.1 *The property issue*

“It takes a heap o’ livin’ in a house t’ make it home”, says English-born American poet Edgar Albert Guest referring to those critical ingredients that turn a *house* into a *home*. Thus, attempting to rephrase Guest’s verse, I note an interesting distinction between *private* and *personal* space: the house represents the “soulless” shell or the immobile private property, which is transformed into the personal space of home by a “heap o’ livin’”. However, as already analysed, the certain reference points in order to approach the above-mentioned distinction within social space, beyond emotions, memories and experience, are the state power and the social sphere.

To make that clear, I highlight the *property issue* as a crucial factor regarding the “Cyprus Problem”, being central within public discourse, negotiations and conflict resolution plans⁶⁰, too. The property issue shows best the link of private space to state power, while operating as a component of the social sphere with reference to personal space in real (physical/social) and imaginary (mental) terms.

I draw upon the *report of the International Crisis Group (ICG) (2010)* in order to understand some basic aspects of the property issue, while employing a political/ diplomatic/ legal perspective as a background against which different perceptions of “home” develop. According to the report, Greek Cypriots claim ownership over 46,000 properties in the north, while Turkish Cypriots claim to have ownership over 16,200 properties in the south left behind in 1974. Apparently, the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot

⁶⁰ the property issue had been of great importance in the Annan plan but it has also played a significant role in individual court cases.

authorities have treated private property in different ways during all those years since the division. For instance, after the independence declaration of the TRNC in 1983, displaced Turkish Cypriots received “title deeds” for Greek Cypriot properties, which had been only temporarily ceded to them by then. In exchange, Turkish Cypriots ceded any claim to their properties in the south. On the other side, Greek Cypriot authorities make a different management of the Turkish Cypriot properties. As long as the Republic of Cyprus regards Turkish Cypriots as “legal owners in the government-controlled areas” (ICG, 2010:3) there is no legal right to sale or exchange Turkish Cypriot properties.

However, due to the “unsettled situation” since the military occupation, things get rather complicated. While Turkish Cypriots, who still live in the TRNC are not allowed to claim their properties, there are cases of others who live abroad or in the Republic of Cyprus controlled area for a sufficient time period, who have won such cases or have been compensated. The bottom-line, however, for both sides is that legalism seems to fill in the gap of a broader political solution for reconciliation (Trimikliniotis, 2010:28). As the same report (2010: 1) interestingly states:

“as Cypriot politicians and Turkey fail to come to terms, the property question is increasingly being atomised by individual actions and the courts – a process that will be more expensive, slow and inefficient for all than a comprehensive property settlement”.

As a result, “home” as private space becomes a critical component and a negotiation tool with reference to state power in order to turn again into an individual action to reclaim personal space. Additionally, it reflects two different post-war official narratives regarding the Cyprus Problem. On one hand, Greek Cypriot authorities follow the official narrative of reunification and on the other hand the Turkish Cypriot authorities follow the official narrative of partition with respect to two distinct zones, communities or states. However, these official narratives are never crystal clear at the end of the day, since financial interests or legal aspects have led to a much more complicated situation. Nevertheless, the reflection of those parameters on the attitude every day people possess towards their *former* homes, is usually clearer. I could argue that while Greek Cypriots seem more emotionally involved with their abandoned homes, Turkish Cypriots seem rather distant, taking the current

situation for granted, while prioritising their *new* established life⁶¹.

Moreover, “home” is being related to a collective space; networks of people who try to find “home” again, either by claiming their abandoned property or by making a fresh start in their new home and neighbourhood. This collective space forms a collective identity, too, highlighting “refugeedom” as a crucial characteristic one possesses or not. In this framework of both personal and collective aspects with respect to private space, “home” carries both real and imaginary characteristics, linked to a palette from real estate interests to nostalgia, reminiscent of the American novelist James Baldwin, when arguing, “perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable condition”.

In this sense, by the term “home”, I refer to the private space being on one hand linked to the social sphere through its personal aspect and on the other hand related to state power, together with political space. Put simply, I am interested in different perceptions of “home” as a representation of personal stories as well as of a collective imaginary or a collective demand.

4.1.2 Narrating private space: The displaced

Next, I open the floor to the actors, who *narrate* personal space on their own and the other side. Moreover, I am interested to explore the limits of this personal space towards the space of self-definition; the space around one, the reference point from which one begins to “draw” his/her mental world. In this context, I mostly focus on respondents who had been forced to abandon their homes either during the 1963 inter-communal conflicts (Turkish Cypriots) or after the 1974 war (both). In this framework, following Hobsbawm’s (1972) idea that “all human beings are conscious of the past (defined as a period before the events directly recorded in any individual's memory) by virtue of living with people older than themselves”, there are two generations involved in the debate: those who have first-hand experience of the 1974 displacement and their children who possess second-hand experience on the issue. To be more specific, in the first category the ages range roughly from 50 to 60 year old, since these people both possess first hand experience and still influence development in the social and political scene, while in the first category I refer to participants from roughly 25 to 35, who have secondary experience and have grown up in the

⁶¹ Nevertheless, the first time that Turkish Cypriot had to abandon their homes was in the 60’s and especially after the 1963-1964 conflicts.

post-war era, heard stories from their parents and/or school and are informative about the post-division generation.

During the interviewing process it was often “unnecessary” to ask straight questions about the informants’ home as long as it was one of the first things they prioritised while narrating their personal or family stories. Interestingly, when narrating about their “home”, respondents who had experienced a displacement in 1963 or 1974 were directly referring to their *former* home. A 27-year-old Greek Cypriot in Nicosia refers to the experience he had had when he first travelled to the other side. He talks about the way his parents, who had been both “internally displaced” (Hadjiyanni, 2002), have influenced his perception of the other side with respect to his *former* family home:

“We all have a personal story (referring to 1974). My parents are both refugees from two villages of Famagusta. You can see their homes from the street but you cannot go there and I had some negative feelings about what had happened in Cyprus. But slowly this has changed, I think. I do not see it that hostile any more; I see it as something that has happened to our lives, something that has happened and we learn to live with it. But simply, while driving to the way to Paralimni from Nicosia on the old road, when we reached my mother’s village, she took her hand out of the car window and said ‘there is my home’. She had no hostility, just said ‘there is my home. There is the place I cannot go to’”.
(INT5/GreekCypriot/Male/27)

After the opening of the barricades in 2003, it was the first time after many years that Cypriots had the chance to cross the border to the other side and witness the new situation. According to the *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus* (2003), in the first week after the opening of the Ledra and Pergamos crossing-points around 140,000 Greek Cypriots and around 34,000 Turkish Cypriots crossed to the other side. As mentioned in the same report, until May 2003 and the additional crossings of Strovilia and Ayios Dometios/ Metehan, the average number of crossings per day stabilised at 13,000 people.



Ledras/Lokmaci crossing, April 2008 (internet)

There are many photos and videos that record the first day of the opening, showing thousands of people queuing in order to cross to the opposite direction. The motivation to visit their abandoned homes was extremely common among Cypriots. However, these crossings are not necessarily linked to high levels of encounters and interaction⁶². They can be understood as short trips to the “unknown” other, carrying all representations and stereotypes formed during the years of invisibility; trips back in time, to imagination or a recall of past traumas. Some would note that they only went to the other side once in order to see their former homes and have never visited the other side again since then. Some others have attempted to enter the houses and meet the new inhabitants. The young Greek Cypriot continues narrating about his own experience and feelings when he finally managed to visit his father’s home and meet the “other”:

“I have been there (on the northern side) once but I would not like to go there again in the way I did the last time. We went to Famagusta by car in order to see my father’s home. We tried to go to my mother’s, too but we couldn’t because it is in the military zone. And I did not like the experience. I went there to see my father’s home and the one (one Turkish Cypriot or Turkish person) was saying ‘get out!’ while the other was saying ‘let the man see his home’. I want to prevent myself from such conflicts” (INT5/GreekCypriot/Male/27).

A 25-year-old Turkish Cypriot young man is also a child of a displaced

⁶² See PRIO Report 4/2007, Ari Sitas/ Dilek Latif/ Natasa Loizou “Prospects of Reconciliation, Co-existence and Forgiveness in Cyprus in the Post- Referendum Period”

Turkish Cypriot family from a village near Paphos. His family story includes also a story about the *former* home:

“My grandmother told me about her visit to the other side. She visited her old house, now inhabited by Greeks (he actually means Greek Cypriots). They welcomed her; they offered Turkish coffee and sweets. She saw a picture on the wall. Maybe it was a photo, I don’t remember exactly. She recognised that picture but she said nothing. She did not ask to have it back. After a while, the Greeks gave my grandmother a box with her personal stuff. She has shown me that box; I think that was very polite.”
(INT /TurkishCypriot/Male/25)

Interestingly, the Turkish Cypriot old woman although having visited her former home, she did not claim her personal things; she said nothing about the picture on the wall although she had noticed and recognised it. At the same time, the Greek Cypriot inhabitants did not only preserve her personal stuff but they also assumed she would want them back. On the other hand, the secondary experience of the young respondent manifests a rather detached yet friendly attitude towards the other side, which is common among the younger generation as I argue below.

At the same time, people on both sides, now in their fifties or more, have a first-hand experience of the displacement. Most of them travelled to the other side soon after the opening of the Ledra Palace Crossing in order to witness with their own eyes what had happened with their former homes and villages. There are interesting differentiations between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. Dominant political management regarding the property issue as well as dominant narratives about the Cypriot status quo seem to be reflected to a certain extent on the attitude both sides have formed towards their former homes. One Turkish Cypriot man and one Turkish Cypriot woman note:

“Our home was in the west-south. We came here after the war. We never wanted a separation. We became refugees again and again. We were forced to live our village in 1963, run away again and again. After the war we came to Nicosia. We are innocent. Today, a Greek Cypriot family lives in our home, a doctor. But I don’t live in a former Greek Cypriot house in the north. We haven’t exchanged”. (INT 31/Turkish Cypriot/Female/61)

“I was born in a village in the south. We moved to Nicosia after 1974. Our world had been already small and it got smaller. Now, my home is empty. Our village was set on fire then, but our house survived. I would like it to become a peace museum”. (INT33/Turkish Cypriot/Male/55)

There is some sort of compromise in both quotes. Both respondents refer to their former homes in a way that shows that they take the new situation for granted. They know that they will never return and perhaps they do not even want to. The first respondent remembers “running away again and again” and she has no intention and will to experience such a situation once more. She wants no involvement in the property issue; the Greek Cypriot family can keep her former home and let her in peace, in her new home that belongs to no one else except her. The second respondent does not claim his former home either; he “would like it to become a peace museum”.

However, the property issue constitutes an important factor among those Turkish Cypriots who have reservations on reconciliation and co-existence. For instance, the 55 year-old Turkish Cypriot man (INT 33) mentions:

“I don’t know. I support the reunification but only in some strict terms. You know, the Greek Cypriots are way richer than we are. Maybe, if Cyprus becomes one united land, they will come and buy ‘us’, too with their money. And then we are going to lose our homes once again. Not under the threat of a weapon but under the threat of a wallet”. (INT33/Turkish Cypriot/Male/55)

Summarising the above in order to further link them to the mapping process, there are two main images of private space: the *occupied* and the *abandoned*. On top of these two images, primary or secondary experience influence the level of emotional involvement, indicating that younger people expectably have a looser connection to their *former* family home than the older ones. However, for all participants, the *former* home remains an imagined place that becomes a symbol of a former private life that has either to return yet in abstract way or became a closed case.

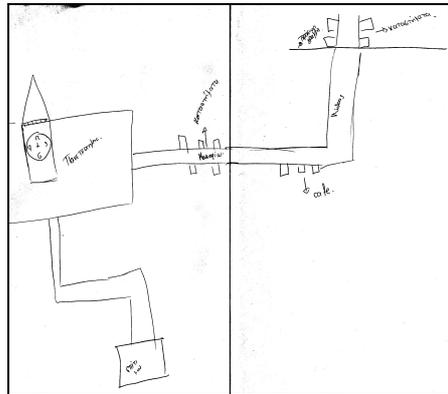
4.1.3 Mapping private space

One first finding and interesting note is that respondents' narrations about "home" differ from the ways they map their private space. Although when talking about their home, they all mention, apart from their new home, their *former* home linked to the 1974 events and the displacement, when they are asked to map their "home" including whatever they perceive as such, no one draws the former residence in his/her mental map; they all respond by drawing their *new* residence and neighbourhood. There is only one exception of a Greek Cypriot, who draws her former home (Annex I, p. /INT6).

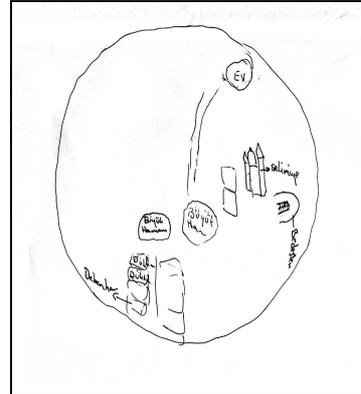
However, interesting findings emerge referring to this element of the produced mental maps. "Home" is perceived in a broader way as the private space including both personal and collective space with reference to actual residence as well as shops, cafes, bars, neighbourhoods etc. The *district*, in Lynch's (1960) sense, is furthermore crucial in order to understand the actor's self-definition with respect to isolation or proximity, approach or distance, familiarity or alienation etc, related to the space of research, i.e. the old city across the divide. Information is given referring to the surrounding environment around the district, creating a space, within which the respondents place their home, their shops or haunts: "This is where I live/work/hang around, across this shop/ next to this church".

In this context there are four categories of mapped private spaces: Firstly, the private space *around the old city*. This includes maps that present private space and connected activities in the periphery of the city. It refers mostly to people who live and act in the periphery and travel to the other side by car, using cross points out of the old city, where they are allowed to drive towards the other side. Additionally, this category refers mostly to Turkish Cypriots, who travel to the south in order to shop in the big malls of the city. This group of maps includes respondents who perceive the old city as a place that they do not cross in order to satisfy their daily needs. It is not surprising that Turkish Cypriot respondents produced such maps, as long as only a minority of Turkish Cypriots inhabit the old city or own shops, while the majority lives out of the city's walls, gathering their activities in the outskirts. Finally, as long as they mostly visit the south due to consuming and leisure reasons, they travel by car using the relevant cross-points.

Secondly, the private space *in and out of the old city*. This mental mapping category refers to those who work inside the old city while living outside and



Mental Map 28 (*out/visiting*)



Mental Map 30 (*in*)

I have selected mental maps of each category in order to present the ways the respondents have represented their private spaces⁶³. However, referring to all maps' allocation to each category, out of 24 mental maps that give sufficient spatial information to this request, 2 (8,3%) belong to the first category (*round the city*), both by Turkish Cypriot respondents; 8 (33,3%) belong to the second category (*in&out of the city*), 4 Turkish Cypriot and 4 Greek Cypriot respondents; 10 (41,6%) belong to the third category (*out & visiting the city*), 9 Greek Cypriot and 1 Turkish Cypriot respondents and 4 (16,6%) belong to the third category (*inside the city*), 2 Turkish Cypriot and 2 Greek Cypriot respondents.

According to the above allocation, I suggest the following *image* of the old city referring to the first aspect, i.e. the *district*: In terms of private space Turkish Cypriots' *districts* mostly involve commercial activity; the majority splits their lives in and out the city between their shops and working places and their homes in the outskirts. Additionally, a minority includes the south in their mentally mapped private spaces due to crossings for commercial reasons by car. On the other hand, the majority of the Greek Cypriots has a visiting relation to the other side, organising their private space in the outskirts yet including specific spots they prefer to visit. Additionally, it is more usual to work inside the city and live out of it than doing both within the city's walls.

⁶³ See also Appendix

Below, I attempt to “translate” these four types of relations between the respondents’ private spaces and the old city into sketches in order to visualise the four categories.

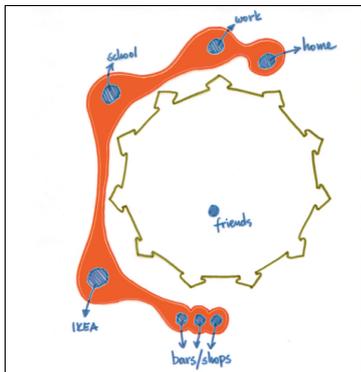


Fig.4.1 Private Space round the old city

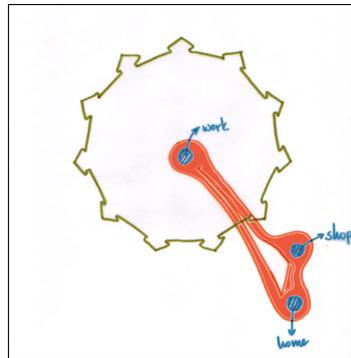


Fig.4.2 Private Space in and out the old city

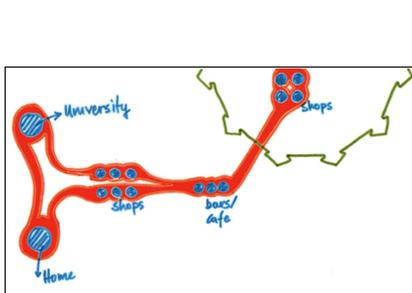


Fig.4.3 Private Space out/
Visiting the old city

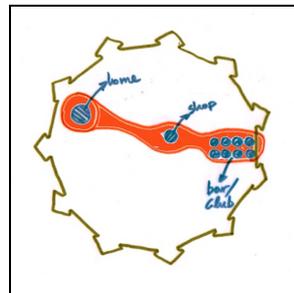


Fig.4.4 Private Space inside the old city

Having these sketches in hand, I note that no mapped private space suggests an active involvement of the “other” even if the respondents visit the other side every now and then after the opening of the barricades. Private space includes the personal space of home and the collective space of the broader neighbourhood. Furthermore, it refers to the state power, as already stated, underlining the presence of the border even in its penetrable form. The Green Line is there, while the respondents “draw” their districts. In the next section, we can enter the realm of this borderline’s mental representations.

4.2 The Green Line and the distance between us

4.2.1 Narrating division and crossing

4.2.1.1 *The land of the missing: the other side as a mass grave*

The issue of the missing persons is of high importance within public discourse in Cyprus. Apart from constituting an issue of high political significance, it also penetrates the personal realm; distinguishing those Cypriots who have a missing loved one from those who have been luckier⁶⁴. The other side is perceived, especially for the Greek Cypriots, as a mass grave, as the land of the missing.

“We buried people with bulldozers in order not to stink in the heart of the summer. We buried people with bulldozers like animals that die. They open wells lately and exhume missing persons. In Cyprus there are 1600 missing persons and until now they have found almost 300. Inside wells, inside mass graves and since technology has developed a lot, they do this DNA test and recognise them. I can’t feel nice when I know that this person, whose place I visit, killed a relative of mine. I don’t know. How should I feel, when graves open at the moment and killed people are found? Would feel all right? What if you had a (missing/killed) relative in your family? How would you feel then? How would you feel if you saw a Turkish Cypriot?”. (INT21/ Greek Cypriot/ Male/ 60)

“We had a missing person; the brother of my mother-in-law, who stayed back and they killed him. We knew from others in the enclave, approximately where he had been buried, so we went there with my brother-in-law to indicate the place to the ones who finally found him. We are waiting for the identification in order to burry him. It is recent. Two months ago. We knew for a long time where he was, since we left, because people living in the enclave, who stayed there and were not killed, had told us that he was in a certain place”. (INT3/ Greek Cypriot/Male/64)

However, missing people are different from dead people; missing persons constitute an open wound that seeks to be healed, an open case that

⁶⁴ PRIO Report 4/2007, commending on the way emotional involvement is influenced by the case of having a missing loved-one or not, says “Here the story becomes more complex. This experience proscribes the prospects of reconciliation but does not cancel the prospects of co-existence or forgiveness”

seeks to close. This is moreover linked to two further parameters: Firstly, they highlight the need for truth and justice and secondly the leave an open space for pain monopolisation.

In this context, from 1974-1977, there had been numerous meetings in order to solve the problem of the missing person and return the remains to the relatives, giving them the opportunity to mourn and prepare funerals for the beloved ones. However, during this period and since the conflict events were still fresh, there was actually no outcome. During the next period, between 1977 and 1981, progress has been definitely made, since the UN General Assembly (GA) called for the establishment of an organisation that would deal with the problem of the missing persons. Finally, in 1981 a bi-communal committee called CMP (Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus)⁶⁵ was established in order to conduct investigations regarding missing persons since the inter-communal conflicts in 1963 and the war in 1974.

The CMP gathered information in order to create a list with all missing persons, while collecting blood samples of relatives for future DNA identifications. In 2006, three years after the first opening of the barricades, the CMP began several excavations and exhumations on both sides of the island. A team of experts has been conducting DNA identifications for years, returning the remains to relatives concerned, giving them the chance to prepare forty or fifty-year postponed funerals after all. However, these identifications have played another crucial role, too. They have managed to question dominant narratives about the past, proving that both sides had been victims and perpetrators at the same time, while contesting the monopoly of victimization and pain that each side has been claiming for itself. The CMP managed to gather numerous spoken testimonies that led them to the hidden graves. Finally, since 2008, the CMP consists of 8 teams in the north and 2 teams in south, carrying out exhumations autonomously until today.

In this context, during an interview with a Greek Cypriot in the south, I had the chance to listen to an exceptional story⁶⁶:

“There is a beautiful, charming beach in the Cypriot south, which I still visit very often. The landscape is wild, full of white rocks, thin sand and a

⁶⁵ Updated data can be found in the official CMP website www.cmp-cyprus.org

⁶⁶ Later I found this story published by Turkish Cypriot journalist Sevgül Uludağ, in the Internet magazine, Hamamböcüler (Cockroaches) in March 13, 2008 http://www.stwing.upenn.edu/~durduran/hamambocu/authors/svg/svg2_13_2008.html

brehtaking, deep blue sea. The place is called Ayios Georgios Alamanos after the name of the local monastery. Compared to other touristic hot spots, this one is a rather quiet place in Limassol close to the highway that connects Limassol with Nicosia. Apart from its remarkable beauty, there is also an interesting story that makes this place unique; the story of the fig tree.

Back in the 80's and 90's a rare species of fig tree was growing on the seashore. Its roots were invisible resembling a bush with branches, leaves and figs. I still remember that tree. I could not explain how it could grow on that beach, yet that absurd tree became a local landmark and a meeting point, when we wanted to meet and go for swimming.

One day, I think it was two years ago (2008), we went to the beach with some friends. The fig tree was gone. In its place there was a big hole within a restricted area. It was one of the CMP's excavations.

Back in the August of 1974, Ahmet Cemal, a Turkish Cypriot young man, together with two other Turkish Cypriots, (Erdoğan Enver and Ünal Adil), was murdered by three Greek Cypriots and buried in a cave by the sea of Agios Alamanos beach. After killing them, they used dynamites in order to seal the cave with fallen rocks and hide the dead bodies forever. However, the vertical explosion of the dynamites managed to open a hole at the top of the cave that allowed sun to enter the heart of the cave straight onto the dead bodies. Out of this hole a strange fig tree had been growing for years, macabrely spotting the three young men's grave. According to estimates, the last thing that Ahmet Cemal had eaten before being killed was a tasty rare fig from his garden, since his village was full of the certain species. Ahmet Cemal's last meal, out of his guts, gave birth to an extraordinary fig tree that for years had been pointing his grave but no one ever noticed".

There was a landmark for two decades; a unique phenomenon of nature that spotted people's memory, their childhood, their summer swimming and holidays. But there was a second level underneath. That same fig tree was another piece of the large bi-communal project regarding missing people's identification. At the same time it was a beautiful plant over the surface and a horrible event underground; a natural element in physical space that carried different perceptions, symbolic loads, interpretations and definitions.

4.2.1.2 *The enemy and the friend*

The other side is the lost place, the memory of conflict and the open place that recalls trauma today. During all these years, identities have been confused, the former friend became an enemy and as such gives at the same time birth to the need for reconciliation. Older generations despite the fact that they carry the traumatic experience are much “warmer” towards reconciliation, while younger generations know no other place apart from the divided one and, therefore, what constitutes an exception for some, for others has already become normality.

“The young generation on both sides has nothing to share. I see older people, who have friends from the past, people they were leaving together. Now that the barricades are open, I hear them saying ‘I will go to see my friend x’. Things are friendlier for them. On the contrary, for me and other young people as well as for young Turkish Cypriots things are not like that. I don’t see what could bring us close; I see no common ground. It is simple. They are people from a foreign country [...] The old people could also speak the language. I have just tried to learn two or three words. I do not see any relation. The only thing I can see is that I can travel to the other side only if I show my passport. That means that I travel to a foreign country. I have no connection with that. Ok, I know some people in my age, we have a contact but this side is my city”.
(INT5/Greek Cypriot/Male/27)

“Back in the past Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were friends. But foreign forces wanted us apart. I don’t mean only Turkey by this. Maybe Greece, Turkey, England, Germany... They made us fight”.
(INT31/Turkish Cypriot/Female/61)

However, narrations are not clear at this point. Aversion is mixed up with emotional involvement within the same narratives, while creating a contradictory blend of aggression and geniality, distance and approaching.

