(RE)MAPPING NICOSIA

WOMEN'S AGENCY IN THE CONTESTED WALLED CITY

ARETI KOTSONI

Contents

ABSTRACT

Nicosia, an ancient walled city in Cyprus, is the only divided capital worldwide. After the Turkish invasion in 1974, Nicosia was divided by a buffer zone into two ethnic groups, the Turkish-Cypriots in the north and the Greek-Cypriots in the south. This conflict led to forced displacement, urban segregation, and human rights violation, especially for local women.

After the opening of Nicosia's buffer zone in 2003, the interaction of Cypriot women sparked multicommunal actions for peace over Cyprus' conflict. Despite being oppressed and underrepresented, Cypriot women[1] use Nicosia's divided space as urban commons to challenge the conflict's nationalist status quo that wants the two main ethnic groups to hate and fear each other. Women's actions shift the geopolitical focus of Nicosia's territorial conflict to a social territory reproduced by their bodies while they navigate their everyday lives in the contested city. Unfortunately, women's agency and action for peace are still invisible locally. This research aims to create a counternarrative over Nicosia's frozen conflict by showcasing women's contribution toward peace.

Keywords: Nicosia, conflict, buffer zone, gender, urban space

First, the study maps several organizations, initiatives, and events where women are primarily involved. Through these actions, women from all sides come together in the urban space of Nicosia and address the conflict. This research maps these spaces in the city, to understand their proximity and women's bodily experiences and relationships to these spaces. Through this mapping, I advocate that despite many of these events and organizations being informal and community-generated, they positively influence the state of the conflict, the territorial division, and the multi-communal relationships. The countermapping of this report also includes archival material, photographs, text, data, and other elements that convey personal and local experiences that are often excluded from the nationalistic narratives of the Cyprus conflict.

1. In this report, the term Cypriot women or women refers to female-identified people in Nicosia from Cyprus's two main ethnic groups, the Turkish-Cypriots and the Greek-Cypriots. For purposes of more targeted research, I avoided including other minoritized groups (e.g., queer, migrants, etc.). Minoritized are the groups that are actively diminished and oppressed by more the dominant social groups, that hold greater socioeconomic and political power (D'Ignazio and Klein 2020b, 7). Women in Nicosia are both minorities, meaning that they are comprised of fewer people, and minoritized, meaning that their perspectives are regularly dismissed as irrelevant.