“I feel very bad about the fact that the Turks opened the barricades and brought the Turkish Cypriots here and we have become second-class citizens. [*Does this mean that you are against the opening of the barricades?*] Look. I don’t have anything personal. I have never fought with a Turkish Cypriot during those seven years. I have even been to the other side some

times, I met some of them here, too. I went to a wedding with Turkish Cypriots. However, I can not say that I have friends on the other side. I can't feel nice when I know that this person, whose place I visit, killed a relative of mine.[...] [*Do you differentiate though the Turkish Cypriots from the Turks? Do you feel closer to the Turkish Cypriots?*] Definitely! How could I ever speak to a settler? I have never met any settler. I have met and spoken to Turkish Cypriots many times. I went to them to the other side. Not very often, don't think I started any social relation. If I ever did, it was only twice. And I have been twice to my village; it does not exist any more" (INT21/Greek Cypriot/Male/60).

"[*Do you have friends on the other side?*] No. How could I have friends on the other side? I don't want to go there, to buy things and support the economy. I don't even let my children do so. They (the Turks) got my property, how can I give them money now and support the occupation? On the other hand one could argue, that things do not depend on me; on my money. Correct. Still I ask you, why? If you steal something from me and I help you keep it, it means that it is my fault. [*So there is nothing that connects you with the other side...*] Well, there is nothing that separates us with the Turkish Cypriots. I believe that if the Turks leave, we have nothing to divide. I speak with the Turkish Cypriots, who come here to buy things. What do we have to divide? Cyprus would be so prosperous if things were else. I fully support the reunification. [*However, if it was possible, would you ever live on the other side? Would you buy a house there?*] Of course not! Why would I buy a house if the Turks are there? I used to have property and they took it from me. Why would I ever spend money to buy another house?" (INT3/ Greek Cypriot/Male/64).

[...] I'm saying that in a friendly way; there have been some incidents, you know. Greek Cypriots have damaged Turkish Cypriot cars that passed to the other side. I've heard that they have sworn at people. These are really bad things. I think Turkish Cypriots don't behave in this way. We believe in peace much more. We accepted the Annan Plan, but they didn't. [...] Greek children think we are hostile. We have erased hostility from our school books, but they didn't" (INT31/Turkish Cypriot/Female/61).

The participants seem to differentiate their attitude towards the "other" according to different reference points. This occurs for people on both sides and

is indicative on the way identities are being structured carrying different interpretations within different contexts. For instance, Greek Cypriots can express hatred feelings towards Turkish Cypriots in a context that includes only the two of them. When people who came from Turkey and mostly the settlers enter the context, their attitude changes as long as compared to Turkish people, Turkish Cypriots are way more preferable for Greek Cypriots. They prioritise a common Cypriot identity, a common past and a common reference to the land, while forming a kind of alliance with the Turkish Cypriots against Turkey. At the same time, when “mother-land” Greece enters the debate many of them will highlight their “Greekness” in contrast to a clear Cypriot identity.

During the interviewing process, I asked them to put in a scale three features that could be indicative of their identities: Greek, Greek Cypriot (or Cypriot), Christian – Orthodox. Interestingly, there were many who would prioritise the “Greek” identity, including themselves in a common cultural and historical context with reference to “motherland” Greece. On the other hand, when the same question was addressed to Turkish people, asking them to put in a row the key-words of: Turkish, Turkish Cypriot, Muslim, no one included Turkish in his/her scale, while only one included Muslim.

Turkish Cypriots are extremely worried about their communal existence since they see their population get less than the people coming originally from Turkey either as immigrants or settlers. Moreover the economic dependence on Turkey and the existence of large numbers of the Turkish army are perceived as elements that prevent the north from becoming a modern, independent state, while being an obstacle for a possible solution⁶⁷:

“Historically a minority in the island, Turkish Cypriots have begun to speak of themselves as a minority in their own country. Traditionally fearful of encroachments on their political rights, Turkish Cypriots have in popular discourse begun to confuse the visual preponderance of temporary immigrants, especially in Nicosia, with those Turkish nationals who have acquired a right to vote and so who may, as Cypriots fear, ‘interfere in our political

⁶⁷ In March 2011, massive mobilisations took place in the north under the general motto for “communal existence” highlighting the role of Turkey against an independent function of the TRNC or a possible solution of the Cyprus problem towards a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. People were carrying banners and shouting slogans against Turkey and the military presence.

will” (Hatay and Bryant, 2009).

In this sense they possess a genial attitude towards Greek Cypriots in terms of a common Cypriot identity in contrast to a Turkish one. However, it is also clear that they are concomitantly distant, when referring to re-unification, being more in favour of a distinct framework of co-existence.

“My children were born here. I am Turkish Cypriot but I am married to a Turkish man. The Greeks say that my husband is a settler, who occupied Cyprus, so they don’t give Cypriot passports to my kids. Their father came to Cyprus by a boat, he met me, we fell in love and we got married. In what way is he a settler?” (INT 13/Turkish Cypriot/Female/56)

In this context, *political and civic involvement matters*. Participants, who are involved in political parties that support re-unification or in inter-communal cooperation platforms, possess a clearly friendlier attitude towards the “other”.

“My father owned a garage; he is a car engineer. He was staying with my grandmother and my grandfather in the center of Famagusta but they left after the invasion. My grandparents found some relatives and stayed in Limassol, my father embarked on a ship to Greece, where he worked as a sailor for some months. He was based in Athens. After that he came back to Cyprus and met my mother. My mother is a refugee. My mother comes from a village outside Nicosia. In 1984 we moved to Arabic countries due to my father’s work. Me and my mother came back in 1988 and my father three years later, in 1991. Regarding the Cyprus issue, my father, due to specific political beliefs, was very close to the other community. Namely, he had Turkish Cypriot friends, employees, clients; he had contacts. This is why I was raised with no hostile feelings against the other community. [...]

I have friends; I have colleagues. This led to my professional choices, too. I am a journalist. I was working in a newspaper, which was the only one supporting the Annan Plan. I worked there for fourteen months. It was my first professional experience and I am very proud of that. Now I work in an NGO on a bi-communal program funded by the UN. That’s way I am in direct relation and everyday cooperation with the other side” (INT/Greek Cypriot/Male/).

Of course, the rejection of the Annan plan on behalf of the Greek Cypriots and its massive acceptance by the Turkish Cypriots, apart from their political implications, has also provided a rough image of each side's intentions. In this sense, Turkish Cypriots express their disappointment and their belief that Greek Cypriots are not ready yet for co-existing and reconciliation:

"We used to live in common villages. We were friends. This is why I was fully disappointed when the Greek Cypriots disapproved the Annan Plan. I closed my eyes, remembered all my friends and I wasn't able to understand why. I know some Greek, I have even written a letter in Greek. May I read it to you? [*he starts reading in Greek*] 'I don't want anything more than a common land. I don't want anything more than our own Republic. Do you Giorgos? [*referring to a hypothetical Greek Cypriot*]' (INT 14/ Turkish Cypriot/Male/71).

4.2.1.3 *On the edge of the world: akrites*⁶⁸

People living in the old city perceive themselves definitely different from the ones who organise their lives in the outskirts. Moreover, people, who never left the old city since the war constitute a separate group within the locals with respect to how they perceive themselves. Since I had been living for some months in a place "on the edge" (Ayios Kassianos, fig.), I can safely argue that there were three categories of inhabitants: firstly those who had family residences for many years before 1974 and have never left their neighbourhoods even during the difficult times of the conflict; secondly those who inhabited the place soon after the war when it was almost abandoned and thirdly newcomers who enjoy the new trend.

The first category is the most interesting one for the way they distinguish themselves from the others, while making a certain contradiction even more intense: the old city of Nicosia is the middle of the broader region and in the heart of the island, yet the Green Line has transformed it into the edge of the world. The border's paradox, the paradox of spatial discontinuity is socio-spatial. At the same time that space is injured, new constructions and perceptions of identity follow dialectically the paradoxical and controversial

⁶⁸ Yannis Papadakis (2005); *akrites* is a Greek word referring to someone who lives on the edge, the border. It has heroic implications though as long as originally *akrites* were the guards of the Byzantine borders and are actually those who guarantee safety and protection against external attacks.

condition. While the Green Line transfers a city from the centre to the edge, people become heroic guards:

“If I wasn’t here in the war, the Turks would have come one kilometre closer. Some of us are still ‘partisans’ here. The paths were open and nothing could prevent the Turks from coming closer. There were no barricades or checkpoints or barrels and watchtowers. Everything was free; it was possibly to cross. So, thank God, some of us were here and saved the place [...] I would never leave this place. I am not afraid either. Often our soldiers were shouting at me ‘Mr. G, leave! The Turks are going to attack, we have information!’ But I was never afraid. No way. ‘If you have any spare weapon, give it to me!’ I was shouting back and they were laughing. Why should I leave? Where should I go? Here is the centre of Nicosia, the capital of this land. If they had taken this place that would mean that there would not be any other place to go. If you take the capital of a country, what else remains to take in order to enslave a place? If you take the capital, it’s over” (INT21/ Greek Cypriot/ Male/ 60).

However, the above refer mainly to the Greek Cypriots, while Turkish Cypriots do not seem to share the same perception. The reflection of the official narratives is here manifested as well. The southern side “looking” to the north, to the lost land, the lost “home”, perceives its place as a liminal one. On the other hand, the northern side is more supportive of the clear distinction and therefore perceives its place as the end of the state, while the Green Line constitutes a *sinir*⁶⁹ (Papadakis, 2001; 2005).

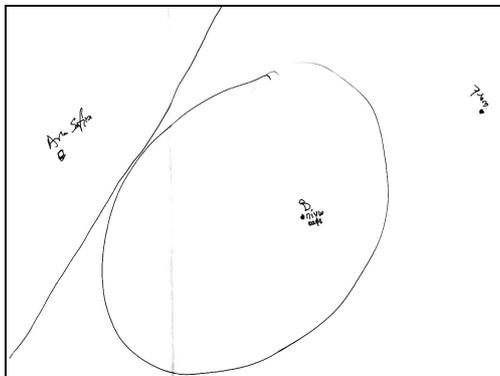
“We restore all our houses till the last inch of our territories across the Green Line. We don’t leave even a meter unexploited; we keep alive whatever we can. The other side has created a second buffer zone beyond the buffer zone. This reflects our belief that Cyprus is united, well the dominant opinion at least, while the other dominant narrative refers to division in the form of two states or a confederation” (INT / Greek Cypriot/ Male/50).

⁶⁹ Turkish word for border.

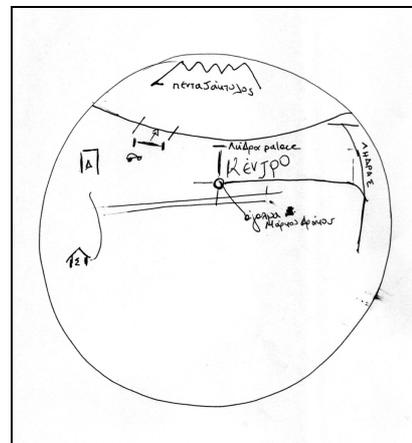
4.2.2 Mapping the edge: representations of the border, the “self” and the “other”

The Green Line and the Buffer Zone operating as *edges* illustrate the limits of the actors’ “world” being common or potentially common, while offering the opportunity to examine something crucial; whether the borderline constitutes the limit of one’s “world” or not. The Green Line is both an answer and a question. It is the response to conflict that becomes a quest to transcend it, while replying again with separation. However, how do the participants map this common space of conflict and contact?

There are four categories of maps with respect to the Green Line: firstly, there are maps that draw the Green Line in its “correct” position, splitting the walled city *in two halves*; secondly, there are maps that place the borderline in a way that does not divide the city into two equal parts showing that *the participants’ side is bigger* than the one that belongs to the other; thirdly, maps that place the Green Line *out of the city’s walls*, while attributing the whole of the old city to their own side and finally maps that place the Green Line *on the edge of the paper* showing in this way that the other side is out of the drawing area; it does not exist. Some characteristic examples are the following, which I attempt to schematise in the sketch below:



Mental Map 1



Mental Map 14

the second category (unequal parts); 2 maps (9%) belong to the third category (out of the city's walls) and 6 maps (27,3%) belong to the fourth one (on the edge of the paper). The findings indicate that the majority of the participants either downscale or exclude the other, while the difference between the first and the third category shows that placing the borderline somehow through the cyclical walls is also a matter of external knowledge. Finally, I have to add that 2 participants did not draw the Green Line at all in order to show that they do not accept it. They are both Turkish Cypriots, while in all other categories both communities are quite equally distributed.

4.3 Landmarks: The political space of conflict

4.3.1 Stereotypes and narratives: What is the symbol of the other?

According to Kliot and Mansfield (1997) the symbolic landscape in the political space of conflict consists of places of *continuity* and *transformation* with respect to place-names, religious places, monuments and broader mnemonic policies. In the case of Nicosia, there are periods of inscriptions and periods of erasures following each time the dominant narratives regarding what has to be remembered and what has to be forgotten.

I am mostly interested here about the elements used by the participants in order to symbolise the "other" through a representation that manifests both a broader "encyclopaedically" existing spatial knowledge, as of the "tourist", and what the "other" *is* in a word or image. Regarding the first case, let us think of Acropolis referring straight to Athens, Big Ben to London, Eiffel Tower to Paris and Fernsehturm to Berlin. However, regarding the second case, a smell, a small bar or a person's face could equally operate as personal landmarks employed by one in order to symbolise a place, highlighting memory, experience or a certain incident.

"We were coming from our village to Nicosia together with my brother, when the Turks invaded Cyprus. We woke up very early and the Turkish invasion occurred at five o'clock in the morning but we had no idea what was going on; there was no information. Have you seen that big statue just after Kyrenia? It is a very tall one dedicated to the day they invaded the island from the sea. It is a statue of Kemal. We passed this point that

day of the invasion because we were coming from Lapithos. I saw that statue again when I visited the other side and I remembered the day the Turks occupied our land [...] I will never forget those days. If you exit my shop, you will see Ayia Sofia Church. They were up there with guns". (INT21/ Greek Cypriot/ Male/ 60)

"The opening of the barricades facilitated commercial activity for sure. We know the other side. We drive by car to IKEA. I like the market on the other side; I believe it has better things to buy". (INT22/ Turkish Cypriot/ Male/ 36)

4.3.2 Mapping the symbol of the "other"

Linking the above to the mapping process, I am interested to see which elements of the symbolic landscape are employed in order that one side symbolises the other. The produced maps confirm firstly a lack of broader knowledge about the actual symbols of the other side, while revealing the relation between the actors and the symbols. In a sentence, I would argue that the symbol of the "other" is much more linked to the participants' personal story, involvement or action rather than to the "other". In other words, the produced maps mostly refer to the aspect of "emotional symbols" rather than to a broader "encyclopaedically" existing knowledge.

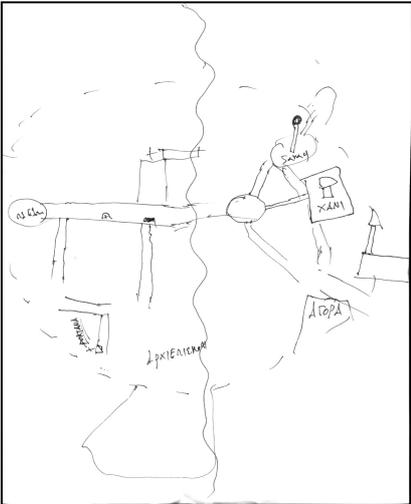
This is more than expected since firstly little about the other's or about a common history is taught at school, while a second element makes things clear: *maps*. As long as city's maps present the other side as an empty place, it is absolutely expectable for the participants to have low spatial knowledge.

In this sense, at this point I am interested in two aspects: the structured spatial information beyond the empirical and the ways the other side is symbolised. What do the informants know even if they do not have personal living experience? Which symbols do they employ in order to notions and images of the other side?

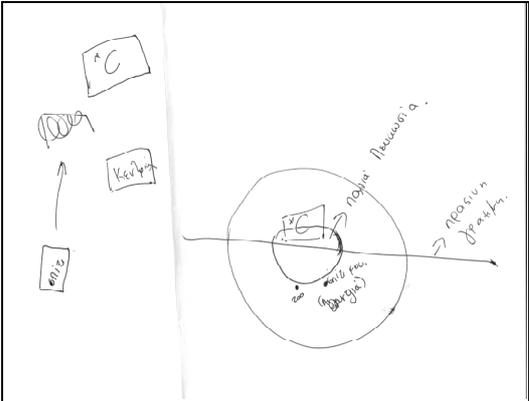
The space that is being drawn is political. It is the symbolic landscape of conflict, as it is described by Kliot & Mansfield (1997), being a landscape of continuities and transformations, and is formed by the state and the dominant narratives through mnemonic practices. A map drawn by a young Greek Cypriot woman, who had never visited the other side is remarkable. She

symbolised the other by drawing the Turkish Cypriot flag on the bank of Pentadaktylos/ Beşparmak, that is visible on the Greek Cypriot South. Other Greek Cypriot participants note characteristic monuments and squares, while Turkish Cypriot participants mostly note malls and resorts that constitute main attractions during their visits in the south.

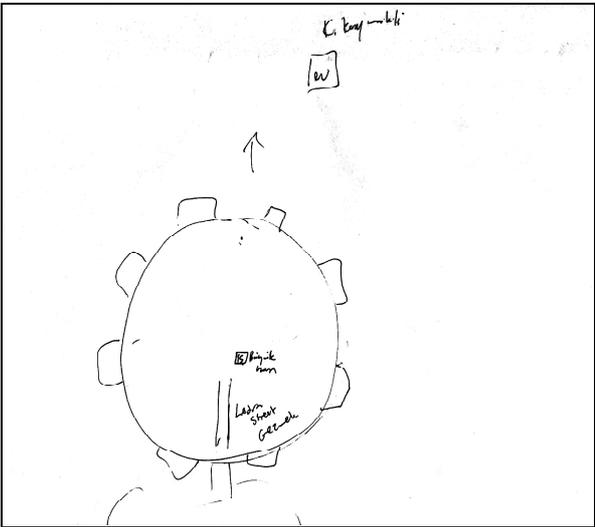
Below there are some characteristic maps providing information about the “symbol of the other”:



Mental map 9



Mental map 27



Mental map 32

Attempting to gather all elements and provide the image of the mapped symbolic landscape, I underline some key-elements/ symbols used by the participants: Out of 17 maps that give any information about the symbol of the “other”, for Greek Cypriot participants, the other side has the symbol of the

Selimiye Mosque / Ayia Sophia (5), the Büyük Han (1), the Municipal Market (1) and the flag on Pentadaktylos' / Beşparmak's bank (2) and one participant noted the small shops in the north. All these symbols are elements that the participants recognise, are emotionally involved with or even claim.

At the same time, the Turkish Cypriot participants do not symbolise the other side employing monuments and landmarks but they rather highlight commercial areas and streets, such as Ledras Street (8) and Makarios Avenue (3), as well as shops and malls they visit, when crossing to the south in order to shop. Moreover, in the Turkish Cypriots' maps there is a significant absence of religious places (no one marks a mosque) that manifests the rather secular socio-political constitution of the community in contrast to maps drawn by Greek Cypriots, who mark churches on their own and the other side.

However, both sides share the most significant monuments, a symbol of a common cultural heritage: the Venetian Walls. The Walls, quite unconsciously during the process, constitute the common symbol that both sides employ in order to symbolise both the self and the other. Finally, I gather the above in the collage below:



Fig.4.6 The symbol of the "other" (sketch and collage by the author)

4.4 Routines: Sewing the city

4.4.1 *Over/Under/Within: Invisible Crossings*

“No chains around my feet but I’m not free” says a graffiti on a wall in the southern part of the old city, while receiving a responding message on a northern wall: “Drilling the border”. Both graffiti refer to the division and basically to the will to break through⁷⁰. Actually, the old city is an ideal place for street art since its labyrinthine form, with small side streets and openings, pilotis and galleries, creates hidden corners, where street artists leave their marks in the form of a stencil graffiti or simply a sprayed slogan. Furthermore, due to the significant proximity of both sides, these messages seem to participate in an imaginary dialogue, responding to each other, while concomitantly crossing the border within a common urban “text”.

And if the graffiti are written parts of a common dialogue, there is also a sonic give-and-take. I refer to the church bells ringing in the southern quarters and the voice of the Muezzin giving a recorded, digital call to prayer coming from the Selimiye Mosque (St. Sophia). It is quite usual to hear them “talking” over each other, yet both composing a unique normality for the city’s acoustics. Of course as long as sound travels together with the wind, church bells and prayers are not the only actors of these sonic commons. In places where the buffer zone does not extend more than a few meters it is possible to hear voices, laughs, music, celebrations or military commands. Either faintly or sharply, the presence of voices in foreign languages or comprehensible sounds definitely constitutes an invisible border-crossing by air.

Nevertheless, in Nicosia you might be able to distinguish people or even separate them due to their nationality or religion but you can never tell whether a stray dog or cat is originally from the north or the south. Stray cats and dogs cross the buffer zone and become the subject of rumours and complaints among the residents of the old city, especially those in the south, who live near the Green Line and can “assure” you that the aggressive dogs come from the occupied areas. However, this can only be a vague assumption since these animals do not always obey to the military law.

⁷⁰ For more see also Karathanasis, 2012.

However, while the above invisible crossings take place in visible, physical space, there is an actually extraordinary realm of constant, daily invisible crossings: *social media*.

4.4.1.1 *Social media: the invisible web for a virtual crossing*

For the needs of my research work, I have joined several platforms and groups in the virtual world of Internet social media. As I argue in Chapter 5, social networks play a significant role to the contact of actors across the divide, especially regarding young people. Being a member during all these years in *Facebook* groups, Internet platforms and inter-communal blogs and websites⁷¹, I have had the chance to witness and join a large invisible bridge between the two sides.

Since most Cypriots make a sufficient use of the English language, I would firstly argue that *language is not an issue* in this area. Facebook and Twitter are of course the two basic media, where mostly young people connect with each other. They become mutual virtual “friends” and “followers” or join groups and events. However, most of the platforms are somehow connected with grassroots political actions underlining that even this virtual crossing is rooted in physical practice and socio-political action⁷².

Apart from platforms that have certain subjects and aims, thanks to this virtual world, people from both sides witness moments, thoughts and current “statuses” of the “other”. In this way for instance, a Greek Cypriot can see holiday photographs of a Turkish Cypriot or the latter can access information about one Greek Cypriot’s day at work or on the beach. This crazy bridging can even potentially let Turkish people who are officially forbidden to cross the

⁷¹ There are facebook groups that are closed or restricted and I do not have the permission to refer to them, while there are others that are open to public. These groups are of both political and cultural interest having members from both communities as well as some international members. Some examples are “Bank of Commons | Cyprus” <https://www.facebook.com/groups/346548078799312/> ; “Kala Kathoumena” <https://www.facebook.com/groups/5715411365/members/> , which is actually a facebook group of the popular café “Kala Kathoumena” in Phaneromeni Square in the southern part that constitutes anyway a meeting place for Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot people, mostly young; “OWN CYPRUS Lawsuit” <https://www.facebook.com/groups/164311653712376/> , which is an intercommunal solidarity platform for the two young Turkish Cypriots who had been attacked by a fascist group of people during the antiracist Rainbow Festival in 2010 in the southern city of Larnaka; “33 35 Independent Collective” <https://www.facebook.com/3533independent?pnref=story> ; and other profiles such as “Occupy Nicosia” and pages that were created because of certain event and still connect people from both sides of the barbed wire.

⁷² As happened in many cases especially in the recent uprisings, facebook and twitter played a significant role in the organising of mobilisations. Especially in the case of divided Nicosia, young activists state that social media were of great importance (see more in Chapter 5).

border, make an imaginary trip across the divide, even burrowing in personal corners of the others' lives. I wonder how many "like" buttons have been already pressed by Greek Cypriots under photos of the occupied areas posted by Turkish Cypriots or how many flirting virtual chats have brought young people a step closer.

4.4.2 Crossing visibilities: Nicosia's bi-communal Master Plan

However, the most significant and emblematic manifestation of the city's organic unity is surely the Venetian Walls. Both symbolically and physically, the cyclical Venetian Walls of the old city constitute the indisputable common ground for both sides across the divide. This fact does not only have symbolical connotations but has also functioned as the city's most serious "headache" after the division. Soon after 1974, the need to follow common policies regarding infrastructure and urban planning emerged.

In 1978 an agreement was achieved between the two municipal authorities regarding a common sewerage system. Thus, while division was harshly present over the ground, a necessary border crossing was linking the two parts underground. In 1979 a second agreement gave birth to a bi-communal master plan. Nicosia's bi-communal master plan⁷³ has gone through different stages since then and until now, yet putting forth some crucial projects that hope to handle the city as a *whole* especially after the opening of the barricades.