World map

Cyprus
110m graticules 30
110m graticules 10

0   1000km   2000km

Reseach

REmapping Nicosia
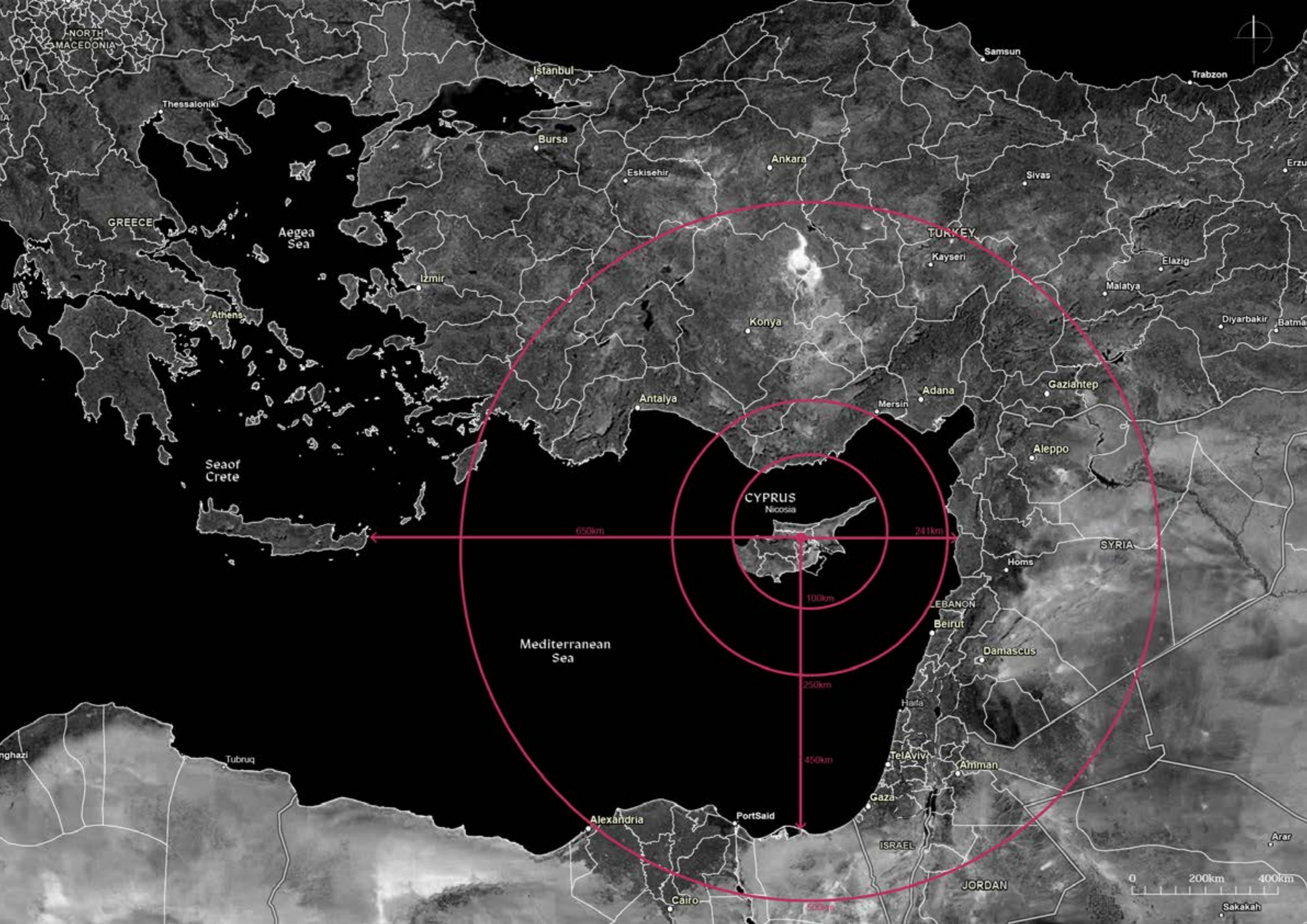
Nicosia is the world's last divided capital and Europe's last divided city in physical and socio-political terms. It is the capital, administrative center, and most urbanized city of Cyprus (Brooke n.d.). Historically, Nicosia has been the bridge for solving the Cyprus conflict, which is internationally referred to as the "Cyprus problem" (Cockburn 2004, 10). Cyprus is a site of nationalism, militarism, violence, and displacement that oppresses women in many ways. The conflict has been well examined, but its gendered aspect has never been raised in public (Hadjipavlou 2010, 3). Women's perspectives, experiences, and agency are missing from the conflict's hegemonic nationalist narratives.

Before the division, the two main ethnic groups in Cyprus, the Turkish-Cypriots (TC) in the north and the Greek-Cypriots (GC) in the south, coexisted in peace, despite their social, political, and cultural differences. Colonial forces and the ethnic division between TC and GC resulted in nationalistic sovereignty claims, which led to Cyprus's territorial division in 1974 to reduce the tension between the two communities (Brooke n.d.). After the division of Nicosia, official attempts for peace negotiation,

bi-communal cooperation, and conflict resolution were unsuccessful, with no tangible results. Such attempts began in 1978, including public policies, bi-communal projects, and Master Plans that propose top-down intervention in the urban space of Nicosia. According to Maria Hadjipavlou, the gender of people involved in solving the Cypriot conflict are all upper-middle-class men (Hadjipavlou 2010, 75). That implies, among others, the exclusion and marginalization of the female presence, voices, and perspectives. It also indicates how democracy, representation, rights, and participation operate in Cyprus. Trying to imagine a different, united city and society while excluding the perspective and experience of almost half of the population (50.8 percent of the GC and 50.4 percent of the TC are women) (Hadjipavlou 2010, 75) cannot be achieved. Despite their marginalization, women found alternative ways to unite in Nicosia's walled city and its margins to raise their voices for peace.

After the crossing's opening in 2003, women from both sides came together after almost thirty years to organize movements and activities in Nicosia's urban space. They use

the urban space as commons for connection, collaboration, and interaction. Nicosia's walled city represents a political space indicative of democratic action on a local and national scale. The use of the divided space by women challenges the nationalist perspective of the conflict, instigating hate and fear among the major ethnic groups (Papadakis 2006, 3). Despite their political repression, women's multi-communal initiatives brought international attention to the Cyprus problem (Herodotus 1987). Their solidarity groups, marches, and projects focus on bottom-up interventions and participatory decision-making (Gender Advisory Team n.d.). Their initiatives inspired other multi-communal programs that engage citizens across class, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. Such initiatives include demonstrations, lectures, workshops, art, and festivals. The way women use Nicosia's urban space shows how borderlands act as experimental places for different ethnic groups to reunite and reclaim these places and their identities.

Nicosia, Cyprus

Turkish-Cypriots

Buffer zone

Greek-Cypriots
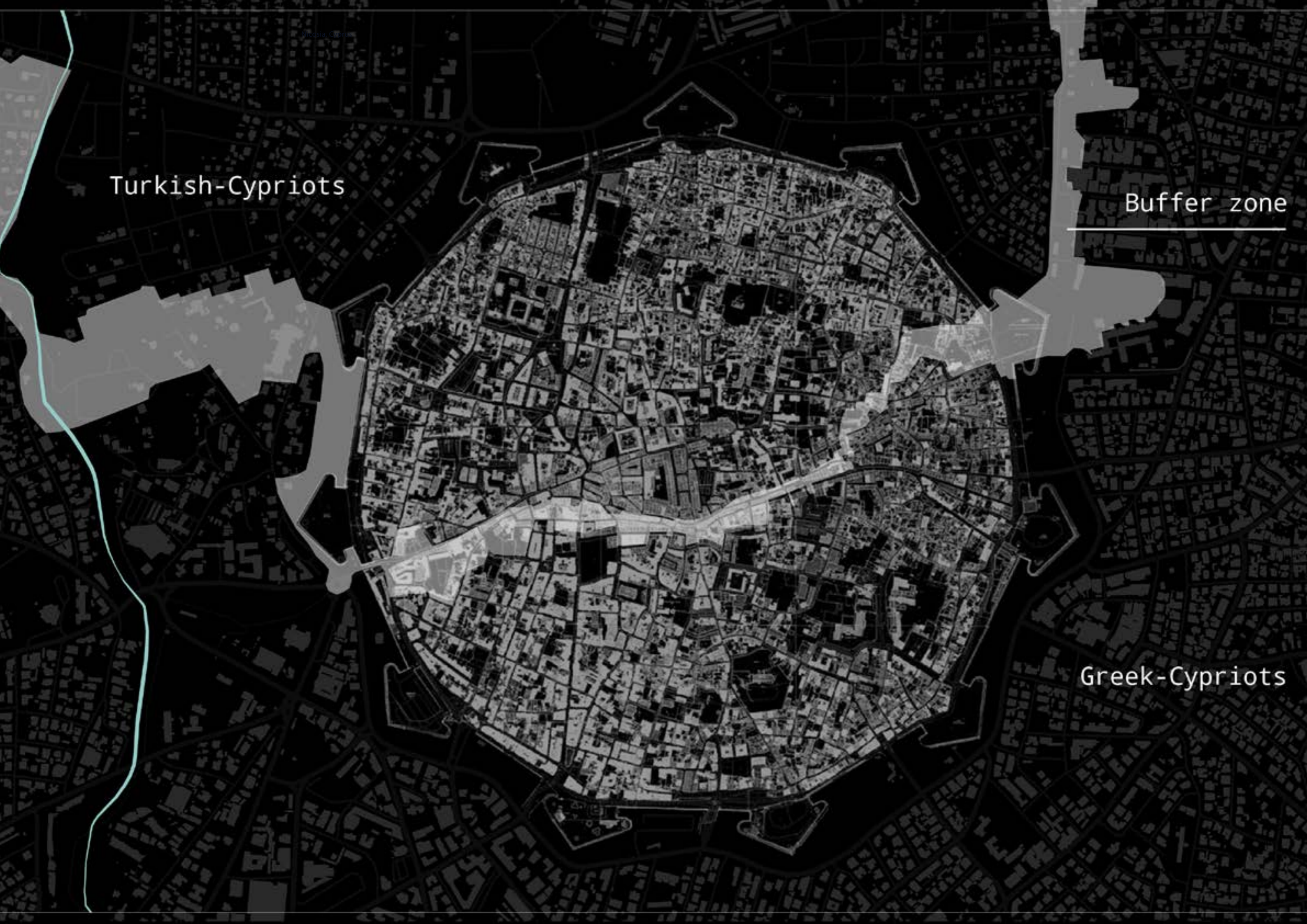
Women's Political Agency

and Advocacy for Peace

PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS

This project maps multi-communal activities in space to highlight women's political agency and advocacy for peace and similarly highlight the regenerative spatial quality that Nicosia's buffer zone holds. Understanding the spatial dynamics of Nicosia's urban space can help designers and planners better understand the transformative nature of the conflict and how the aforementioned actions can exert political pressure to affect it. In this project, maps are used as a tool to visualize feminist geographies (Mattern 2021) and emphasize women's contribution to local political change as invisible social actors. Traditionally, maps are a political tool instrumentalized by the status quo to distort information and enforce social control. Maps can "produce worlds instead of simply reflecting them" (Pavlovskaya 2018, 52), and in the case of this project, they can render visibility to women's agency in space. This project includes mapping public and private places for women's interactions (e.g., community spaces, markets, cafés, and religious facilities).