However, the permanent goal for planners and policy-makers, beyond infrastructure, is the old city's rehabilitation especially due to the fact that the old city had been quite abandoned in many areas for years, after 1974. Following this central concept, the master plan has combined some basic elements that hope to compose a solid policy with respect to a common urban planning. On one hand it encourages people to re-inhabit the old city, while intervening to public space. Specifically, it has included residential motivations and restoration projects within rehabilitation programs in order to attract new residents. For instance, Arab Ahmet and Chrysaliniotissa quarters have been

⁷³ Nicosia's Master Plan is both financially and functionally under the umbrella of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). However, as I have personally witnessed as well as found out after talking with people working for each side's Master Plan, each side's sector works mostly "alone". For instance, when I asked to have detailed Auto-Cad formatted plans of the city for the needs of my project, I was told that there is no united plan of the city and that each part works on each half, while joint meetings take place under UNDP.

parts of rehabilitation and restore programs. Additionally, Saman Bahçe residences in Ibrahim Paşa quarter and Phaneromeni quarter (figs.) have been also parts of the aim to restore neglected urban areas. Additionally, one of the plan's goals is to include monuments and their surrounding areas into restoration projects: for example Omerye Mosque, Büyük Han, the Old aqueduct and Selimiye Mosque (fig.).

Moreover, Nicosia's master plan has included interventions within public and open space. A significant pedestrianisation, connects both sides' commercial zones providing a semi-seamless walk on the vertical axis⁷⁴ that connects the north with the south through the Ledras/Loçmaci cross point. Additionally, the buffer zone is also included within the plan's goals, referring to the architectural heritage and its reservation. Finally, the master plan provides the redesign of the green areas of the ditch around the city's walls.

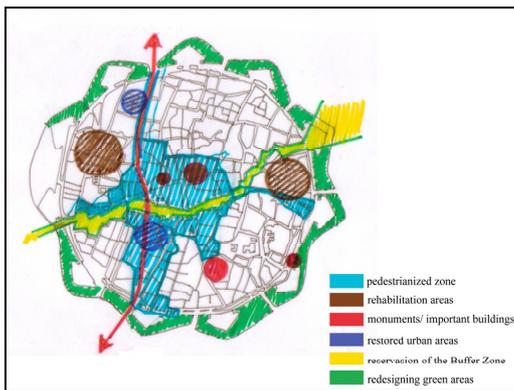


Fig.4.7 Master Plan Projects (sketch by the author)

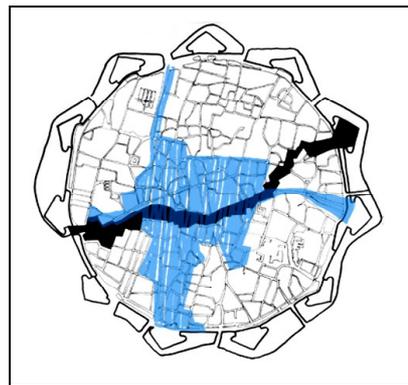


Fig.4.8 Pedestrianisation (sketch by the author)



Fig. 4.9 Nicosia Master Plan logo (Internet)

Following the pedestrianised route from one side to the other, one can spot maps of the old city, marked by the Master Plan's logo, presenting the city as a whole, while pointing the exact location. Surely, these projects constitute both mental and physical crossings. They take place within the *conceived space* of urban planners, the UNDP, experts and local authorities, while becoming

⁷⁴ See also 1.2.1.1

physical interventions in space hoping to transform the social space of conflict, too, towards a common space beyond the divide.

However, the actual actors are the significant protagonists of this emerging common space. The routes, being an element of the city can be understood as components or “fibres” of the urban fabric. They are manifestations of habits and comfort, of the actor's routines strongly connected to everyday life, their sense of familiarity as well as spatial qualities such as scale, streets' width, infrastructure, sense of security, distances, built environment etc. How do the actors move within the fabric? Which routes do they inscribe and therefore which criteria do they employ in order to use the city?

4.4.3 Crossing or avoiding?

As already mentioned, the most common motive among Cypriots in order to cross the border is to see or visit the *former* home. Since the opening of the barricades and until now Cypriots travel to the opposite direction in order to see what has happened to the life they left behind. Most of them have done so just once or twice and their crossing was a “route with blinkers” leading to the former home and backwards without any further interaction:

“Yes, I’ve been to the other side two or three times to see our places, our land, to see some villages, but I don’t have relations with Turkish Cypriots or Turks. I have been (to the other side). I was very curious to see my land. I went there two or three times. It’s been a long time since the last one. Four years. I was curious. How it is today.” (INT1/Greek Cypriot/Male/ 51)

Others, mostly older people, have included the opening of their barricades in their everyday lives, enjoying frequent crossings that resemble their former life, when they used to live in mixed places. They have found old friends and re-arranged their reality according to the new condition:

“I see my friends every day. They come here; I go to their place. Every day. We grew up together. Neighbours never killed each other. I remember, when the Turks were coming, we were hiding our friends and

so did they. Foreign people, from Kyrenia, Limassol, people we didn't know, were killing us in our neighbourhoods. So, how could I not see my friend since I can? Unfortunately (*krima*- he says that in Greek) my children don't have Greek Cypriot friends. *Krima*" (INT/ Turkish Cypriot/ Male/ 67).

However, in the old city of Nicosia, routines either *avoid* or *cross*. They "plot" routes that *highlight* and others that *seam* the spatial wound created by the Green Line. The every day crossings of working people, friends, visitors, gamblers or brothels' clients constitute an imaginary everyday seaming that transcends the physical division due to business, leisure, pleasure, economic or para-economic reasons.

When I visited the casino in the northern part, just a few meters away from the Ledras/Lokmaci crossing, I went to the roulette table. Next to me a Greek Cypriot woman was gambling, paying in dollars. Soon she realised that we both speak the same language and a small talk started. Referring to her "illegal" crossings to gamble, she says:

"you know, Cypriots don't come to this side because they don't want to legalise the pseudo-state (*pseudo-kratos*). But if you go to the north, on your way to Kyrenia, check the cars out of the casinos: hundred percent Greek Cypriot car plates. They go to launder money" (off the record).

Casinos seem to be frequent destinations for Greek Cypriots as many mention. I indeed visited the casinos in the north and witnessed with my own eyes what the Greek Cypriot woman had told me. One Greek Cypriot participant commending on different kinds of motives to cross would also include casinos in his comment:

"If you ask a Turkish Cypriot 'do you want the Cyprus Problem to be solved?', he will say 'No!'. Why would he want that? Now he has medical treatment for free; I pay he does not. He has medical treatment for free, I do not. I have to pay to go to my own hospital, while he does not pay a cent. My wife is handicapped and gets a 260 Euros pension a month. Turkish Cypriots, who came here 'yesterday', while my wife has been working for eighteen years, get 1,000 Euros per month. With 260 Euros we cannot even pay the electricity bills. Turkish Cypriots have the right to

come here, do their shopping or go for work. One engineer here nearby employs Turkish Cypriots. You can see them in the morning crossing Ledras' barricade. The Greek Cypriots opened the Ledras' barricade in order to have easier access to the casinos. Some rich people... That's the truth! It's ridiculous..."(INT21/ Greek Cypriot/ Male/ 60)

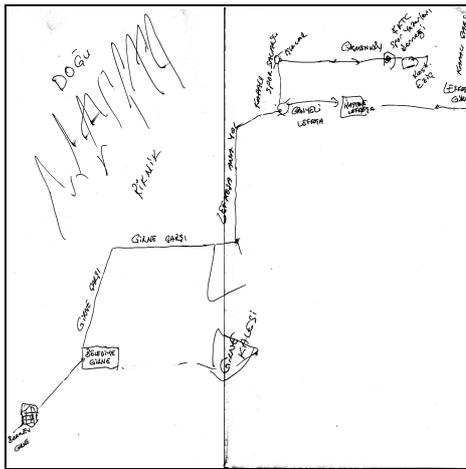
Either over or under the table, different motives to cross narrate a different, yet interesting, story about the division. The oldest trans-gendered prostitute in the southern part of the old city told me one night that "if I open my mouth a second war will occur in seconds". She claimed that Turkish Cypriot clients cross the border in order to have sex experiences under conditions of certain anonymity. "I work here since 1974, I have experienced all the events and I can assure you that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have exactly the same attitude. They want to cheat their wives and earn illegal money", she commended (off the record).

4.4.4 Mapping routines

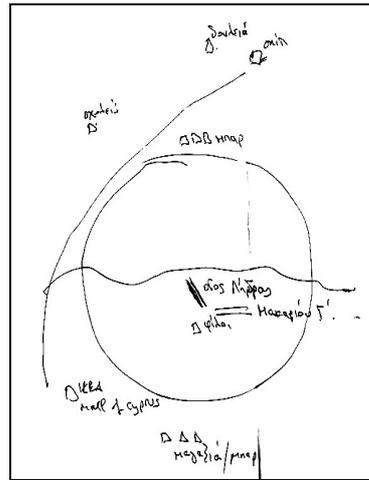
In the mapping process, routines were a useful tool for the participants in order to help them draw their mental world, since it was easier for them to draw a routine and mark on it certain elements. These were either "car-routines" or "walking-routines" that showed the actors' habits and life organisation. The produced maps manifested both *crossing* and *avoidance* in either *detailed* or more *abstract* forms.

Something that has to be mentioned regarding this part of the maps is the scale exaggeration as long as familiar routines produce a certain "zoom" in the map including details that cannot be found elsewhere. In most versions, it is being manifested that the participants know which route to follow in order to reach a place but either their seldom visits or certain performance restrictions lead to distortions regarding the scale, the distance estimations and the range of information they possess.

Moreover, detailed routes are the routes that avoid, while crossing routes are way more abstract. This "route with blinkers" is reflected in the mapping process as well, since participants mark starting points and endings, while the routine has no information in her unfolding. Below, I select characteristic maps of crossing and avoidance, of detail and abstraction:



Map of avoidance and detail



Map of abstract crossing

4.5 What are the produced maps? The lived space

4.5.1 Self-locating in a web of nodes

In every mapping process, I was asking the participants to locate themselves in their produced maps. During a process like mental mapping, where the participants are asked to imagine, construct and represent space on a blank piece of paper, the question “where are you at the moment?” is basically the encouragement to construct an invisible web of *nodes* (Lynch: 1960) within which they locate themselves. Do they observe the process and what they have just narrated from a distant point? Are they part of what they are drawing, having the attitude of the wanderer, who *wanders* and *maps*, while *producing* space? Finally how does the produced map correspond to real/ physical space?

Using a little cross or a verbal description, the participants spotted the location, where the interview was taking place. Being actors, who are related to the old city in one or other way, they could usually respond to the question and have certain orientation coordinates, yet this task opens the debate of *what are* the produced maps anyway. Are they maps of the city or are they maps of the participants habits, actions and their broader emotional involvement? Guy Debord ([1955] 2008:) would note:

“The production of psychogeographical maps, or even the introduction of alterations such as more or less arbitrarily

transposing maps of two different regions, can contribute to clarifying certain wanderings that express not subordination to randomness but complete *insubordination* to habitual influences (influences generally categorized as tourism, that popular drug as repugnant as sports or buying on credit)".

4.5.2 The mapping of social relations

The above brings me to the core of this section, combining both narrative and mapping tasks in an inseparable whole of understanding the spatialisation of conflict: it is about the reflection of emotional involvement on spatial perception, information and representation. In other words, while participants represent space through their mental maps, the produced mental space represents their profiles as a whole composed by measurable and immeasurable variables.

I repeat in a nutshell what I have already discussed in the methodology chapter regarding how emotional involvement can be "measured" through the construction of the participants' profiles. I choose four axes round which the narrative process revolves combined with groups of specific questions and "hard variables". These four axes refer to the participants' personal or family stories; their involvement/ interaction/ encounters with the "other"; their attitude towards reunification/ reconciliation/ co-existence; and finally their relation to the space of research, i.e. the old city. The specific questions attempt firstly to provide some guidelines for the narrative part and secondly to "measure" the accuracy of what is being said. Therefore during the narrative process, I ask the participants to answer by scaling or with a yes or no relevant questions to the four suggested axes (see Annex II). Moreover, the "hard" variables complete the participants' profiles since age, political engagement, gender and nationality matter. (Sitas et al., 2007).

The research findings suggest and confirm that the *mapped* space is concomitantly a *map of social relations* and therefore the initial argument that a spatial approach can be vital for a new understanding of social relations in a space of conflict is confirmed. Space exists both in real and mental terms, while reflecting social and power dialectics on individual and social bodies. In other words, space includes environments and pseudo-environments, stereotypes and images, physical aspects and emotional extensions. Indicative is the quote

of the following participant:

“For years I had been listening to laughs, voices, children playing, their mothers shouting at them. I had never seen them neither did I ever believe that I would see them in my life. For me they didn’t exist. They didn’t exist in such extent that during summer, when temperature was really high, I used to go to my backyard and take a shower completely naked. I wasn’t embarrassed at all. Although I knew they were there, I could listen to them, for me it was like they didn’t exist” (INT/ Greek Cypriot/ Male/ 50).

4.5.3 Towards a new geography of conflict

The oral history and mapping processes do not only represent individual narratives but they also manage to offer a new *geography* of conflict made of *unmapped* and the *immeasurable* elements. However, there is no “objective” way to translate the research findings into a concrete, stable and positivist conclusion or a concrete (psycho-) geographical image. On the contrary, the need to explore a fluid, yet rich, open process of spatialisation is what is being highlighted here. In this context, the fieldwork is actually perceived as a moment, a “photo-shooting” of real and mental space that attempts to capture multiple divisions and everyday dynamics in the Old City of Nicosia. Bearing this framework in mind, I elaborate next on different variables that *cluster* the mappings providing some socio-spatial interpretations of the produced lived space.

At first, a distinction between the two different generations involved in both processes is clearly underlined. The younger ones, who are between 20- 40, have no first hand experience of the events but they rather possess a secondary image of the conflict. The older ones, who are between 50- 70 have primary images of the conflict since they had been born by that time (Collison and Kennedy, 1981). Interestingly, all the participants who do *not* include the “other” in their mental maps refer to the first category, that of the younger ones. They are those who draw either only their own half of the city or the Green Line on the edge of the paper, implying that the “other” does not exist. At the same time, no participant of the second category (the older generation) excludes the other from his/ her map.

This finding suggests that younger people take the current situation for

granted since the divided “world” is the only “world” they have ever known. It cannot be linked to restricted broader knowledge, since all those participants were absolutely aware of the fact that the old city of Nicosia is divided in two halves. Therefore, I suggest that the produced maps did not reflect restricted knowledge, or performance distortions either. On the contrary, it is a statement that the world begins or ends at the borderline. However, this is further linked to aspects of political engagement and resolve.

Among the young participants who usually excluded the “other” from their mental maps, those who provided efficient spatial information, were the ones who had a *political involvement* in initiatives referring to the “common space of demand”. Participants either with a political pro-reconciliation background or with an involvement of their own, drew maps including the “other” or furthermore providing information and symbols of the other side. This is not the same for the older generation, though. Older participants include always the other in their drawings, representing the walled city as a divided whole, yet their emotional involvement does not seem to play a role here. Participants with low emotional involvement produce maps with similar, broader or narrower spatial information and vice versa.

This finding suggests that the gap that the older generation would potentially leave behind, can be filled in by collective will and a certain engagement towards reunification and co-existence. However, this must not be exaggerated, since the spatial information regarding the “other” is generally narrow. The opening of the barricades does not seem to have involved the other side in everyday life and the production of a lived space as a whole. For instance, actors with high emotional involvement do not include the other side in a random everyday occasion, as for instance while choosing a bar on the other side during a random night.

In general, I suggest that former experience of the older generation plays an important role in socio-spatial terms and pro-reconciliation engagement could potentially be a good starting point in much “cool blooded” terms, though. In other words, political resolve is not a sufficient parameter for socio-spatial integration, while first-hand personal experience seems to be rather crucial.

In terms of *gender*, the participants with the narrower range of spatial information and lower emotional involvement, too, are female. Among those of the younger generation, who do not include the other side at all or place the

borderline on the edge of the paper, the majority are women. Ari Sitas et al. (2007) would argue “Men tend to perceive that they have stronger forms of exposure North and South (38.2% as opposed to 23.5%) and have had more meaningful encounters with Cypriots from the “other side” (29.2% as opposed to 13.6%); women have been more prudent about crossing the border and they constitute the majority of non-crossers and the minority of frequent crossers”. The sense of *discomfort* or *fear* (see also 2.2.2.3) might be an assumption here to explain why women have lower emotional involvement, less interaction and therefore narrower range of spatial information.

However, subdivisions exist here, too, including both *age* and *nationality*. Older women possess wider range of spatial information either being highly involved or not. Additionally, younger women provide maps with narrow spatial information even when they are politically engaged pro reconciliation. The participants with higher emotional involvement are mostly Turkish Cypriots of the older generation. However this does not lead to a wider range of spatial information than the corresponding Greek Cypriots of the same age and gender.

I argue that emotional involvement and strong interaction with the other side that manifest the fact that the participants have included the opening of the barricades in their everyday lives, does not overcome the fact that Turkish Cypriot public opinion is pro-coexistence in a distinct way of two separate zones or states. Therefore, they do not possess information linked with the “other” but rather information linked to their habits whenever they cross. Emotional involvement seems to be unable to overcome the collective desire or the dominant narrative of partition even within generations who have experience of the former entity.

Furthermore, the element of *displacement* plays a double role. It functions both as a chance and a traumatic experience. It manifests the memory of a common past and provides the chance of a lived socio-spatial knowledge of the “other”, while marking the traumatic experience of those internally displaced. Moreover, displacement is a crucial factor for one's identity construction (being a refugee or not); the sense of monopolising pain (refugees experienced the real pain); irredentism and nostalgia (my home is on the other side; the other side is not my home; see 4.1). Thus, first-hand and second-hand experience of displacement is crucial here, too. It is indicative that all internally displaced participants, who possess first-hand experience, included information about the

other side in their mental maps, while those who did not include information were younger ones. I argue that refugeedom inherits certain identity constructions from generation to generation, while the signifieds are being predictably distorted. In spatial terms, this can be clearly underlined with reference to the *former home*, which is a real reference for the older and an imaginary for the younger ones, who usually refer to a *home* they have never inhabited.

4.5.4 From individual mental mappings to community mappings

In order to conclude with the first round of the fieldwork referring to the oral history and mental mapping processes, I choose to commend on a certain distinction between individual mental mapping and community mapping processes. In particular, I support the idea that there is a need to go beyond the capturing of moments of the produced lived space towards a community mapping that functions both as a “reading” and a “healing” of conflict.

In this context, an interesting remark emerges tackling the initial question of what the current maps constitute. The answer is that they can only function as an overlap of different individual socio-spatial images, while an image created by a sense of community is missing.

- How could a sense of community be cultivated in order to turn the everyday actors into a “neighbourhood”?
- How could the notion of community and neighbourhood be revitalised, while developing a common space?
- How could new, original and bottom-up processes create new narratives in terms of self-definition, community engagement and place-making?

The above are only starting points and open questions, while the next chapter sheds light upon practices towards the creation of a common space and a community mapping.

CHAPTER 5: THE COMMON SPACE OF DEMAND. GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM AND INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

5.1 Framework (fieldwork round II)

After exploring the realm of mental representations of the social space of conflict, I move towards the *common space of demand*, offering an *aspirations mapping*. In this chapter, I elaborate on the meeting point of collective space and civil space with respect to grassroots activism and the institutional bi-communal cooperation referring to NGOs and other initiatives that work on the ideas of reconciliation/ cooperation/ interaction. Once again, I keep a spatial approach to these aspects, attempting to shed light upon the reclaiming of common space towards a restructuring of social life (Harvey, 2008; Lefebvre, 1996; Purcell, 2002).

From this perspective, I elaborate on the emergence and development of grassroots and self-organised activism in Nicosia. I argue that there is a transforming political subjectivity, emerged in the period after the opening of the barricades, the rejection of the Annan Plan⁷⁵, the failure of the official peace-talks and the disappointment towards the institutionalised bi-communal cooperation. In this framework, I am interested in the activists' practices, direct socio-political and cultural initiatives, their response to calls for action and their involvement within the global uprisings, towards the emergence of a new radical politics. Peter Marcuse (2012) would argue that the global occupy movement⁷⁶ is part of a long tradition. As he argues

“The occupy movement places itself within the tradition of many early resistance movements, most recently, the movements of 1968, the World Social Forums, the self-consciously civil society”.

In this context, I focus on the Occupy Buffer Zone (OBZ) movement (2011-2012) within the UN-controlled area of the old city of Nicosia as a

⁷⁵ See 1.2.3

⁷⁶ When referring to the global Occupy Movement, I refer to the period 2011-2012, when occupations of streets and squares took place in many cities round the world. Most famous ones are the Spanish “Indignados” and the “Occupy Wall Street” in New York.

significant case study that hopes to unfold the emerging political subjectivity and the involvement of both sides in an alternative reclaiming of the common space as well as the corresponding social reception and public discourse.

Secondly, I involve the institutional bi-communal platforms of cooperation in the debate, attempting in parallel to put them into a dialogue with grassroots activism. As long as this chapter refers to the second round of my fieldwork in 2012, I am in the position to present an “imaginary dialogue” between grassroots and institutional actions in order to have a clear understanding of the actors that compose and produce the common space of demand in parallel, beyond or in contrast to state power.

Finally, I highlight another parameter that remains underestimated in the existing literature: *the third actor*. I argue that the way in which the public debate unfolds with respect to the “Cyprus Problem” and its solution ignores one crucial factor that cannot be left aside. This is the parameter of the third actor referring to the migrants’ presence in the old city of Nicosia. According to the latest censuses, around 55% of the population in the north are immigrants from Turkey who are not allowed to cross the border. On the other hand, almost 42% of the population in the south are non-Cypriots, either immigrants coming from EU countries or immigrants coming from third countries. I insist that these percentages suggest that there is a significant third actor, who does not share the same involvement with respect to the division or the other side, yet playing a significant role in the production of the common space. Therefore, I present a *mapping of the migrants’ presence* according to the latest censuses combined with a site recording I have conducted.

5.2 Collective space: grassroots activism in the walled city⁷⁷

5.2.1 The new subjectivity towards a radical politics

Although there is thorough analysis referring to the geo-political strategies, the economic policies and the institutionalised actions, there is little written in the

⁷⁷ Parts of this section, in another version, are published In: Iliopoulou, Eirini and Karathanasis, Pafsanias. 2014. “Towards a Radical Politics: Grassroots Urban Activism in the Walled City of Nicosia”. *The Cyprus Review* 26/1: 169-192; Mig@Net Report 10, available at: [www.mignetproject.eu/] as well as in the paper

presented by E. Iliopoulou and P. Karathanasis (2012) at the ‘Right to the City – Right to the State Conference’ in Nicosia 2012. Here, I include parts that refer exclusively to my own research.

literature regarding the grassroots dynamics developed by both the socio-spatial division and the need to overcome it. In the last two years, however, steps in the literature have been made, thanks to the “Occupy Buffer Zone” (OBZ) movement in 2011–2012, which has drawn remarkable attention compared to other grassroots initiatives (Ilican, 2013; Iliopoulou and Karathanasis, 2014; Trimikliniotis and Tsianos, 2014; Zanou, 2012). Additionally, there is no systematic record or clear claim that there is a developing political scene attempting to express and represent a new radical politics. In this context, I attempt a different narrative, placing the development of an alternative, grassroots activism in the centre of the debate.

What I am actually suggesting here is that there is a political subjectivity, which is more than the sum of its significant “milestones”. This subjectivity attempts to create its own *collective space*, political tradition, identity, slogans, lifestyle, ideas and new radical politics towards a reclaiming of the common space. I argue that it made its appearance in the period 2003–2004 and especially in the divided old city of Nicosia, in a socio-political context marked by the opening of the Green Line barricades and the disappointment in the negotiations and mainstream politics. In the Cypriot context, it goes beyond *bi-communalism* towards a *communal* identity, while contesting both nationalisms. On the global level it perceives itself as part of the anti-globalisation, antineoliberal, anti-capitalist movement, inspired by global developments and the recent uprisings. In this framework, this political subjectivity manifested itself, seeking to express an alternative way of thinking and acting as well as a desire for “change”. It was the starting point of the grassroots activism as an ongoing process that has been forming a germinal political tradition.

But what kind of “change” are they fighting for? Elaborating on the recent uprising in Turkey, Alain Badiou suggests that it is right to rise up, but when doing so, “the problem of the duration and the scope” opens up (Badiou, 2013). Additionally, another question emerges in relation to the actors’ identity in the way they perceive or construct themselves and their cause. The political scene is a quite fluid and bitty one, interrelated with anarchist, radical left, anti-authoritarian and autonomous groups, mainly comprising sections of the island’s middle-class educated youth from both sides of the divide. They insist in forming a *communal* political identity in contrast to the mainstream ethno-national segregation or the liberal and economic character of the institutionalised “bi-communal front” (Zanou, 2012).

In the present climate the grassroots political action is strongly affected by the current capitalist crisis, while the political subjectivity is being transformed in dialectical relation with collective action, bringing together several potential actors (Badiou, 2013) within the “generation of crisis”. The “generation of crisis” led massive revolts and movements against austerity, repression and injustice worldwide creating historical moments of what Badiou calls “the rebirth of history” (Badiou, 2012). From the Greek revolt in December 2008 to the Arab Spring, the Spanish Indignados, the global Occupy movement and the revolts in Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the popular uprisings show us that “the collective power of bodies in public space is still the most effective instrument of opposition when all other means of access are blocked” (Harvey, 2012).

In the Cypriot context, the first and most significant moment of action by the “generation of crisis” was the OBZ movement that confirmed David Harvey’s (2012:) note in *Rebel Cities* that “the struggle is global as well as local in nature”. The OBZ movement was the localised expression of the global call for action that stood up against the socio-spatial division on the local level, while criticising the systemic crisis on the global level.

By bringing together the above in the following section, my aim is to unfold the subjectivity’s characteristics, manifestations and potentials as regards the common space of demand, holding on one hand the thread of the alternative political scene during the 80’s and 90’s (especially in the southern part) and on the other creating the thread that brought it to up to the occupation of the buffer zone in 2011-2012. Is it a newborn Right to the City “being far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city” (Harvey, 2008)?

5.3 The Occupy the Buffer Zone movement and the Right to the City

5.3.1 “We are living the solution”

“Everything started on October 15th. It started with people meeting up in Eleftherias (Liberty) Square. Someone created a facebook event and

people gathered. We were meeting once a week. And then at some point on November 15th we started going to the buffer zone, between the two checkpoints and continue the discussion there. And then we said 'hey let's set up some tents'. It was something spontaneous." (P., bufferer⁷⁸)



Banner of the OBZ movement "We are living the solution" (internet)

Responding to the global call for action by the Occupy Movement, the "bufferers" from both sides managed to localise the global message

"expressing with their presence their mutual desire for reunification and to stand in solidarity with the wave of unrest, which has come as a response to the failings of the global systemic paradigm".⁷⁹

The spontaneous act of simply putting up tents in the Buffer Zone soon became a permanent camp and gained momentum attracting several people, or in other words not a homogenous crowd. As Murat Erdal Ilican (2013: 60) puts it:

"the OBZ crowd in the Buffer Zone gained a following from a variety of backgrounds including social classes, political orientations, education levels, ages, sexes, ethnicities and religions.

⁷⁸ "Bufferer" is the name used for themselves by the organisers of the OBZ movement, due to the fact that they actually occupied the *buffer zone*.

⁷⁹ Taken from the OBZ website, available at <http://occupythebufferzone.wordpress.com/about/obz/>

What united them was a general discontent of the situation locally and globally, and their aspiration for change from the bottom up”.

The linear crossing of the buffer zone turned into an inhabited collective space, a “square” where people met, sang, drank, ate, slept, discussed, played, argued and demonstrated. The activists’ physical presence and resolve were crucial elements for a new socio-spatial experience and therefore for the “revival” of the so-called “dead zone”. In other words, the new concept that had entered the debate affecting both the spatial as well as the socio-political level is the “demand”, the “reclaiming” of space transforming the buffer zone into a “common space of demand”, while contesting the dominance of the official urban action in political space. The “Occupy the Buffer Zone” (OBZ) movement opened the debate regarding urban life and socio-spatial partitions. In that context, mobilisations aimed to localise the global call for action spread by the global “occupy movement”, while translating their demands into the “language” of the local issues.

Although most of the bufferers would agree that the OBZ movement constituted a significant “discontinuity” with respect to Cyprus’ social movements and grassroots activism, the mobilisations did not come out of the blue. On the contrary, it is safe to argue that they had followed the thread of actions and initiatives taken during the past decades. A Greek Cypriot bufferer, who considers himself as part of the broader alternative movement, having spent most of his free time around Phaneromeni Square, remembers that before the OBZ burst, he had participated in several actions such as “the Kuğulu Park movement, the street parade, bicycle mobilisations and many other things”:

“People who started the whole thing had done some other things in the past. They were people from Phaneromeni Square, they had created Kardaş and some other squats such as Mala Casa, Fanari tou Diogeni, etc.” (F., bufferer)

If you ask the Greek Cypriot locals today, *who are* those people mostly involved in grassroots activism and the alternative social movement, you will get one direct answer: “Phaneromeni youngsters”. From a place of protest during the 1955-1959 struggle against the British, Phaneromeni Square, the small opening in front of the big Christian-Orthodox church “Panagia

Phaneromeni", has become the ultimate meeting place for youngsters, who seek to express an alternative political and cultural trend since the 90's and especially in the period I focus on. It is a place, where young people meet, organise open-air parties, drink, eat, sing, mobilise and generally hang around in open space. A famous tree in the middle of the square, named "Manolis", is an alternative name of the place, especially for the "insiders". The right way to put it is that "Phaneromeni youngsters" are actually the main pool out of which grassroots and alternative activism draws or else people from the broader grassroots activism more or less frequent Phaneromeni square. Moreover, in terms of location, Phaneromeni square is just right next to Ledras/ Lokmaci crossing, where the OBZ movement took place, actually occupying this "no man's land":

"this movement is important because it's different from other movements, it happened in a no man's land. Nobody owns it. No country, no flag, no nation. It's a free zone, a gap" (bufferer).

Taking part in the discussion regarding the *local demands* and the movement's conceptual framework, a Turkish Cypriot activist added,

"demands change from person to person, I think. The main idea is about dealing with the problems caused by inequalities. Many issues come from that. It's not only capitalism. It's small things in life as well. We created an environment for people to think about alternatives. That was the common ground. I think. An alternative space for creative thinking".

In the same context, it would be repeated several times over that the main goal was "to create awareness", while a Greek Cypriot bufferer remarks that

"it was unbelievable! Within a few days a whole community was created on that 'square'. It was self-managed, horizontal, based on general assemblies".

The process of occupying a former empty place and turning it into a public space for all, is interrelated with the socio-political process of contesting dominant policy, stressing "the need to restructure the power relations that underlie the production of urban space, fundamentally shifting control away from capital and the state and toward urban inhabitants" (Purcell, 2002). In that

sense, from the occupation of space new-born discourses emerge endowing concepts such as “reunification”, “rapprochement”, “re-conciliation” and “co-existence” a radical nuance and edge, as people are more inspired “to see and act beyond the closed horizons of the mainstream politics” (Stavridis, 2009). Moreover, it brings on surface the potential for new political subjectivities that were largely absent, silent, marginalised or suppressed in the past period, opening up spaces for subversive action “seeking to overcome isolation and reshape the city in a different image” (Harvey, 2008). In this sense, such processes of re-claiming urban spaces affect the public sphere as well as individuals on a personal level. After being stabbed by far right-wingers, S. was prevented for a while from living a normal daily life. As he claims later, he was “helped” by “the OBZ movement to recover after the attack by the fascists”.

Moreover, being *together* in a place of nobody was a chance to experience coexistence *here and now* in a way that co-existence is no longer a demand but a *product* of the bufferers’ “direct action” (Graeber, 2009). A Greek Cypriot activist pinpoints:

“we thought about camping for a night. But then the UN forces came the other day. They told us that we bother them and that we had to leave. But we didn’t. The UN provoked us, so we stayed ...”.

Inspired by the need to overcome the failure of formal narratives and policies regarding the reunification, bufferers argued that grassroots activism can play a leading political role:

‘if the OBZ is consistent, it will definitely affect the political scene. It does not mean that we are going to become a political party, but in some way we create a political tradition’ (bufferer).

Choosing the Ledras/Lokmaci crossing was symbolic, as:

‘the buffer zone is a symbolic place; it symbolises a lot of things; the UN regulation, the division’.

At the same time it offers a kind of utopia:

‘in the buffer zone it was the first time that we lived together willingly, creating something out of nothing’ (bufferers).

The buffer zone, which is a symbol of the division and separation of Cyprus, became the vehicle through which OBZ realised itself as a movement and acted towards satisfying the need of the bufferers to overcome the divide and live together claiming a new-born right to the city. Regardless, the right to the city claim carries a particular danger from the moment of its birth: the fetishisation of space (Marcuse, 2012). Both in the OBZ and in other cases of the global occupy movement, the occupation and appropriation of public space turned from a tactical tool into the strategic goal of the movement. In that way the prioritised claim was the use of public space, undervaluing at the same time broader ideological visions, socio-political perspectives and long-term demands. As long as the free access to public space could be satisfied the ultimate goal seemed to be fulfilled, too. One can “read” that comment in almost every popular slogan of the OBZ:

“We are living the solution!”, “Welcome to the reunified Cyprus!”, “No borders camp!”.

Was or will in the future such an aspect be a dangerous obstacle for the movement’s development and success? Could the fetishisation of space become a boomerang in the hands of gentrification policies, embodied by the system as common “human rights”? Is Peter Marcuse right when arguing that “some of the occupy movement’s internal weaknesses are the resistance to unity with the discontented, the refusal to talk about ‘power’ and the insistence to limited but important rights as goals of its key campaigns (e.g. the right to sleep on park benches)” (Marcuse, 2012) Finally, can we talk about the right to the city (in the Lefebvrian sense, 1968) separating it from the revolutionary process of social restructuring?

5.3.2 Reception and Dynamics: Public Discourse and the neighbours

5.3.2.1 The Media

The OBZ movement brought actions and discourses from the edge to the centre. Former marginalised thoughts, political statements, arguments and practices

were brought to the centre of the debate forming supporters and opponents, or else forming a certain “us” and “them”; “inside” and “outside”. The bufferers’ action, or even their lifestyle, their taste, their clothes, the way they behaved could no longer be ignored, since they had occupied the heart of the city, contesting at the same time the heart of the city’s division. The OBZ movement was covered by the international Media almost from its very beginning. *Aljazeera* produced a documentary commending that “Cypriots join the global protest movement to heal their divisions”, inviting the bufferers to talk about their aims. *Reuters* published also an article entitled “Fed up with separation Cypriot youths seek change”, hosting a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot activist. Interestingly, at first local media including TV channels, magazines, and newspapers presented the mobilisations sympathetically.

The turning point in the public discourse at least on behalf of the mass media was the public debate immediately prior and straight after the evacuation of the occupied building by the police forces. On 6 April 2012 the police of the Republic of Cyprus used its special anti-terrorist forces to invade the occupied place, and arrested 28 activists after a brutal attack. On behalf of the OBZ movement, the press release stated:

“The participation of the Special Anti-Terrorist Force shows the way in which the state handles the youth of this place, G/Cs and T/Cs, who claim a future which will be a creation of the Cypriot people themselves and not a creation of the existing domestic and world politico-economical and social status quo. We apologize for being unable to transfer in words the repugnant scenes of state violence we lived, and we wish to assure you that we will not stop existing actively and creatively. “You cannot evict an idea!””.

In order to invade the place and evacuate it from the activists, the police claimed that there was extended drug use in the area, while creating a certain moral panic (Cohen, 1973). After such an announcement, the link was beginning to be clear: bufferers constituted a threat against social order since they were drug users, abnormal, unhealthy and therefore marginal. The *TV Channel ANT1* mentioned:

“many attempted to prevent police investigations while forty

people gathered in the area just after the event in order to ask for explanations. A 52-year-old British, who lives in Pafos was intoxicated, according to the police'

In two short sentences, the reporter manages to create the activists' profile composed by aggressive behaviour against the law, weird mixture of ages and finally the most crucial moral issue: drugs and alcohol.

5.3.2.2 *The "neighbours"*

For the Lefebvrian thought, the right to the city is "a call for a radical restructuring of social, political, and economic relations, both in the city and beyond" (Purcell, 2002). Defining urban space as the decisive terrain of performing socio-political identities, the right to the city makes a clear distinction between the inhabitants of the city and the others, between "us" and "them". Referring to the Lefebvrian scheme of both "us" and "them", who has the right to the city in a landscape of conflict such as the divided Nicosia? If the right to the city is like "a cry and a demand" (Lefebvre, 1996) then who has the right to claim the "political landscape" (Kliot & Mansfield, 1997) of a divided city in its multiple intersections and divides? In his writings on both the right to the city and the occupy movement, Peter Marcuse asks:

"What is the city for? Who gets to live here? Who decides and how?" (Marcuse, 2012).

A Turkish-Cypriot bufferer, who was stabbed by members of the neo-Nazi right-wing organisation ELAM during the yearly multicultural Rainbow Festival in November 2011⁸⁰ notes:

"All kinds of people (participated in the movement). Young people, who believe in peace, anarchists, people from different countries. All sorts of people. There were lawyers, there were doctors, there were musicians, there were poets. People who are thinking, who are active, who want to create the world they want to live in instead of living in the world they

⁸⁰ The Festival is organised by KISA-Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism in co-operation with tens of organisations and communities of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and foreign students, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot bicomunal and human rights organisations and cultural groups. For more see http://www.kisa.org.cy/EN/activities/cultural_events/659.html

have been given.”

Many more activists would confirm that S.’s point of view represents the collective perception of people who took part in the movement. However, the above statement involves an interesting note between the lines. S. describes the political subjectivity involved in the movement, while at the same time forming certain exclusions. In his words, the bufferer’s profile is politically vague but at the same time fits to what expected as “normal” being “a lawyer, a doctor or an artist”. In order to respond to those who blamed the movement as being a hotbed of orgies and drugs for young and old people, S. reproduces in a way the dominant perception of normality. In such normality, migrants, workers, marginals, street vendors, and social outcast have no place. Thus, the most crucial form of openness we will need, if we really mean to have open-minded public space, “is openness to the urban underclass” (Berman, 1986).

However, one of the disadvantages the OBZ movement had was the insufficient interaction with the locals; often the activists would simply take for granted the opposition by locals; this would deprive them from seeking any local support, even if was forthcoming. A young Turkish-Cypriot female activist, notes that “there will be opposing factors for sure”, given that “not everyone supports every ideology and as long as we keep the movement in action, the opposition will be in action as well”. A young Greek-Cypriot activist would add:

“There are two certain groups of ‘locals’. Within the Old City, there is a more alternative atmosphere around Phaneromeni Square. This is where we all came from. To a certain extent that part of the city was positive towards our movement. It happened many times that we came here to take chairs for example and we had support in general. Regarding the other group of ‘locals’ I would include neighbours and shop-owners in Ledras Street. They were detached from the movement.”

Once again it has to be mentioned that the OBZ movement generated both “inclusions” and “exclusions” about the basic concept, its goal and its characteristics. This is expectable since the movement attempted to sharpen and radicalise socio-spatial claims against the ethno-national and class divide. In that sense, while people rallied around the ideas represented by the OBZ,

opponents were being also constructed.

Matters were polarised mostly due to the hostility of the Greek-Cypriot media, financial, commercial and professional interests and practices of gentrification forces. The OBZ was accused for threatening social order. Although in many other cases of activism local society would be indifferent, the spatial placement of the OBZ could not allow the “locals” to be utterly passive. Because of the centrality of the location, the spectacle of the occupying by the large numbers of people crossing the checkpoints, the good internet promotion and the relative longevity of the action, it had attracted attention, including the mainstream media. The OBZ was central in the “neighbours” discussions.

The locals’ attitude towards the movement was by and large negative, even though the discourse contained internal contradictions. In the northern part of Nicosia, only few shop-owners, especially in the Büyük Han, were sufficiently informed and had first-hand experience, while the Turkish non-Cypriots had almost no clue since they are not allowed to cross the border. The dominant discourse regarding the OBZ by the locals in general undervalues the significance of the initiative and stresses what they considered to be “threatening” and potentially damage peaceful, clean, normal, legal, healthy, quiet everyday life. There was a consensus almost amongst all of the local informants on three accusations: They are “dirty”; they “take drugs”; they have “abnormal social and sexual behaviour”. Typical is the shop-owner of a shop just a few meters from the border:

“they do not even obey hygiene rules. I see them every day. Go there and see how they live in their filthy tents. I saw them taking drugs so many times. In front of my eyes they dropped a bag full of marijuana.”

During another discussion, a female shop-owner just round the corner, would repeat again and again:

“they have done me much harm. The night before the police attacked they had done so many damages out of our shops. They throw their garbage here all the time. They steal our banners in order to use them as blankets. We had to work in the morning and we faced all that dirt.”

Some meters away, on the other side, a Turkish Cypriot shop-owner in Büyük

Han would also agree that

“unfortunately there are some youngsters who take drugs. I hoped that it wouldn't be that way.”

Responding to the question whether they had seen these things and how many times they had visited the other side across the barbed wire, most of them answered that they had been there once or twice during those months while crossing the border. They all prioritised “abnormal social behaviour” rather than their political disagreement; in fact they would broadly state that they would highly agree with the political demands of the movement with respect to Cyprus’ reunification and demilitarisation of the island.

The bufferers on the other hand have a totally different view, strongly countering the above accusations, as “these are only ways to make a scandal: drug use, older men with under-age people, vandalism”, contending that “dirt is something you find everywhere. In our case it was just used for marginalising” (bufferer).

Another bufferer would definitely disagree with all those arguments mentioning that:

“the place was being cleaned every day. All those who support such accusations, do not agree with the movement. Perhaps they do not even want the island to be reunified. Maybe they are right-wingers or fascists who express themselves like that in order to spoil the movement. Even my mom was visiting the place and she said that it was clean”.

At the same time another young Turkish Cypriot emphasises how deeply unfair are the accusations:

“we basically occupied a building, a destroyed building and we restored it. We tried to make it a place where we can enjoy, do things, activities and projects. Abnormal? Who? For whom? For the system everything we are doing is maybe abnormal.”.

Although the locals imply that they represent the “normality” in sharp contrast with the “abnormal” activists, the scheme of “inclusion” and “exclusion” is used in different terms. For example, while the locals regard

themselves to be the ones who exclude the “others”, they often exchange roles in order to justify themselves. For instance, almost all the informants agreed that they were victims of exclusion:

“the activists didn't come not even once in order to give me something, to say who they are and what they protest for. I have no clue about their demands. They never gave me a text. They never spoke to me. They didn't speak to anybody”. (local shop-owner)

The “excluded” locals expressed feelings of victimisation; some even went as far as claiming that they would have had a different opinion if someone talked to them and “explained the reasons of the occupation”. Interestingly, some bufferers would partially agree that a basic problem of the movement was the lack of sufficient contact with the local society. On the other hand, others would remind that there were texts translated in Greek, Turkish and English, but “one cannot expect everything from a small group of people in such a small period of time”.

However, what strengthens the function of the OBZ as an urban movement is the contested urban space itself where different groups and scenarios confront. In that way, the right to the city constitutes the spark for the debate on production of common space and in parallel becomes the demand each side desires to monopolise. The debate covers a broad span of all aspects of social life: from politics, economic development, urban policies, moral issues and matters of social behaviour. Is this perhaps what makes the OBZ a grassroots urban movement that stands up for the right to the city, being a claim that “cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire” (Harvey, 2008)?

5.3.2.3 The virtual common space: from a “like” button to a movement

“Sometimes I feel like things are as valued as pushing a ‘Like’ button...”
(bufferer)

A crucial dimension is the digital/non-digital aspects of representation and action and on-line/off-line practices; a virtual common space where public

opinion, values, representations of physical space, social relations, beliefs, ideologies or cultural identities are being formed, affected, contested or even controlled. It is about a public arena where individuals' value systems are both reflected and (re-) shaped. Moreover, social networks offer the chance to users or else to the actors to connect with each other and create virtual social relations.

In the case of the OBZ movement in Nicosia, the activists used Facebook extensively, expressing feelings and statements, obeying to certain "unwritten laws" within the "virtual publics" (Papacharissi, 2002). For instance, while the involved activists were never more than 200 in physical space, the corresponding OBZ- Facebook⁸¹ page had around 2.000 "followers". A young bufferer would remark:

"Internet is really important. Everything is happening there actually. You just enter your Facebook account and you are being overwhelmed by information and news about anything".

A young Turkish Cypriot would be more critical, calling the phenomenon "internet activism", while spotting both the advantages and the drawbacks of it.

The extended use of on-line practices by political groups attempts to "transcend traditional mass media since the utopian rhetoric that surrounds new media technologies promises further democratization of post-industrial society" (Papacharissi, 2002). Activists contest the dominance of the state and the ruling class on controlling public discourse and therefore support alternative ways of information and mobilisation through the Internet. As all bufferers mention, the OBZ movement started with a "facebook event". The facebook page was one of the prioritised things to be done, while being followed by several people. What is also worth to be noted is that the virtual aspect of the movement was one of the most crucial factors that helped the local movement to be globally connected. As a consequence, internet use influenced the movement's demands, too since they were linked with the broader demands of the occupy movement against austerity measures, capitalist crisis and for an anti-capitalist struggle.

In the foreword of the interesting publication "Tweets from Tahrir" (),

⁸¹ <https://www.facebook.com/OccupyBufferZone>

referring to the Arab spring and the occupation of Tahrir Square following the timeline of the revolt through the tweets shared that period of time, Adhaf Soueif would argue:

“I think we're agreed: Without the new media the Egyptian Revolution could not have happened.[...]It remains to be seen whether the impetus and immediate success of the Revolution will also help in the tasks that lie ahead: building consensus, building institutions, mending the damage and moulding the future.”.

With his foreword, Soueif unfolds both the potentials and the limits of virtual public space since on-line practice can never replace the need for direct communication and action in the common space of demand.

5.4 After the OBZ: The grassroots activism in times of crisis

Crisis seems to be a shrill axis that penetrates all levels of social life beyond economy. As already mentioned in a former chapter, according to the dominant discourse and the Troika experts (EU, ECB, IMF), the Cypriot economy was no longer the “economic miracle” but a monstrous economy of an “over-extended banking sector”. At the same time, on the level of dominant rhetoric, the Cyprus crisis was presented as the result of personal responsibility of those, who used to “live beyond their means”, enjoying the fruits of the developing growth by building houses, receiving bank loans, loading their credit cards, cruising with expensive cars and feasting and loathing in consumption and easy money.

However, after the Presidential Proclamation regarding the haircut tax on deposits, people’s reaction was direct, leading to massive mobilisations in March - April 2013. In a climate of uncertainty and shock, Nicosia experienced some of the most massive rallies in its recent history not referring directly to the national issue but to the economic policy. Thousands of people were gathering every day outside of the House of Representatives or the Presidential Palace. Regarding the blocks in the protests, it is safe to argue that the most massive ones refer to the opposition Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), the United Democratic Youth Organisation (EDON) and to the Pancyprian

Federation of Labour (trade union PEO).

At the same time, from the very start of the mobilisations, a discussion emerged referring to the formation of a grassroots, independent political front that would bring together the extra-parliamentary Left, the autonomous/anarchist groups and people involved in the grassroots activism. The main motivation for such an initiative was the lack of a radical, anti-capitalist discourse that would go beyond the official Left, represented by opposition AKEL. ERAS (a coalition of various left tendencies), NeDA (Trotskyists, YRE), ANT.AR.T.E.S. (anti-capitalist Left), Coiling Irregulars (anarchist/ libertarian) and Skapoula (student group) were the main factors that composed an independent block in the protests, together with people drawn from the broader pool of grassroots activism and the “Phaneromeni youngsters”.

Moreover, this block moved towards the creation of an “Anti-capitalist Network” that aimed to adopt the role of a radical, anti-capitalist front within the mobilisations and beyond. In the first call of the Network it is stated that

“We invite all comrades, groups and tendencies referring to the radical movement in Cyprus to form an insubordinate, anti-capitalist social network, horizontally structured, beyond politics of “management”, “interclass national struggle” and the bureaucratic trade unions. To fight for social uprising till the end!”

General assemblies, events, discussions and protests followed in order to find a common ground among the participants. But in spite of everything, this political initiative has not managed to gain a broader social support as yet. Likewise, it has not managed to involve relevant initiatives in northern Cyprus into a common struggle that would combine the current mobilisations with the grassroots rapprochement activism in the direction of a common class struggle. On the other hand, the need has been undoubtedly highlighted for a new type of radical politics that will contribute to the social struggles ahead: A politics that “will merge the force of the people with the sharing of political ideas” (Badiou, 2013) and radicalise the labour, social, anti-imperialist, antifascist movement. It might be a new challenging era for the radical grassroots activism in Nicosia and Cyprus towards a promising expression of the generation of

crisis, helping to understand the emerging subjectivity, its characteristics and its place within the political arena.

In interesting, yet turbulent, times the question of “what is next” is a common agony. Will radical political forces and a stronger grassroots activism find the way to inspire the broader social movement towards a new radical politics against austerity, unemployment, privatisation, gentrification, nationalism, fascism and repression? Will they contribute to a common social struggle forming a radical content beyond the liberal reunification plans? Finally, is it a new bet to win towards the reclaiming of the common space?

5.5 The Civil Space: Different shades of common

5.5.1 Three NGOs narrate common space

In May 2012, when I conducted this round of the fieldwork, the OBZ movement was coming to an end and the discussion about its goals, results, achievements, perspectives and new tasks ahead was open, having in hand its timeline and development. However, grassroots activism is not the only actor claiming common space. As already argued, if grassroots activism represents the collective space, another component comes to complete the common space of demand: *civil space*. I refer to NGOs and bi-communal platforms of cooperation, who are significantly popular and rather many in Cyprus’ *civil society*. It is the “formal” activism, mostly active under the auspicious of the United Nations, who fund most of the NGOs that act in the Cypriot realm, which moreover have been significantly empowered after the opening of the barricades.

In this context, I have interviewed three members and co-founders of three important NGOs that act in the civil space of Nicosia, two of which are furthermore based in Nicosia’s UN-controlled buffer zone next to Ledra Palace checkpoint. I am interested to explore different perceptions of common space, and different spaces of encounters, while “inviting” both formal and informal activism in a “round table of dialogue” in order to finally see “how common is common space”.

5.5.1.1 Home for Cooperation (H4C) and Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR)

Located in a street that has experienced violent times during the inter-communal conflicts as well as the division in 1963, Home for Cooperation⁸² is established since 6 May 2011 right in the heart of the buffer zone. Being in a no-man's land, H4C attempts to be a place for all, bringing together people from both communities and especially representatives of the Cypriot civil society. H4C is a very significant component of the civil space, hosting NGOs and especially the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research⁸³ (AHDR). AHDR is a NGO focusing on historical education and teaching as well as on the collection and sharing of historical resources, and generally on the establishment of a *multi-communal* dialogue on history, culture and education.

In a space of conflict, where different dominant historiographies seek to establish dominant discourses on the national issue, the existence of a platform, where dominant narratives are being questioned is of high importance. Moreover, history and politics are both supposed to mainly separate people across the divide, both in terms of the actual events and their representations in public discourse. According to my informant, AHDR and the H4C attempt to use history the other way round, as a tool to connect. Moreover, the independent character of the organisation is repeatedly underlined:

“Our goal is to bring people together. We started meeting in cafés near the green line. Afterwards we were hosted in PRIO⁸⁴ in Ledra Palace. There was a call for a European fund, we applied and since we were the only inter-communal project, we succeeded. Our motto is ‘transform the dead zone into a zone for cooperation’”

5.5.1.2 Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC)

The CCMC is also located in the heart of Nicosia's UN-controlled buffer zone next to Ledra Palace crossing and the H4C. Established in 2009, it aims to play a role within civil space with reference to media. More specifically, according to CCMC website “the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC) works to empower civil society organisations and community groups with the tools to communicate their message to a wider audience”.

⁸² <http://www.home4cooperation.info/index.php/>

⁸³ <http://www.ahdr.info/home.php>

⁸⁴ <http://www.prio.org>

CCMC is a member of the Board of the Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE), a broader, European-wide umbrella organisation referring to community media organisations as well as practitioners and academics. Within its goals it is being prioritised to establish a third factor beyond public and private media: communal media. According to my informant there is a certain gap in civil space's knowledge referring to media, which CCMC aims to fill in. Organising workshops and seminars it hopes to help civil society be largely heard:

“CCMC was created in 2009, aiming to support all NGOs with respect to communication and media; how to write a press release to workshops about video and audio production, editing etc. The UNDP had found out that there was a certain lack in NGOs knowledge about media. So, CCMC constitutes an umbrella for 42 NGOs, supported by the UNDP and recently by other funding programs. We support the law reform regarding the media. We support the ‘third parameter’: public media, private media, which already exist, and communal media” (CCMC).

5.5.1.3 Nicosia European Capital of Culture 2017 (ECC 2017)

When I was conducting this part of the fieldwork, Nicosia was a candidate for European Capital of Culture 2017, competing with another Cypriot city, Paphos. Finally, Nicosia did not manage to succeed in this competition and Paphos will be the ECC 2017. However, I spoke with a member of the program in order to see what would such a project propose and prioritise as an *image* of the common space of Nicosia.

Being a potential EEC, Nicosia would demonstrate its cultural production and image as a divided city and beyond. It is interesting therefore to examine which characteristics would compose the *conceived space* of the project's professional in order to highlight Nicosia's most valuable sides. According to my informant, the buffer zone and the city's division would play a leading role in the project's concept as well as a space for the ECC's events:

“It is a project that dates back in 2011, when we applied for the ECC program. We saw it as great chance to do everything in four years! We thought about dealing with the buffer zone, not only in geographical terms but also in psychological terms. You know, the buffer zone between the two main communities, the buffer zone between all communities, the

buffer zone between generations,, ideas, practices, markets etc. When you live in such a city, you have always an excuse not to change anything, because you have the 'big' excuse of the division; something that cannot change. In the end paralyses the cultural production, too. We have a cultural proposal that derives from a social, human starting point. Our philosophy is that the project is not bi-communal but multicultural!"

5.5.2 How "common" is common space?

The last phrase of the ECC informant opens the debate about the *different shades of common* that have been unfolding during the interviews with the civil space representatives. *Common* gets different notions and representations, while satisfying different goals:

1. *Common versus shared*

An interesting distinction emerges, definitely enriching what I have already discussed about the notion of *common* space: "common" versus "shared". My H4C informant sharply underlines that the organisation's aim is not to create a *common* but a *shared* space. The distinction implies that the space created shall not be *one* for everyone but it shall rather have enough room to fit all. *Sharing* is here introduced to describe a space of *understanding*; a space, where connotations may lead to *shared* understandings:

"The increasing chances to interact create the need for a common language. Not actually in the sense of common but rather in the sense of 'shared'. We want to share meanings. It is not necessary for everyone to mean exactly the same thing referring to 1974 events. It is not necessary to decide whether we will call it an invasion or an intervention. We can though understand each other's meanings and connotations" (H4C/AHDR)

Sharing is a tactics towards *having in common*; it is the way, the step and the route pointing to new commonalities. At the same time it offers a looser framework to act within, as long as common space is no longer a strict precondition but rather a perpetual goal of an ongoing process. Sharing space and meanings can potentially lead to a common space that will include sharing, while going beyond that. In other words, common is shared but shared is not

common yet. For instance, sharing the space of the buffer zone can turn it from a no-man's-land into a common space in a process of *totalisation*, where socio-spatial commonalities form a new entity beyond a joint space of two or more different parts.

2. *Common versus bi-communal*

The ECC informant has already made a clear statement that the project's aim is to create a space beyond *bi-communalism*, towards *multiculturalism*. The CCMC informant would also share the same view and emphasise:

“I don't like terms such as rapprochement or reconciliation. We belong to multiculturalism! We promote common values; we create an approachable space. We are not bi-communal; we are multi-communal, trying to create an immediate political agreement here and now”(CCMC).

Another distinction is made here between terms widely used in the broader movement against the division and especially by parts of the Left referring to AKEL. The CCMC informant attempts to draw red lines between the role of the civil space and the mainstream political scene, rejecting the employed terminology that is linked to certain connotations, tactics and discourses. We have the distinction between multiculturalism and rapprochement. At the same time, what is also being implied here is that the Cyprus problem is placed into the background, while civil space operates beyond it.

3. *Common versus rapprochement*

Keeping in mind the above as well as the already mentioned “shades of common”, I am interested to understand deeper how “shared” and “multicultural” interact with terms already used by platforms, parties, movements and initiatives involved in the broader movement against the division, such as *rapprochement*, *reconciliation*, *co-existence* or *conflict resolution*. I need to explore what new terms and understandings emerge in order to represent different approaches and politics opening new palettes for the shades of common. According to the H4C informant:

“In a broader sense we place ourselves within the broader reconciliation

movement, in the sense that we bring Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots together. Former experience, however, shows that we have to go beyond the mainstreams, i.e. AKEL's rapprochement and UN conflict resolution. We want to make a step further. We attempt to go beyond bi-communalism towards inter-communalism. We have full respect for the fact that two separate communities exist; we do not contest that. On the contrary, I would say we celebrate this fact. At the same time though we believe that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can meet without carrying these identities, without rejecting it either. When I work together with Serin, we are not a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot. When we choose who is going to work here with us, we don't have such criteria. We want to create a shared space beyond the Cyprus Problem".

A new space is created here that has three main characteristics: firstly, it derives from a rather intense disappointment towards mainstream politics, followed either by parts of the Left and mostly AKEL or the broader institutional level; secondly, it attempts to express and simultaneously transcend this disappointment by putting forth new notions regarding the problem; thirdly, it attempts to rethink the construction of the actors' identities.

4. Common identity: commonalities

This space looks for new "commonalities" of the ones who "share" the problem even beyond this sharing. What I want to suggest here is that the common space introduced is a shared space that concomitantly seeks to transcend the reason of its birth. It is an interesting approach following a thought that suggests the refusal of one's identity as part of the dichotomy's reproduction. This is mainly highlighted when a distinction between the subjective identity (e.g. nationality) and its social performance is being introduced:

"Most of us had supported the Annan Plan, but we don't focus on that here. The disappointment regarding the plan's rejection shows us that the way to draw strength is to act independently from the 'Cyprus Problem', trying to built 'islets' and possibilities within society. We don't want to solve the 'Cyprus Problem'".

5. Common beyond the Cyprus Problem

It is "common" among my informants to strongly emphasise that civil space has

to act beyond the Cyprus Problem and not as an attempt to solve it or as an “answer” to it. Already the H4C informant has opened the debate, combining this idea to a general disappointment especially in the after-referenda period, referring to the Annan Plan. Civil space needs to create a space for encounters and interaction beyond the main issue of the island, towards the creation of social “islets”, where the actors can experience common space “here and now”. The ECC informant is clear:

“If we accept this dead zone we will accept all dead zones and we will ‘die’, too. You can see that. Cypriots do nothing for the commons, we are disappointed. What we have chosen to highlight is not a superficial thing but it is something both painful and hidden. We don’t aim to solve the Cyprus Problem. We are not a political project. Our goal is to wake people up; not by praying but with direct action here and now. We refer to civil society, to NGOs. We are interested in material and mental separations without a certain political framework; we are not included within the broader movement. We have nothing to do with the Cyprus Problem but we deal with the Cypriot problems. The city is occupied; we can’t ignore that. For instance we can’t organise any events in the north since we cannot guarantee safety and standards. We don’t say that there is no history; we say that history shouldn’t be an obstacle for cooperation, understanding, and creativity among people”.

If an imaginary dialogue between grassroots activists of the collective space and representatives of the civil space took place, an interesting question would emerge: “How ‘common’ is common space?” In terms of physical space, both NGOs and grassroots activism have “shared” the same place of the buffer zone. This is absolutely expectable since only a place of nobody, a no man’s land, could ever turn into a place for all, which has been the initial goal of activists anyway:

“The buffer zone is a common space; this is where all our events will take place. We are in contact with the UN; maybe we could be the chance to open more barricades, to widen the accessible space and keep it open to all” (ECC informant).

However, this “shared” space is not enough to bring them together in a

“common” space, too. NGOs are the “formal” activism, while grassroots expressions seem to be too radical to fit in the same picture. My informants suggest mutual limitation for a possible cooperation, for basic reasons:

6. Common beyond politics:

There is a clear distinction engaged by all informants that their organisations operate beyond (mainstream) politics. Such an approach is obviously close to the self-definition of civil space anyway, which hopes to develop in the “gaps” left by politics and state power. I have already claimed that civil space is part of political space together with state but in a certain distance, though. Additionally, in times of emerging disappointment regarding the mainstream political scene accused of failure, corruption and dark interests, civil space attempts to constitute an alternative way of political representation.

However, it is interesting to note that grassroots activism does not escape the reservations. For instance, the OBZ movement is perceived as part of the political arena and therefore certain borderlines have to be drawn:

“We haven’t taken any position towards the OBZ. This was no conscious decision but on the other hand it has to do with the general philosophy of the AHDR, We choose to keep a distance from politics unless they refer to educational issues. We support them individually though. For instance, I have gone there, I have supported them. But the AHDR brings together people with different political backgrounds. They positive towards contact of course, but the can come from neo-liberal or more conservative backgrounds in both communities. OBZ is part of the extra-parliamentary left. In this sense, it would be difficult for us to have an official contact” (H4C/AHDR).

7. Common versus institutional

The relation with institutions and the state is one more critical factor that distinguishes civil space's and grassroots activism's tactics. While the former is funded and supported by institutions, the latter clearly rejects a possible interaction. However, the central point behind this position are the tactical notions of radicalism and reformism; the concept of operating within or against the system. This distinction functions as a certain borderline, while creating scepticism regarding effectiveness and impact. The picture is clear: for

grassroots activists, civil space is part of the system and therefore against true radical social dynamics; for the civil space grassroots activism represents an utopian perception, often marginalised and always ineffective:

“We have certain differences. For instance, we are funded by the US through the UN and we would additionally like to have support by the state. This means that we are not against governments, while the OBZ is against all [...] We care about our sustainability. One would say that this leads to a compromise regarding our message but this is the model worldwide. This doesn't mean that we don't exercise criticism but I assume that the OBZ would be against us since we are funded by the US. However, for us this is a necessary evil.” (CCMC)

8. Common “within the society” versus “marginalisation”

Linked to the above arguments, another point builds upon the contested common space. The projection wall of “society” creates a scaling of effectiveness and impact. The aim to create a certain community engagement and involve the communities into actions are crucial factors to choose the tactics and “measure” the impacts. Common could not ever be perceived separated from the need to include and share. However, could this be a trap that confuses tactics with strategy?

“I think that something like the OBZ cannot influence the broader political scene. It is very hard to gather people, to become something more than a marginalised movement. If they don't provoke something serious, a ‘hot incident’ for example, no one will ever notice them. Even the media handle them as marginal”. (CCMC)

“I believe that a movement such as OBZ can influence the broader political scene. But it is not something solid. It started as something and developed as something else. It had little media exposure; international media mostly exposed it. For me, every attempt to respond to the need for reunification is an ally. It constitutes one more step against separation. However, in such a conservative society as Cyprus, radical proposals are not only unacceptable but they are marginalised, too. People say: they are few; they don't know what they want; they are utopians. I think that today the OBZ has problems. It was different at the beginning. But then... the dogs were in the same place... I find their analysis on the Cyprus

Issue quite naïve. But it's ok; they have no experience. I'd say that the hegemony of the anarchist scene brought the problem." (H4C/AHDR).

I note eight points that represent many more "shades of common". The bottomline confirms the idea that common space is a contested space, where different dynamics confront. However, although I have claimed that these different dynamics represent enclosure (state power) versus reclaim (social sphere), a certain zoom-in would reveal that these two categories do not create solid fronts at all. The common space of demand is still an open bet to win, while the need to cultivate a sense of community is again highlighted. Could this ever happen within the absent totality of the divided Nicosia? Will the demolition of the wall bridge the multiple commonalities? Finally, what kind of a world are we looking for, behind the wall?

5.6 The third actor: migrants' presence in the old city of Nicosia

5.6.1 Migrants' neighbourhoods: mapping invisible buffer zones

According to quantitative data derived from censuses⁸⁵ as well as to a qualitative reading of Nicosia's neighbourhoods, we can safely argue that the old city of Nicosia is moreover a place of migrants. While Cypriots on both sides were leaving the old city in order to build new, larger homes in less packed, developing areas, migrants were finding a new place to build their lives and create their local communities.

For sure Cyprus knows migration well. During the past decades it has become a place of internal displacement as well as of external immigration, while turning into a migrants' destination since the war in 1974 with respect to the northern part and since the 90's referring to the southern. Cyprus' division and the development of two different realities affect the characteristics of migration, too in terms of policies, migrant's attraction and reception, while affecting migrants' presence in the city, too. In this sense, when talking about migrants a certain distinction has to be made between those in the north and those in the south, since each side constitutes a different "destination" for rather different reasons.

Soon after the war in 1974 the northern part became a destination for

⁸⁵ Fig. 5.2 & Fig. 5.3

Turkish citizens who were offered motivations (e.g. property and work) in order to settle in abandoned Greek Cypriot properties, mostly in empty villages, work for businesses and offer cheap labour force for the newborn economy and finally guarantee a sufficient number of population for the north.

This first wave of migration of Turkish citizens who settled in the northern part of the island was followed by other waves during the decades, in the 80's and late 90's, every time getting new characteristics as long as the TRNC was moving towards development in different sectors. For instance, in addition to the labour workers, who were still migrating from Turkey in order to work in the developing construction sector with low salaries and poor facilities, other kinds of immigrants were also coming to the north such as, according to Hatay and Bryant (2009), "financial experts hired by local or offshore banks, lecturers who teach in the universities, and businessmen who have investments on the island".

However, the 90's found both sides in the middle of a global change regarding the global market and Cyprus functioned as a migrants' destination very much due to its position in the "hot" crossroads of the three continents. Being both a "reception hall" and a "waiting room" (Trimikliniotis, 2011), Cyprus attracted economic migrants, who came to help both sides meet labour shortages. Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the same period led to another wave, coming from the former Soviet states and especially women, who still work in the island's "night-clubs".

The old city of Nicosia offered empty space to host migrants on both sides. They could find cheaper residences and cheap empty stores, which they turned into shops with signs in their own language referring mostly to their own informal communities. They were the ones who had turned the rather abandoned and degraded neighbourhoods of Nicosia into lively areas of activity and commerce (Trimikliniotis and Tsianos, 2014). At the same time, in a space of conflict especially due to ethno-national contradictions, migrants have become targets of racism and "fear" referring to the locals. New, invisible buffer zones of discomfort emerge between neighbourhoods of the locals and neighbourhoods with high migrants' presence.

The words of a local shop-owner, whose shop is located near a migrants' neighbourhood are indicative of the public discourse:

"I was one of the first who came here. I saved the Old City. Thanks to me

and some others the area is alive again. If it wasn't for us, the whole area would be full of immigrants and foreigners.”

In this context, I attempt to *map* these invisible buffer zones in order to provide another image of the city beyond the physical division of the Green Line.

According to the latest censuses, in the southern Greek Cypriot part of the city, out of 16,766 inhabitants, 9,558 (57%) have Cypriot Nationality (RoC), 3,407 (20,32%) come from EU countries (EUN), while 3,758 (22,42%) come from third countries (TCN). In the northern Turkish Cypriot part, out of 7,505 inhabitants, 1,305 (17,38) have mixed citizenship (Turkish Cypriot and other), 1,881 (24,13%) have (Turkish) Cypriot nationality, the majority of the inhabitants, 4,244 (56,54%), have Turkish nationality, while 133 (1,77%) inhabitants come from third countries and 17 are registered unknown.

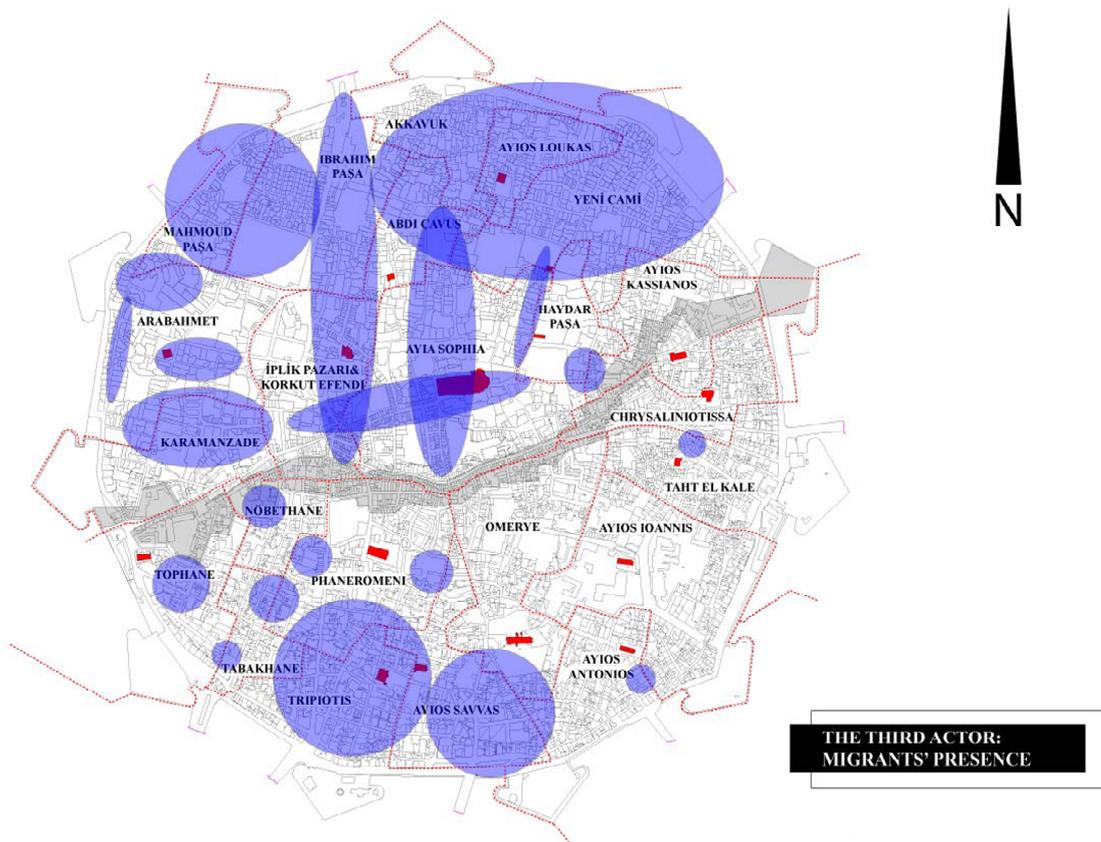


Fig.5.1 Migrants' presence/ concentration in the old city's quarters (by the author).

Having this data in hand, together with a detailed plan of the old city, which I have created with the help of colleagues working for Nicosia's Master Plan on both sides, I conduct an observatory site recording. The city's quarters

are efficient areas in order to check if the provided percentages correspond to the observatory site recording that I have conducted in order to map migrants' presence. At this point, it has to be mentioned that some of the quarters refer to areas and population out of the city's wall and therefore the census includes within its scope people who live out of the old city. However, the provided data can offer a clue of population distribution and therefore help me confirm my recording.

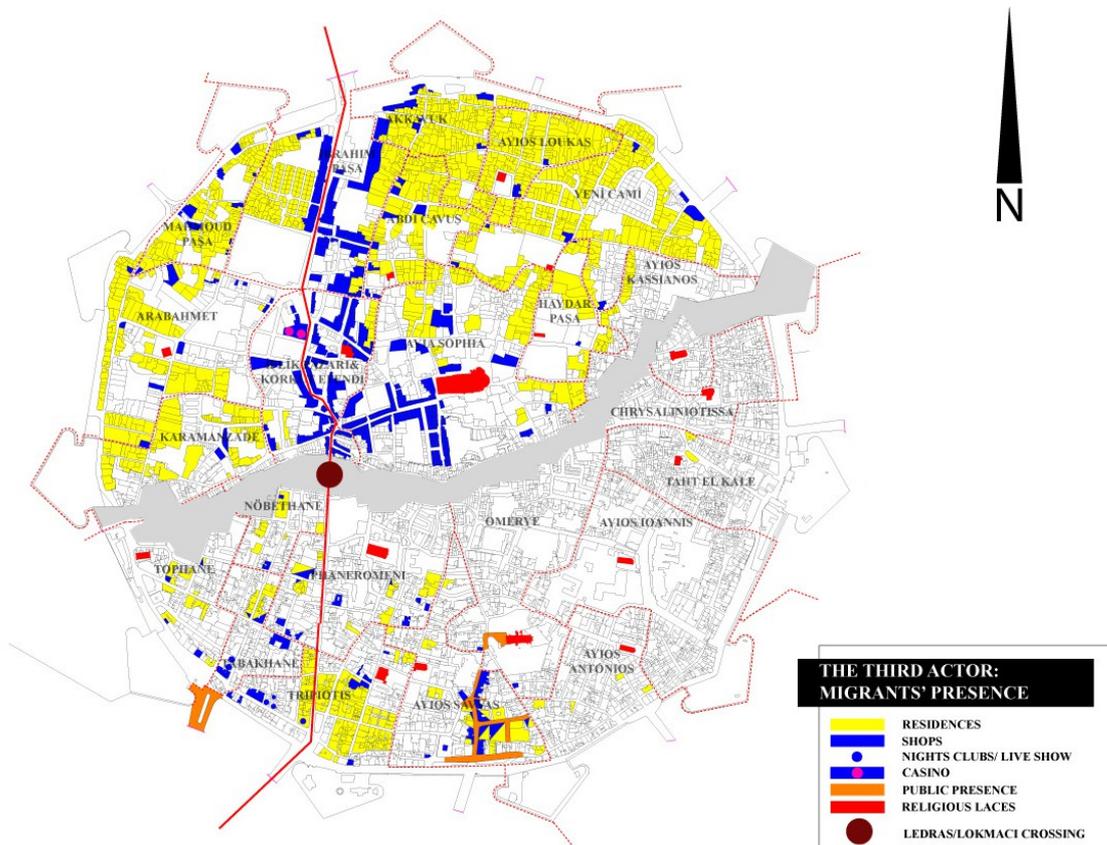
I mark migrants' presence with reference to their shops and residences. Moreover, a special reference is made to "night-clubs", where usually migrant women work as sex workers. I mark all shops, which I recognise due to their signs and labels as well as by asking other neighbours. I need moreover to mention, that the site recording was not that easy in the Turkish Cypriot side, since I couldn't easily tell the difference between a Turkish Cypriot shop and one owned or rented by migrants from Turkey. Therefore, I mark migrants' presence mostly based on neighbours' hints.

QUARTERS	TOTAL	RoC	EUN	TCN
Ayios Kassianos	82	68	13	1
Chrysaliniotissa	124	97	13	14
That El Kale	826	563	139	121
Ayios Ioannis	221	143	34	44
Omeriye	206	90	41	75
Ayios Antonios	5,801	3,340	1,297	1,141
Ayios Savvas	581	146	207	226
Tripiotis	2,158	913	557	681
Phaneromeni	512	129	157	226
Tabakhane	299	99	74	126
Nöbethane	189	61	51	77
Tophane	5,767	3,909	824	1,026
TOTAL	16,766	9,558	3,407	3,758
	100%	57%	20,32%	22,42%

Fig. 5.2 Census The old city's quarters/ RoC (2011)

QUARTERS	TOTAL	TRNC&Other	TRNC	TR	TCN	Unknown
Abdi Çavuş	975	131	253	579	10	2
Akkavuk	898	143	190	543	19	3
Arabahmet	761	124	193	428	12	4
Haydarpaşa	320	33	105	176	1	5
Ibrahimpaşa	675	110	199	353	13	0
İplikpazarı	335	51	110	154	20	0
Kafesli	439	15	132	273	18	1
Karamanzade	429	136	125	162	5	1
Selimiye	987	192	141	639	19	1
Yenicami	1,686	370	363	937	16	0
TOTAL	7,505	1,305	1,811	4,244	133	17
	100%	17,38%	24,13%	56,54%	1,77%	0,22%

Fig.5.3 Census The old city's quarters/ TRNC (2006)



CONCLUSIONS

“A friend recently told me that he had just wandered through the Harz region of Germany while blindly following the directions of a map of London. This sort of game is obviously only a feeble beginning in comparison to the complete creation of architecture and urbanism that will someday be within the power of everyone.” (Debord, [1955] 2008)

Summary

In a nutshell: A “two- scene-scenario”

The thesis has narrated a “two-scene-scenario”: In Scene No.1 the social space intertwines with the parameter of conflict presenting a common space, where the protagonists represent two contradictory dynamics: state power and the social sphere. These dynamics claim hegemony over visibilities (state power attempts to enclose, while the social sphere attempts to reclaim) towards the production of socio-spatial totalities (in an unbreakable set of perceived, conceived and lived space). This scene presents the thesis’ conceptual framework as well as its research “decisions” and a suggestion finally confirmed: The dialectics of power in a space of conflict create visibilities of enclosure in order to maintain dominance. These visibilities include historiographical, socio-political and ideological narratives that lead to the creation of socio-spatial stereotypes and constructions of the “self” and the “other”; a development of collective socio-cultural identities that affect the pre- and post- partition condition. At the same time, they constitute manifestations of a pre-existing or a potential dialectical contrast towards “freedom”, expressed by dynamics of resistance in a common space of demand.

In Scene No.2, the divided old city of Nicosia enters the stage providing an extreme case scenario, where ethno-national, religious, social, macro-geopolitical, capitalist and imperialist contradictions are grounded on a spatial “projection wall” that receives, represents and reproduces conflict (both partition and the quest for contact). The protagonists are the city’s everyday actors living, working, frequenting and acting within the set of the old walled city of Nicosia on both sides. They narrate their personal stories regarding the

inter-communal conflicts through a “narrative mapping” of their *former* home, their border-crossings, their perceptions of the “self” and the “other”, their routines inscribed within the city, either sewing the gap or highlighting it. After narrating the social space of conflict, they begin a pencil-paper process in order to “draw” their mental representations, focusing again on the above elements, while bringing them all together in a web of *nodes* that forms a *lived* space, a *thirdspace*, where their narratives are being spatialised: they draw their emotions, their encounters and interaction, their memories and traumas in small free-hand maps of their environment and their pseudo-environment.

At this point, other actors enter the stage holding banners and placates that introduce collective statement and resolve. The actors are grassroots activists that form a common space of demand together with actors from the civil space, referring to the “formal” activism of NGOs and the inter-communal platforms of cooperation. They want to change the set “here and now” introducing different shades of “common”. They Occupy the Buffer Zone turning a no man’s land into a place for all; they reject bi-communalism towards a communal, shared, inter-communal, multicultural identity. They act in the same space but they seem rather distant to each other, since different tactics form different spaces of demand.

Finally, the *absent* enter the stage in order to remind that the divisions are multiple, visible and invisible, while the buffer zone is mobile; it moves to different areas, re-conceptualises comfort and discomfort and separates people in different ways. The actors are migrants, who do not possess the same emotional involvement with the “Cyprus Issue”, yet being crucial actors within the city in qualitative and quantitative terms. A map that shows their presence manifests new major invisibilities that cannot be excluded from the different layers of the urban images’ overlap.

The initial aim of the scenario was to confirm the idea that Nicosia will still remain a “divided” city in different terms, even after the demolishment of the city’s material border. However, the route followed in order to confirm the hypothesis revealed one more goal: to form a new understanding of the social space of conflict, arguing that at the end of the day such an understanding will not only provide the opportunity to elaborate on Nicosia’s multiple divisions but it will also pinpoint a rough pathway to transcend them in a potential “sequel”.

The thesis has derived from a certain motivation to “dig” under the visible division towards a space of multiple invisible divisions and contacts produced by everyday actors and dynamics. A vague question played the role of the starting point: is the demolition of the border enough to reunite the city of Nicosia, while, at the same time, is a “wall” enough to divide people’s lives for good? Although vague, this question actually placed into the core of the debate the relation between the dialectics of power and the dialectics of social sphere. How does a macro-geopolitical decision influence and interact with everyday attitudes? How are distant institutions linked to everyday life? In which ways and balance does the relation between power and social sphere construct the actors' identities within space? To turn a wall into a door, a keyhole is needed. But then, as already asked, who holds the key?

The above questions become crucial within the framework of the production of the social space of conflict. The idea that the physical division is exclusively a decision taken by distant or local political centers tends to leave the development of cultural identities and segregations out of the debate. It leads to an understanding of the production of the social space of conflict as being a process absolutely in the hands of the rulers, while everyday actors adopt policy-driven models in a passive, linear way. Accordingly, it suggests that a possible solution is basically a matter of political will to “correct” the physical and social rupture. On the other hand, the idea that there is a common popular interest in partition or reconciliation, creates a social vacuum, in which contradictory social dynamics play a weak role. Calame and Charlesworth (2009) argue that everyday dynamics can be utterly lost in the perception of communal conflicts in a macro-geopolitical context:

“Divided cities function in part as emblems of larger political struggles in which individual enclave residents are enlisted to fight battles not directly serving their personal interests”.

However, there is a need to explore the larger picture here; a need to “bridge” the above spheres and scales, offering a dialectical, holistic reading of the space (in real and imaginary terms) that “hosts” these multiple scales,

dynamics and qualities, while reflecting the “storyboard” of conflict. In this storyboard, we can “touch” a city beyond its physical composition and towards the spatialisation of social relations. These relations reveal formalities and informalities, personal stories and official narratives, stereotypes and identities, visibilities and invisibilities and finally multiple divisions.

Bearing the above in mind, this thesis chose to keep a spatial approach, exploring the notion of space; the holistic perception of the social space; the production of the social space of conflict; and the multiple representations of conflict in space and the mind. I clearly argue that this approach offers the chance to go beyond dichotomies towards a multi-scale and multidisciplinary understanding of the certain and other case studies.

From this perspective, I suggested that space is actually a continuous process; the process of *spatialisation* (Shields, 1999:288) of social relations within a dialectical whole of spatial practice (perceived), representations of space (conceived) and the space of representations (lived) (Lefebvre, [1974] 1996). It is crucial here to insist in this inseparable scheme of spatial moments in order to understand that the *whole* carries the *parts*, while the parts reflect the whole. In this sense, the continuously under construction social space is more than physical and more than mental, while being both real and mental at the same time. However, what happens when a physical and social rupture breaks this (spatial) totality? Divided cities become fruitful socio-spatial labs in order to explore the production of the social space on an edge. At the same time, a spatial approach of conflict becomes vital in understanding this urban paradox.

Both in terms of space and social relations, the divided cities are symbols of discontinuity. I have already argued that the divided cities intensively manifest a *lack of visibility* in all socio-spatial moments. A physical border (walls, fences, barrels) bereaves physical visibility constructing the “invisible”, other. The other’s “invisibility” creates *mental walls* of stereotypes, representations and a collective imaginary. At the same time, the invisible “gaze” of the “enemy” and/or the “guard” creates a feeling of exposure and therefore of constant, uncontrollable visibility. However, the crucial components of discipline, examination and surveillance (Foucault, [1975] 1977) within the social space of conflict manifest pre-existing as well as potential dynamics of freedom, breaking through, reclaiming and the construction of new visibilities (Arendt, [1958] 1998). In this sense, divided cities carry a double identity: they constitute a *cry and a demand for visibility* and socio-spatial *totality*, while at the same time

becoming a “battlefield” for different and contradictory dynamics that claim hegemony over a lost and (therefore) emerging *common space*.

To sum up, this thesis has drawn upon different theories and debates regarding the production of space in order to construct a theoretical and conceptual framework, in which it would develop. Step by step, in Chapter 2, I have built upon notions that led me to a concrete definition and a clear suggestion that hopes to clarify my point of view and contribute to theory:

The social space of conflict is the common space (collective and civil), where different dynamics (state power/ social sphere) claim hegemony over visibilities (enclosure/ reclaim) towards the production of socio-spatial totalities (in physical, mental and social terms).

Fieldwork reveals: A divided city without borders?

Space *receives* everyday actions. Nicosia is a “compressed air can”, where history has definitely left its mark. Certain transformations within the physical space of the walled city link the past to the present referring to times of co-existence, conflict and emerging possibilities for reconciliation. Additionally, space *represents* and is being *represented*. It interacts with the individual and collective imaginary becoming a space of stereotypes, habits, encounters, avoidances and crossings, continuities and transformations, edges and nodes. While being represented by the everyday actors through their perceptual systems, it concomitantly represents their memories, traumas and emotional involvement. Finally, space *reproduces*. From its very birth, the division raises the quest for reunification or at least opposite dynamics to partition. In this sense, the restructuring of space is linked to the broader restructuring of social life, turning the right to the city into a sharp demand to reclaim the distorted common space.

In this context, participants map space, while space maps participants’ profiles. This is further confirmed, while participants narrate space, too. The oral history and mental mapping processes, in Chapter 4, do not only represent individual narratives but they also manage to offer a new *geography* of conflict made of *unmapped* and *immeasurable* elements. Practically, they draw their “home”, the “border”, the “other’s symbols” and their “routines”. In fact they

draw a mental world of socio-spatial relations, strongly related to their personal stories, their interaction with the “other”, their attitude towards reunification and their relation to the old city of Nicosia. On the other hand, the aspirations mapping of the common space of demand, in Chapter 5, presents a world of community engagement, collective action and resolve. Practically, it is a “moment” of political grassroots and institutional activism. In fact it is a mapping of will. Finally, in 5.5.3, a mapping of the “absent” third actor introduces new perceptions of visible and invisible borders, while recording migrants' presence in the Old City of Nicosia.

However, throughout the thesis the word *mapping* is used in a more “free” way, linking the realm of senses, will, memories and emotions to space. Therefore, there can be no “objective” ways to translate research findings into a concrete, stable and positivist conclusion or a concrete (psycho-) geographical image. On the contrary, the need to explore a fluid, yet rich, open process of spatialisation is what is being highlighted here. Thus, I attempt to describe this process, capturing an overlap of various images of the Old City of Nicosia and its multiple divisions.

The opening of the barricades has certainly offered a taste of a possible reunification of the city. However, the opening does not seem to be involved in the actors' every day lives. Their “home” or else the private space is organised in ways of *avoiding*, while *crossing* looks more like a “route with blinkers” not suggesting actual encounters. No mapped private space suggests an active involvement of the “other” despite the fact that the respondents visit the other side every now and then after the opening of the barricades. The border is there, manifesting its strong influence.

Furthermore, the border is *mobile*. It moves and creates different perceptions of the self and the other. Participants draw the border, while representing four categories of their imagined city: a city *in two halves*; a city where *the participants' side is bigger* than the one that belongs to the other; a city where the whole created by the Venetian Walls is attributed to their own side; and a city where the “other” is out of the paper's edge, the “other” does not exist.

In a next step, the symbol of the other manifests both external spatial knowledge and socio-spatial stereotypes. The “other's” symbol mostly refers to the participants' personal life organisation or involvement rather than to the “other”. Moreover external spatial knowledge seems to be rather absent, while

“the routes with blinkers” and the low range of encounters, interaction and further involvement is underlined. Actors cross and avoid. They cross due to several reasons, following several motivations, yet the detailed routes refer to their everyday routines followed within their personal *districts*, while *crossings* to the other side seem to be much more abstract.

Older men and younger, politically engaged seem to be the ones, who possess a broader range of spatial information. For the older generation this is not necessarily linked to their emotional involvement, while for younger ones it is a critical variable. At the same time, younger women are the ones with the lower emotional involvement and narrower range of spatial information.

The thesis would therefore suggest that *fear*, *discomfort* and *low political engagement* are crucial factors for *avoidance* and the permanence of invisible mental walls that keep the opened barricades sealed. Moreover, personal experience possessed by the older generation is still a stronger parameter than political engagement, since the latter seems to create a more “cool-blooded” approach to a certain utopia.

This last sentence throws a bridge to the next mapping process; the *aspirations mapping* of the common space of demand. How *common* is common space though? Chapter 5 offers clear evidence of the conceptual starting point, suggesting that common space is actually a battlefield, where contradictory dynamics claim hegemony over the socio-spatial context.

The thesis makes a clear statement: there is an emerging subjectivity, which attempts to create its own *collective space*, political tradition, identity, slogans, lifestyle, ideas and new radical politics towards a reclaiming of the common space. Starting in the period 2003–2004 and especially in the divided old city of Nicosia, it is being developed in a socio-political context marked by the opening of the Green Line barricades and the disappointment in the negotiations and mainstream politics. This subjectivity refers to the broader grassroots activism manifesting itself through several actions, the construction of a *communal identity* and the need for *direct action*.

In a process of *aspirations mapping* referring to the contested *common space*, an overlap of contradictory interests has been revealed. Employing the OBZ movement as a case study, three concentric circles represented three different dynamics operating in the same space, highlighting once again this rhetoric question: how common is common space? The three different dynamics were the bufferers, the neighbourhood and the public discourse (including dominant

rhetorics and state power). The imaginary dialogue I have constructed among the three dynamics, presented a contested urban space, where the different groups and their scenarios confront. In that way, an emerging *right to the city* constitutes the spark for the debate on the production of common space and in parallel becomes the demand each side desires to monopolise.

Space reflects and reproduces aspects of social life, including politics, economy, urban policies, moral issues and matters of social behaviour. In this debate, all different *shades of common* unfold, confirming the idea that common space is perceived in different and contradictory ways and therefore continuously contested. In this context I remark eight points that represent many more shades of common: common versus shared; common versus bi-communal; common versus rapprochement; common identities and commonalities ;common beyond the Cyprus Problem; common beyond politics; common versus institutional; common within society versus marginalisation.

Finally, there are *borders beyond the border*. Migrants constitute a social body that has a significant presence in the old city of Nicosia. However, they have their own special characteristics regarding the socio-spatial context of the division. I argue that migrants' presence represents a lack of emotional involvement and memory referring to the conflict, while bringing new socio-spatial elements in the urban context. A mapping of their presence constitutes actually a mapping of contemporary "buffer zones" in terms of ethnic, racial, class, gender, religious and cultural separations. However, as already stated, multiple divisions create the need and the chance for multiple "bridgings". This is a task beyond the demolition of the Green Line, though.

Opening the debate

Beyond the case study: Transferability of methods and findings

In the introductory chapter, I argued that all cities have certain visible and invisible divisions that reflect class, cultural, religious, gender or other separations in socio-spatial terms. Although cities like Nicosia are symbols of urban conflict, due to their visible physical partition, there is no urban context that does not include multiple forms of division. In this sense, the thesis aims to

provide methods, findings and conclusions that could be applied in other cases, too. Especially in times of high concern regarding the civil society and the community-led practices, it is important to extract transferable and sustainable research output. However, my research process reveals certain preconditions towards adequate transferable results.

Cross-sectoral cooperation is needed in order to “bridge” different scales of governance and different spheres. There is a need for cross-sectoral structures and cooperation among the public (municipalities, regions, etc), the private (certain) and the civil sectors (NGOs, organisations, grassroots activism, etc). Apart from that, cross-sectoral cooperation has to be perceived also in terms of networks. For instance, there is a lot to be done in order to link the academia (and especially academic activism) to the communities, in a way that research would be *reattributed* to those from whom it derives.

Secondly, the *knowhow and use of technological tools and media* can provide parallel input, output and communication tools that are necessary in order to “spread the message”, in a sustainable renewable way, to broader audiences. I am suggesting the creation of multi-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, collective platforms towards a renewable “self-mapping” that will present socio-spatial development periodically, beyond separated single “moments”.

Thirdly, *community-led innovation* in terms of a process toolkit is more than vital. There are exceptional methods that link site-specific research to art, technology, communication and empathy-driven practices. Nicosia, for instance, can become a flagship for further innovation, while other cases can contribute to a better understanding of the case study.

The current thesis attempted to provide experimental tools to explore multiple divisions and dynamics and secondly to trigger a larger research “brainstorming” that could make this panoramic view of urban contexts and paradoxes true. It is safe to argue that there is a fruitful field for investigation and action. However there are certain gaps and open questions to tackle.

Gaps, open questions and further research on the Social Space of Conflict

Referring to gaps regarding the present thesis, I refer to a missing part of my research: the Buffer Zone. Although, due to practical reasons, I did not had the

chance to thoroughly explore this part of the old city, it would be interesting to *map this land within a land* through the stories and socio-spatial practices of those, who inhabit it for more than five decades. In this sense, it would be a significant step for further research to enter the restricted zone, interview key-persons and find out how they perceive and experience their unique *home* within the linear space of the UN-controlled buffer zone. In this way, I am referring to a “dig” under the visibility of conflict, while providing a “bird-perspective” of the buffer zone as if one *reads* it from a higher watchtower.

What are the everyday rhythms in this no-man’s land? What are the personal and collective spaces produced? How do these socio-spatial practices interact with the “world” outside? Where do multiple images of this space meet? Finally, how can a space function both as a non-place for some and a space of memories and lived experience for others? Spending time in Ledra Palace and the UN- buffer zone would offer the chance to tell the story of the linear gap that functions both as a wound and a seam.

Additionally, this thesis employed the divided city of Nicosia as a case study in order to actually make an experiment. The core of this experiment was a process of “digging” under the surface of the visible urban environment towards a space made out of memories, senses, smells, traumas, collective actions, dreams, thrills and ghosts. However, as I have already claimed, the parameter of *time* is a crucial factor in the process of spatialisation. The current thesis could only offer a “moment” of a process referring to a restricted period of fieldwork. Therefore, it would be more than interesting to repeat and enrich research and *mapping processes* in different periods of time and especially close to significant socio-political events. However, at the same time, only a future reunification and *time* are able to confirm my hypothesis that invisible borders will replace the visible ones.

Finally, combining the above to the need for transferable output, I would underline the need for *comparative* and joint studies. How can the case of Nicosia and the methods suggested influence the understanding of other case studies? In which ways can the research findings be translated into urban policy practices? I argue that it is more than important to lift research from an “in vitro” level over an “in vivo” application and experience.

Epilogue: The panoramic view - a quest for wholeness

Why are we so amazed when lifted up on the highest floor of a skyscraper? Why would we wish for a trip to the universe or spend hours on Google Earth journeys? Michel de Certeau (1984:92) asks:

“To what erotics of knowledge does the ecstasy of reading such a cosmos belong? Having taken a voluptuous pleasure in it, I wonder what is the source of its pleasure of “seeing the whole”, of looking down on, totalising the most immoderate of human texts” (de Certeau, 1984: 92).

Nicosia *is* divided when one “writes” the city, while operating as an entity when one “reads” the city. From the perspective of a wanderer, a city of “dead-ends” unfolds, highlighting socio-spatial discontinuity due to the absurd route followed by the Green Line. At the same time, the perspective of a “bird” would have another image of the city, as a whole, surrounded by the cyclical embrace of the Venetian Walls, a historical monument both sides share referring to their former entity. In this sense, Nicosia cries for a “bird” perspective, for a “reading” of space from high up in order to find again its absent totality.

Are we ready to fly?



*Flying Balloons Girl, Banksy
Wall on the West Bank, Israel*

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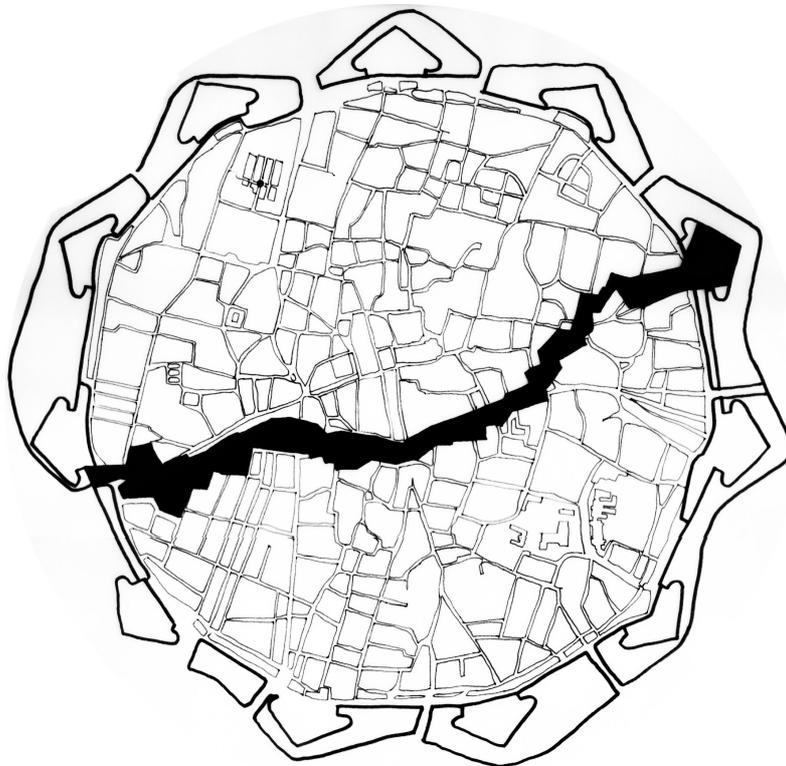
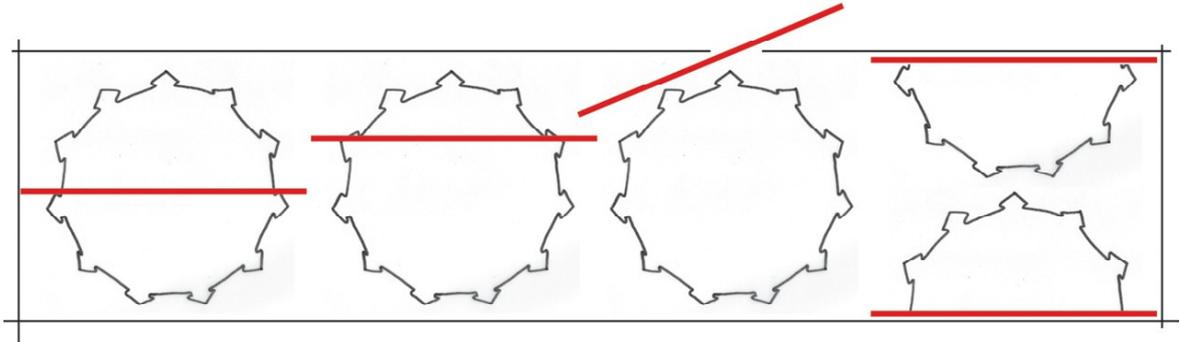
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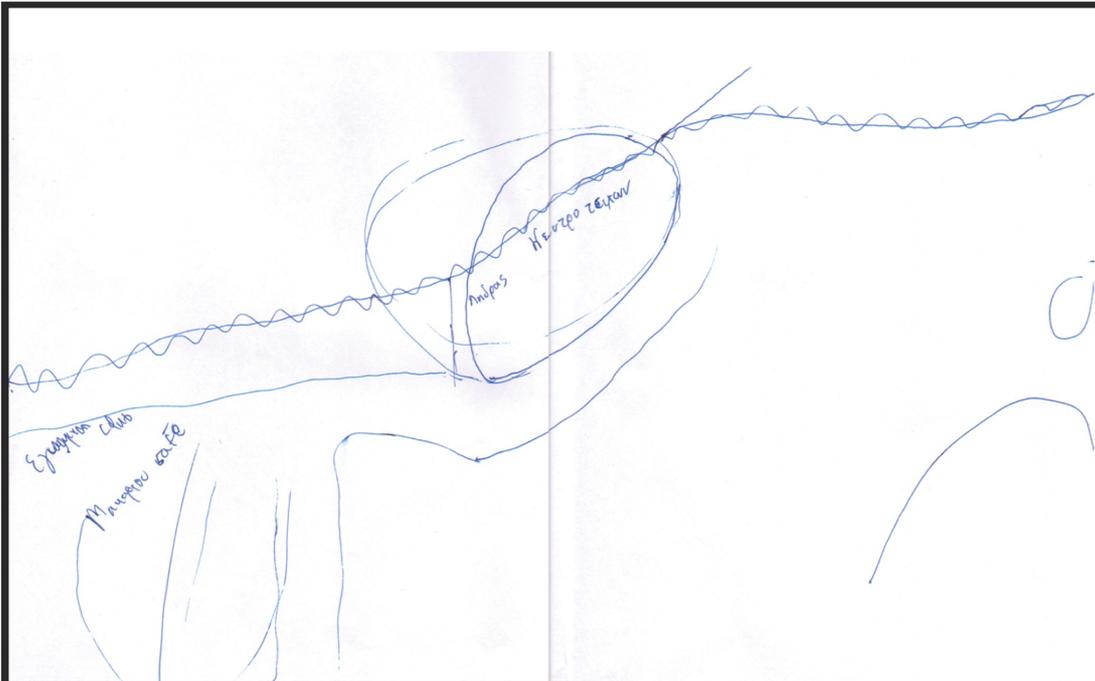
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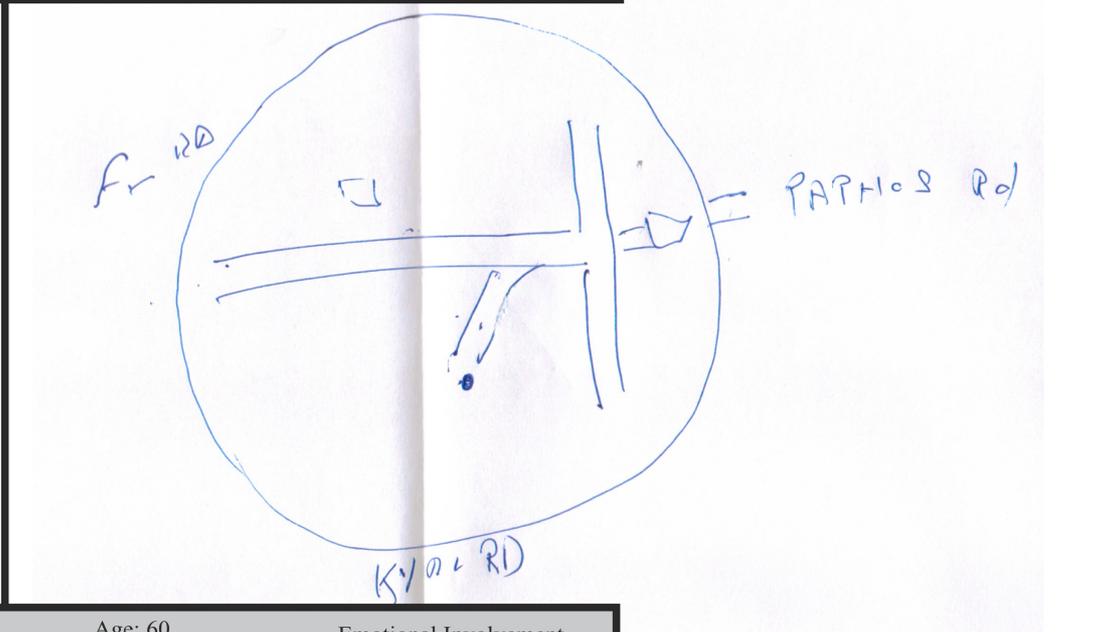
ANNEX I

(mental maps/ nationality-age-gender-education-displacement variables/
emotional involvement/ interaction with the "other")

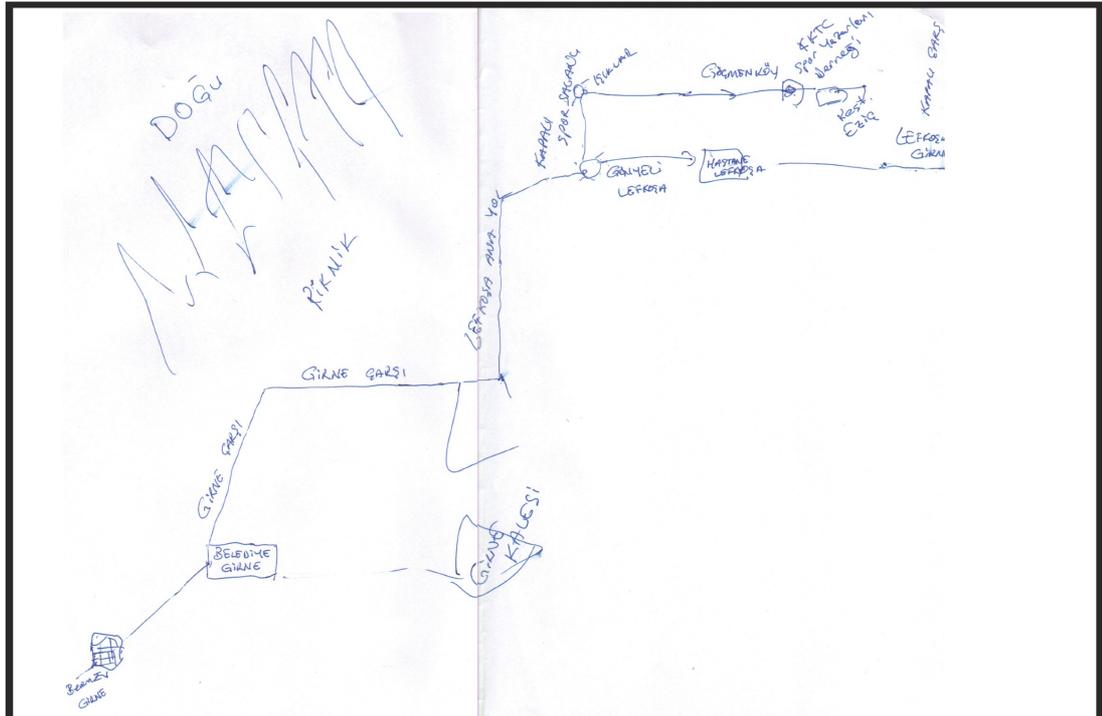




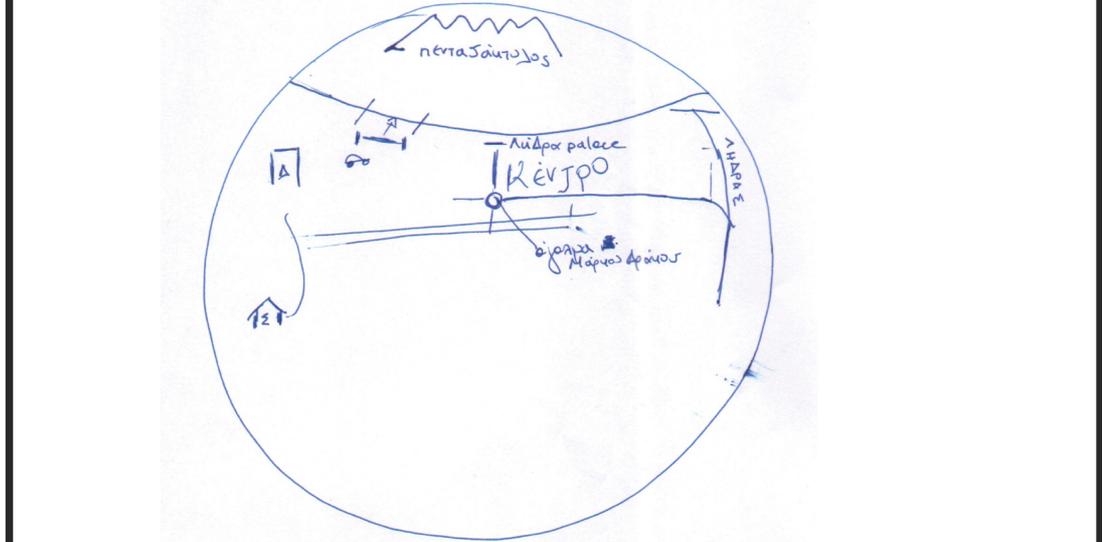
GC	Age: 22	Emotional Involvement
	Gender: Male	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
INT 23	Displacement: NO	Interaction with the "other"
	Education: University	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5



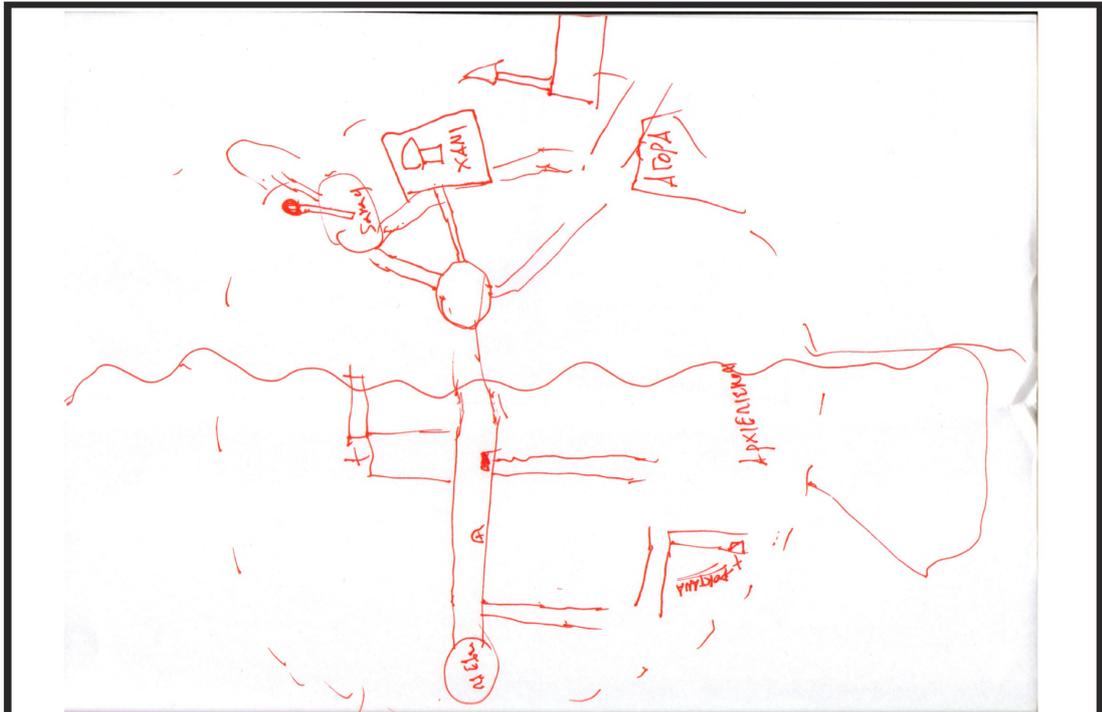
TC	Age: 60	Emotional Involvement
	Gender: Male	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
INT 34	Displacement: NO	Interaction with the "other"
	Education: Primary	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5



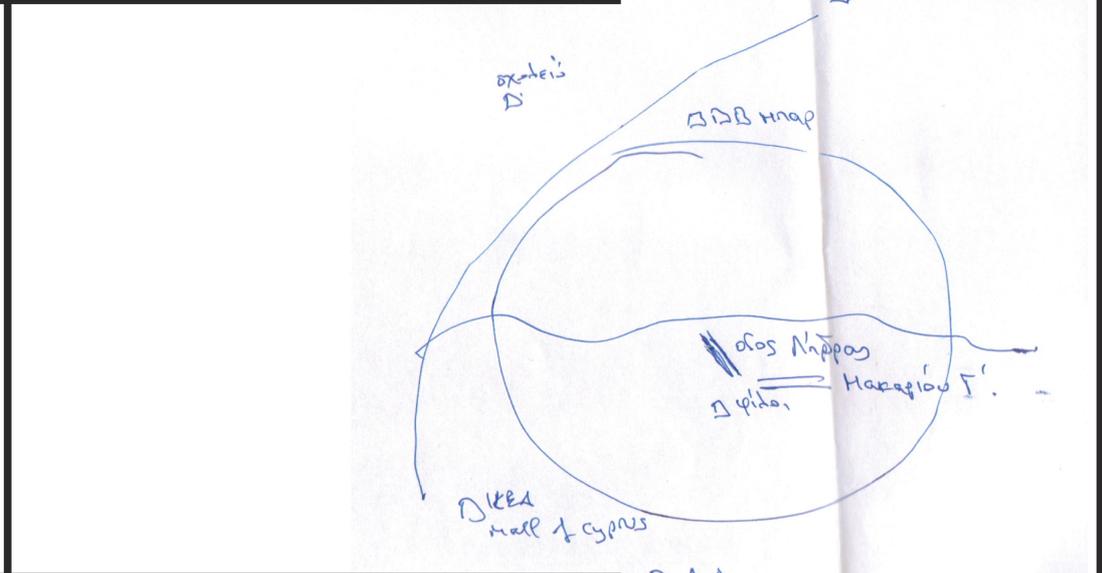
TC INT 15	Age: 42	Emotional Involvement	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
	Gender: Male	Interaction with the "other"	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
	Displacement: NO		
	Education: High School		



GC INT 14	Age: 23	Emotional Involvement	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
	Gender: Female	Interaction with the "other"	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
	Displacement: YES		
	Education: University		



GC Age: 24 Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Gender: Male
 INT 9 Displacement: NO Interaction with the "other" 1 5
 Education: Bachelor

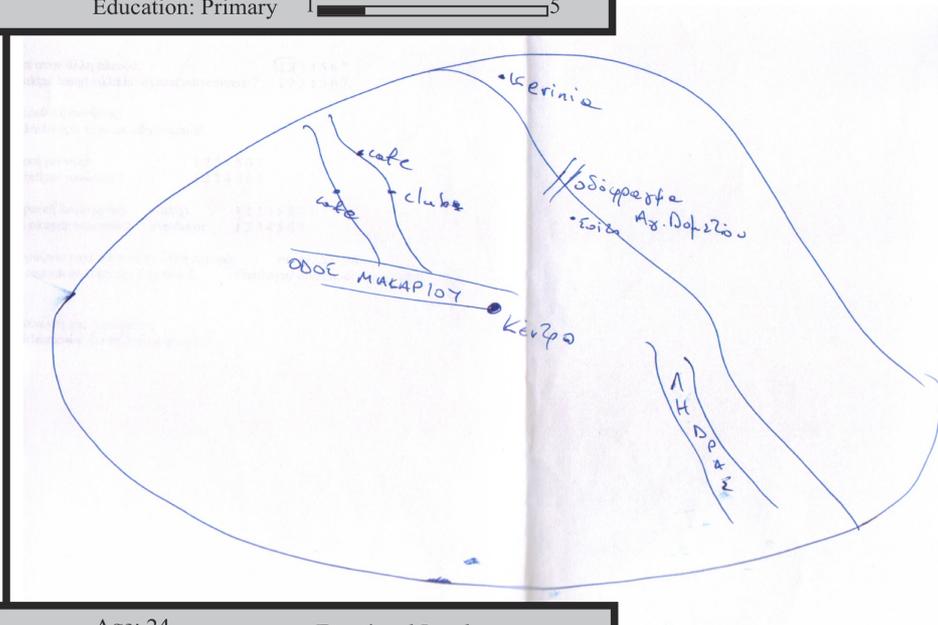


TC Age: 36 Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Gender: Male
 INT 22 Displacement: NO Interaction with the "other" 1 5
 Education: MA



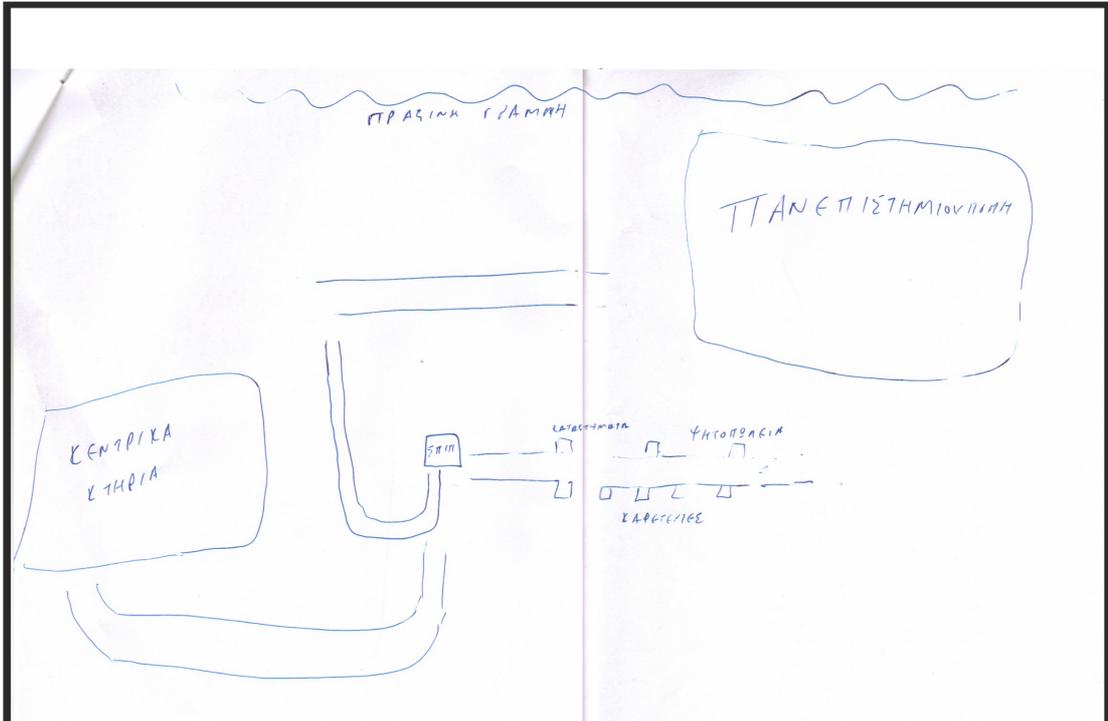
GC Age: 60
 Gender: Male
 INT 21 Displacement: YES
 Education: Primary

Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Interaction with the "other" 1 5

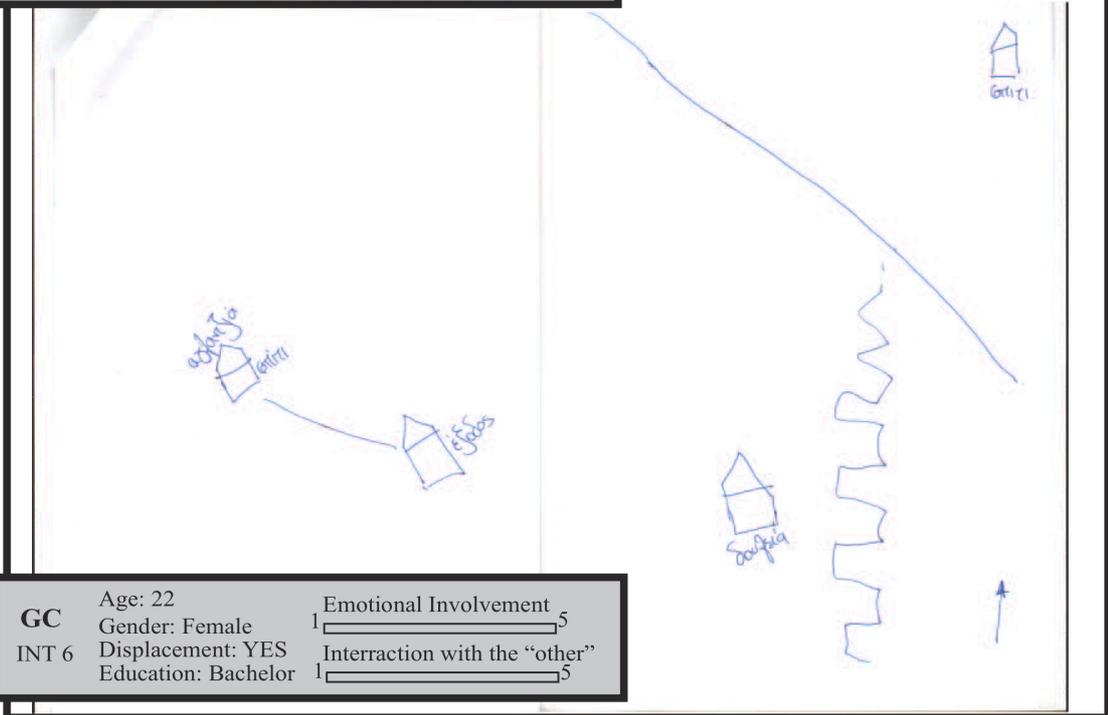


GC Age: 24
 Gender: Female
 INT 25 Displacement: NO
 Education: Bachelor

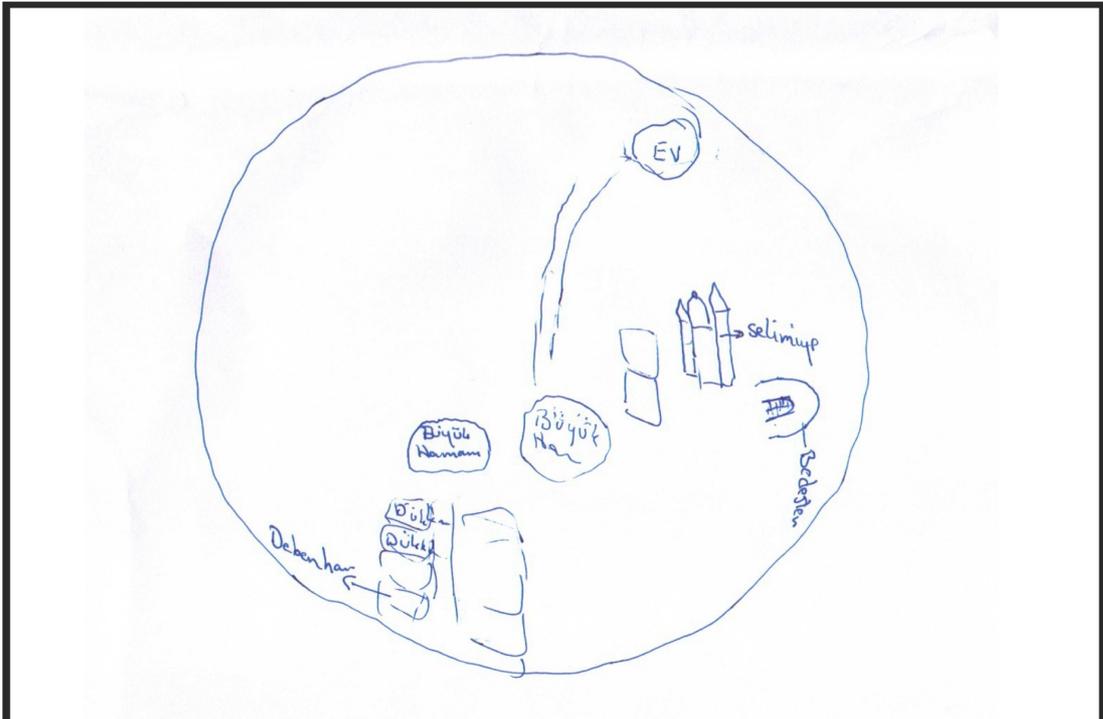
Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Interaction with the "other" 1 5



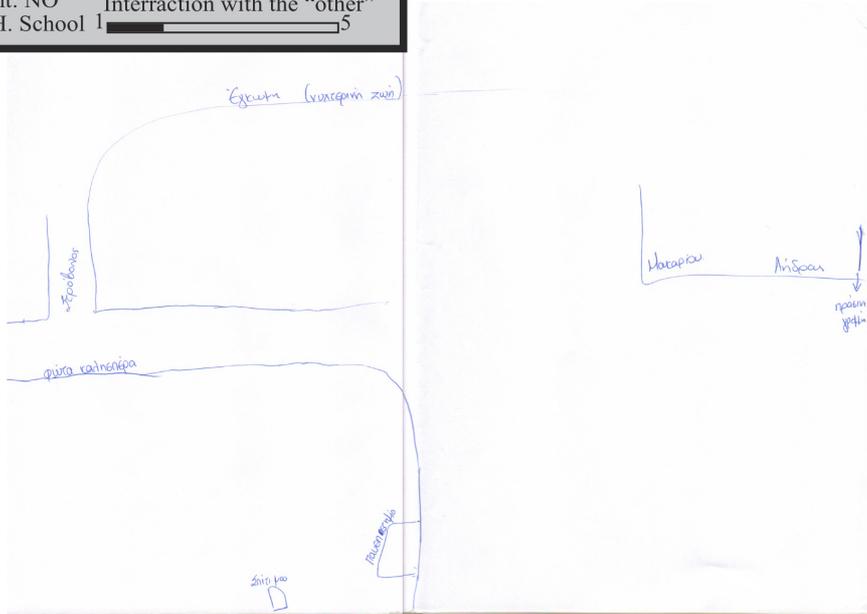
GC Age: 23 Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Gender: Female
 INT 26 Displacement: YES Interaction with the "other" 1 5
 Education: High School



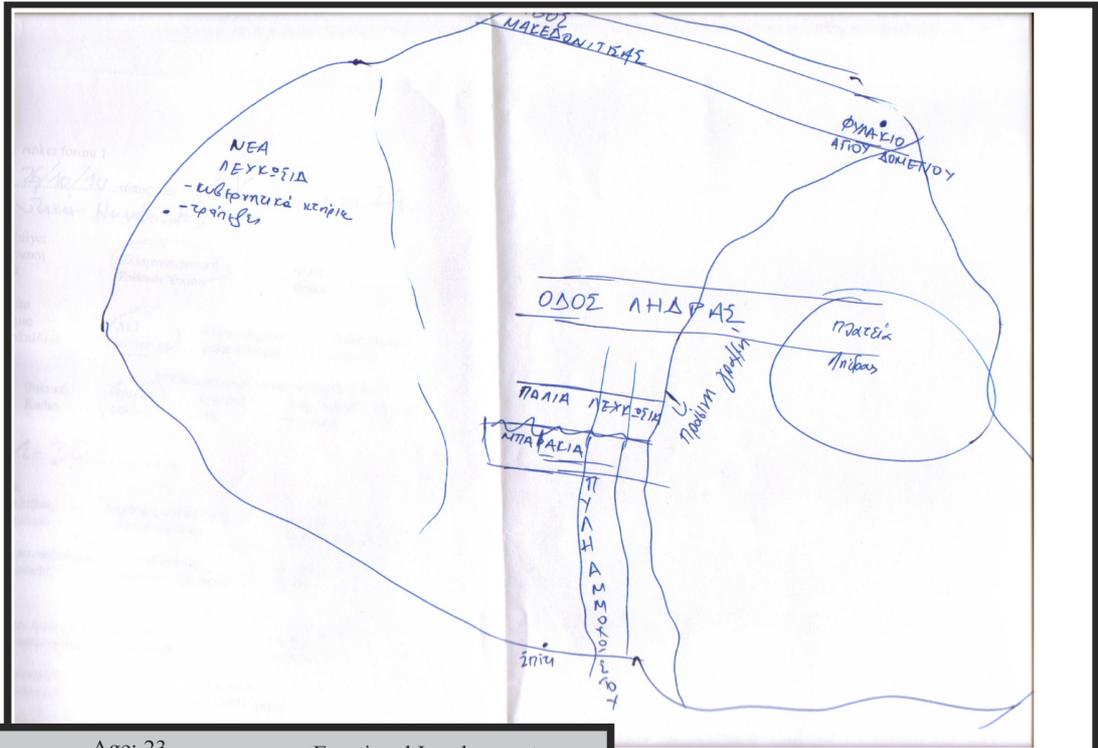
GC Age: 22 Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Gender: Female
 INT 6 Displacement: YES Interaction with the "other" 1 5
 Education: Bachelor



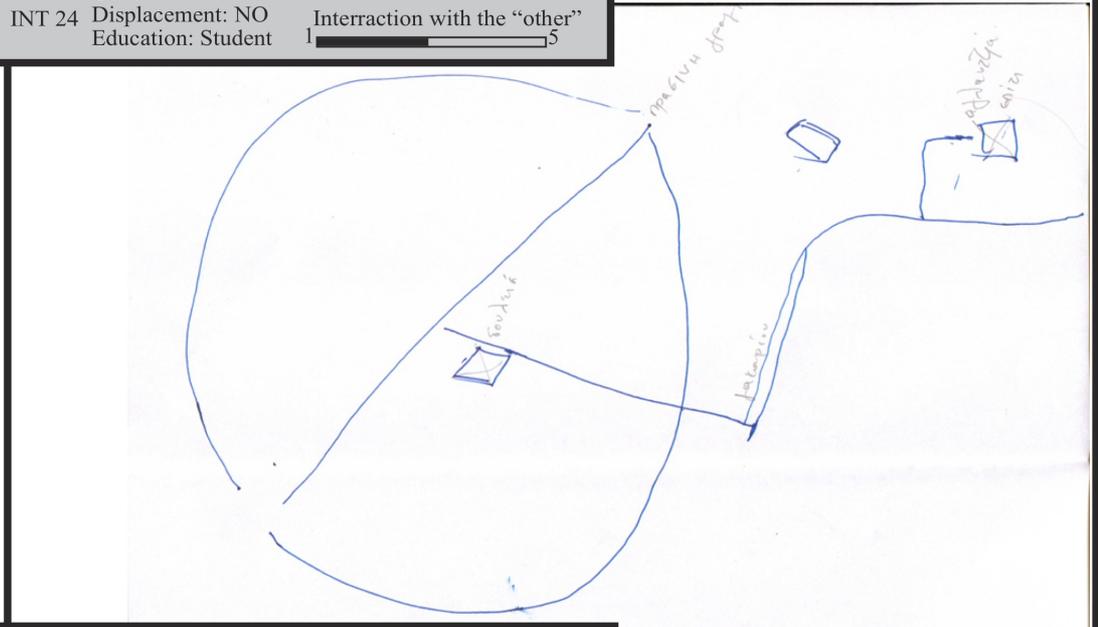
TC INT 30	Age: 52	Emotional Involvement	1	5
	Gender: Female	Interaction with the "other"	1	5
	Displacement: NO			
	Education: H. School			



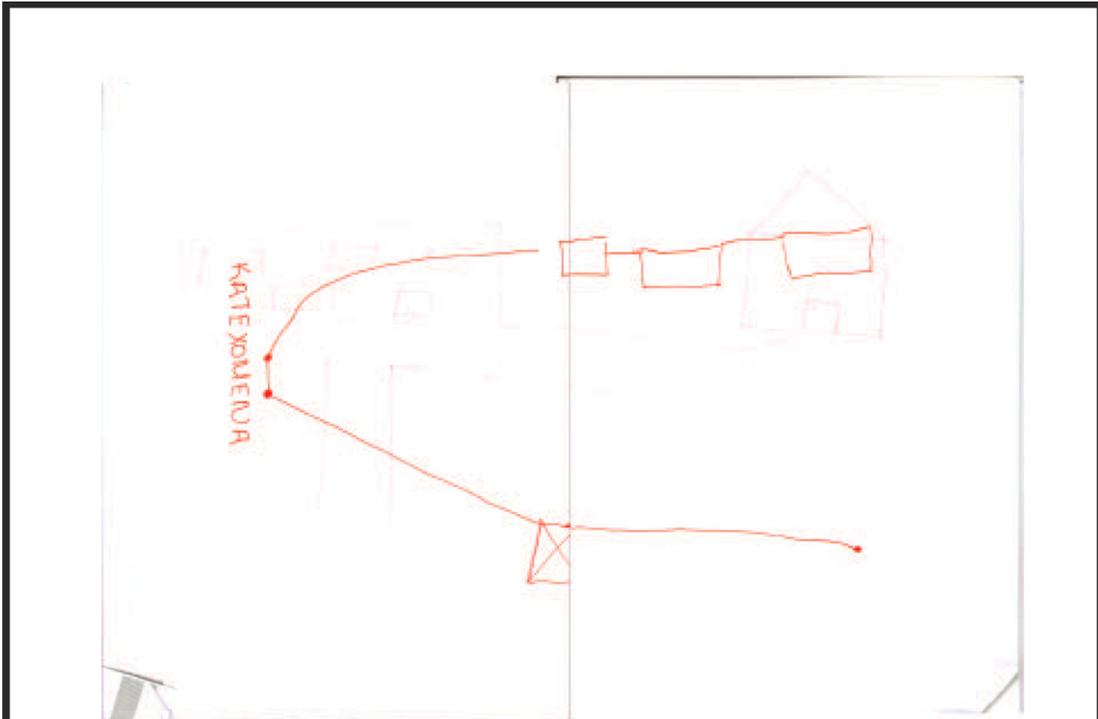
TC INT 22	Age: 22	Emotional Involvement	1	5
	Gender: Female	Interaction with the "other"	1	5
	Displacement: YES			
	Education: Student			



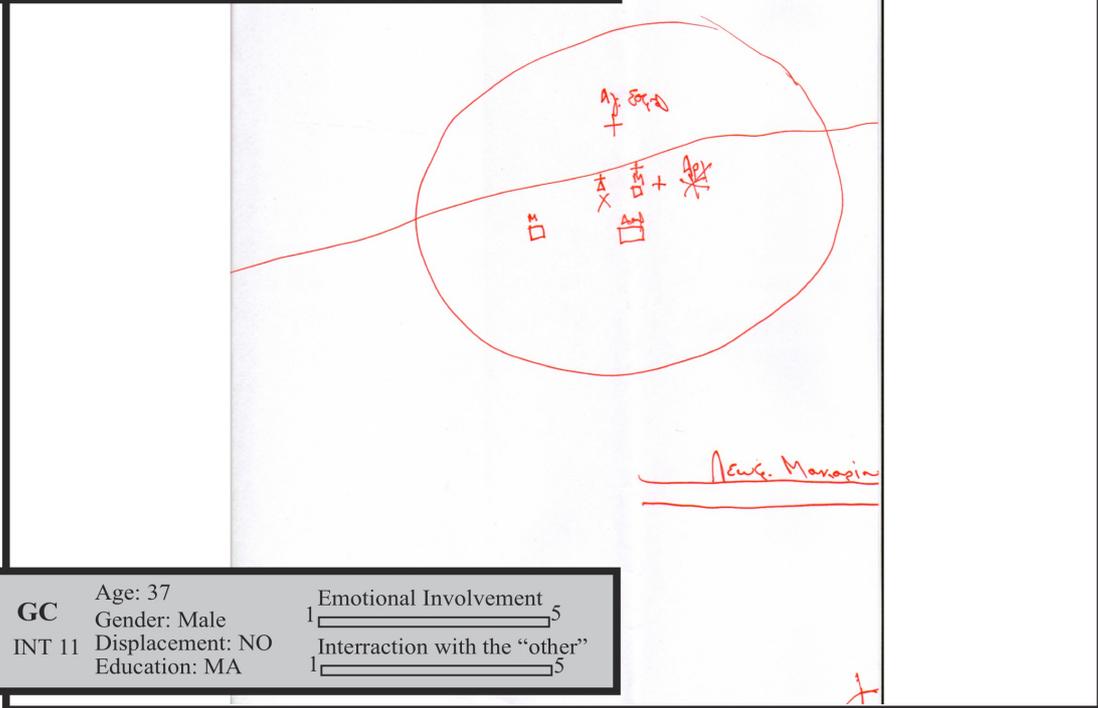
GC Age: 23 Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Gender: Male
 INT 24 Displacement: NO Interaction with the "other" 1 5
 Education: Student



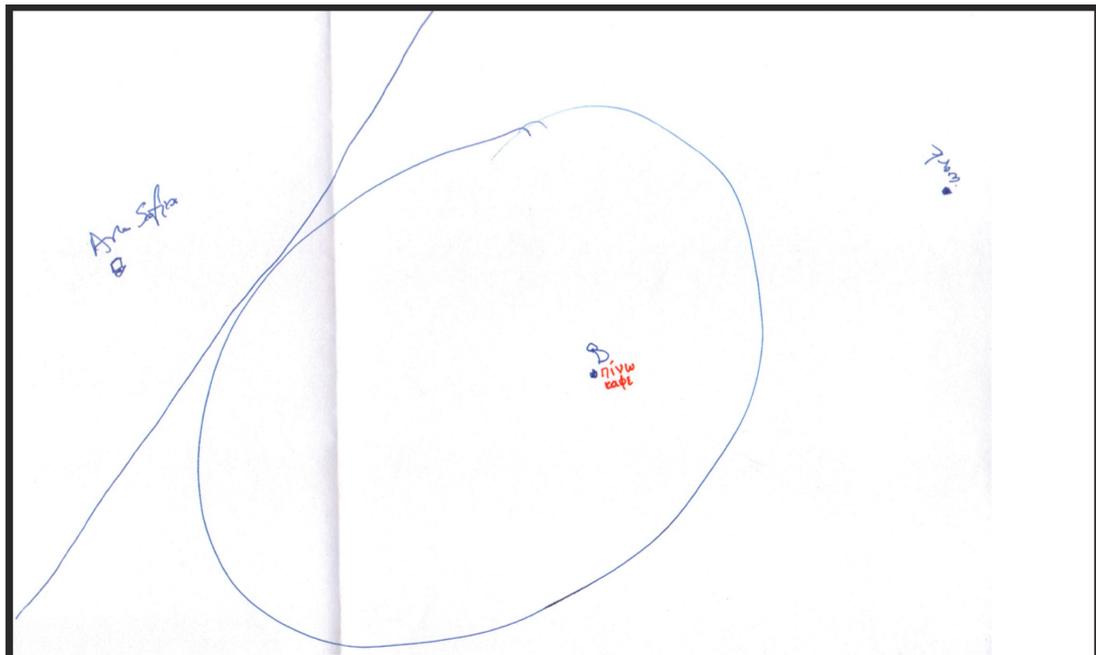
GC Age: 64 Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Gender: Male
 INT 3 Displacement: YES Interaction with the "other" 1 5
 Education: Primary



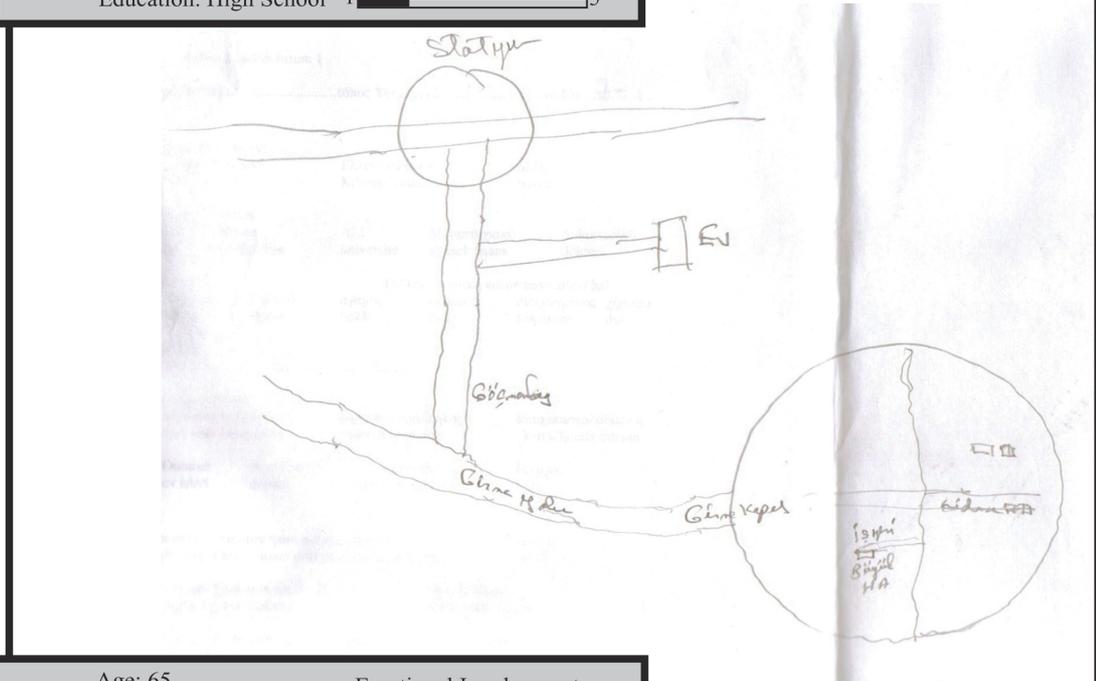
GC Age: 20 Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Gender: Female
 INT 10 Displacement: NO Interaction with the "other" 1 5
 Education: Student



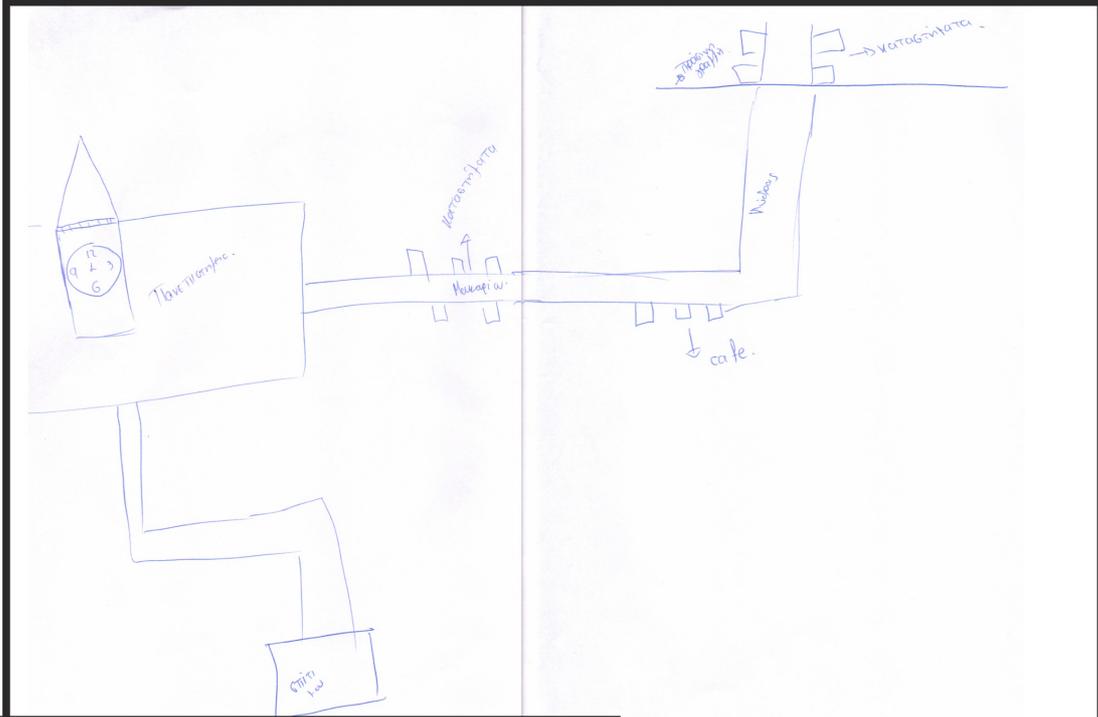
GC Age: 37 Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Gender: Male
 INT 11 Displacement: NO Interaction with the "other" 1 5
 Education: MA



GC	Age: 51	Emotional Involvement
	Gender: Male	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
INT 1	Displacement: NO	Interaction with the "other"
	Education: High School	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

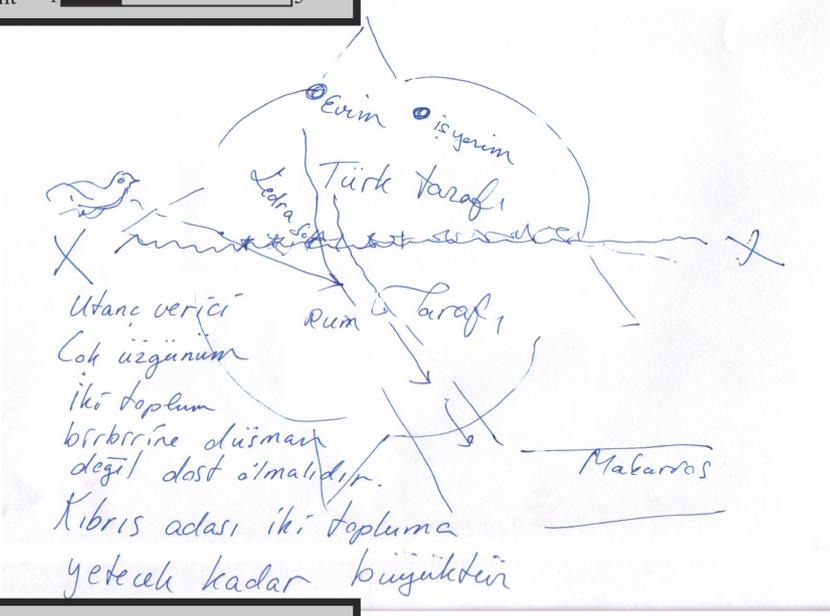


TC	Age: 65	Emotional Involvement
	Gender: Male	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
INT 7	Displacement: YES	Interaction with the "other"
	Education: University	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5



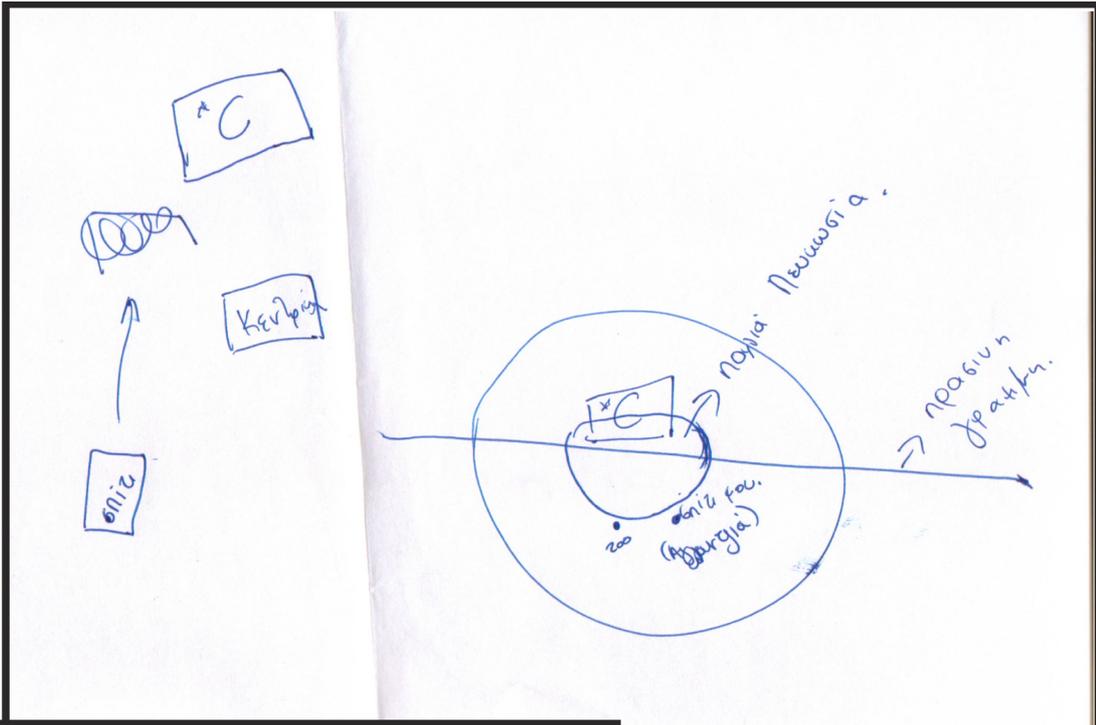
GC Age: 20
 Gender: Female
 INT 28 Displacement: YES
 Education: Student

Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Interaction with the "other" 1 5



TC Age: 61
 Gender: Female
 INT 31 Displacement: YES
 Education: University

Emotional Involvement 1 5
 Interaction with the "other" 1 5



GC	Age: 20	Emotional Involvement	1	5
	Gender: Female			
INT 27	Displacement: YES	Interaction with the "other"	1	5
	Education: Student			

ANNEX II
(Interviews with locals)

date..... place..... No.

A

(A) Nationality

Turkish Cypriot Greek Cypriot Other

(B) Education

primary secondary bachelor master PhD

(C) Gender

male female

(D) Marital status

single married divorced widow(er)

(E) Age

...-14 15-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-...

(F) Occupation

employed (private sector) employed (public sector) self-employed
homemaker retired student unemployed

Q1 What is your personal and family history regarding the division of Cyprus?

(notes)

B

Are you/ your family a refugee? Yes No *parents: Yes No

On which side have you been born? North South

Was your place mixed? Yes No

Do you have a missing/ killed person in your family? Yes No / Missing Killed/ Number:

Have you killed people during the conflicts/ war? Yes No

Do you have property on the other side? Yes No * Where is your former home?

Who lives in your former house today?

Do you live in a refugee's house? Yes No

On which side of the city do you work? North South

What is your employer's nationality? TC GC Other

QII What are your personal relations with the other side?
(notes)

How often do you travel to the other side? 1 2 3 4 5

C

For what reasons?

When was the last time you traveled to the other side?

When is the next time you plan to cross?

Which crossing do you use?

Do you have friends on the other side? 1 2 3 4 5

Would you like to have friends on the other side? 1 2 3 4 5

Do you have colleagues/ partners on the other side? Yes No

Have you ever had a lover on the other side? Yes No

Would you ever marry someone from the other side? Yes No Don't know

Would you let your children marry someone from the other side? 1 2 3 4 5

Which is the crucial point of separation between your side and the other one?

Which is the crucial point of contact between your side and the other one?

Do you speak the other language? 1 2 3 4 5

Do you listen TC/ GC music? Yes No 1 2 3 4 5

Do you read TC/ GC news? Yes No 1 2 3 4 5

If possible, would you ever buy a house on the other side? 1 2 3 4 5

QIII Do you support Cyprus' reunification?
(notes)

How did you vote for Annan Plan? Yes No Other

D

Do you support bi-communal cooperation? 1 2 3 4 5

Have you ever been a member of bi-communal initiatives? Yes (*which one?) No

Do you believe that the island will be reunified again? Yes No 1 2 3 4 5

What keeps the island still divided?

Which party do you support? Name No answer

Do you often travel to Greece/ Turkey? 1 2 3 4 5

Do you have friends in Greece/ Turkey? 1 2 3 4 5

Do you support the opening of the barricades? 1 2 3 4 5

QIV What is your relation with the Old City?
(notes)

Where do you live now?

E

Do you own the house? Own Rent Other

Did you live here before 1974? Yes No (when did you come?)

Did you leave your home after 1974? Yes No (when did you come back?)

How often do you come to the old city? 1 2 3 4 5

What's your favourite place in the city?

What' your favourite place on the other side?