While conducting a literature review for this project and doing remote fieldwork before I visited Cyprus, I was led to examine mostly bicommunal buildings in the buffer zone that host many women-led multi communal initiatives. I also studied five public spaces of bi-communal interaction in Nicosia's north and south. After my fieldwork, however, I realized that these are the "clean cut" spaces where all the visible and funded multi-communal projects occur. I later discovered that many other initiatives are less visible and known and which take place in different parts of the city. I found them by following their traces in the urban space (e.g., graffiti, printed manifestos, and posters in Nicosia's old center) and asking locals about their meaning and origin. These signs in the urban space reveal the actions of groups in areas where women navigate daily (e.g., the buffer zone, the street, and the moats around the Venetian walls).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- In what spaces do women have agency?
- How can visibility to women's views and opinions open up alternatives to decision-making?
- How can architecture serve as a means of order and control?

- What characteristics of Nicosia's Urban environment enable women's meetings?
- What elements (e.g., materiality) of the space connect women from the different communities?
- How does the space act as a safe place for women's actions?
- What do women's actions and advocacy take?
- Are women's activities contributing to Cyprus' frozen conflict? If so, in what way?
- How do Cypriot women somatically experience urban space?
- How have their initiatives attracted international attention to the Cyprus conflict?

- How can planning and design create social freedom for women?
- How do they claim space in the city? How have their activities made the buffer zone more porous, and how has the buffer zone affected their actions?
- How have the buffer zone and the walled city protected them?
- How can the socio-spatial dynamic in the buffer zone help designers better articulate an urbanistic borderland of the future? Can the example of this buffer zone help us reconceptualize this liminal zone?

I started this project with the assumption that Cypriot women in Nicosia are oppressed because of male dominance, religion, and war. In the past five months, I have conducted extensive research to proof my hypotheses. My findings show that while women are oppressed, they have much more agency than what is publicly acknowledged. During my field research in Nicosia, I studied the urban space independently and by following oral histories that revealed to me local women's routines, neighborhoods, and the way they assemble in space.

My in-person field research, in-depth interviews, photographic material, diaries, and sketch maps created a psychogeographic map of the city that shows how local women perceive and navigate Nicosia.

"We crush fascism

and Patriarchy"

Graffiti by unknown artist in the south part of Nicosia saying "In our ovaries the family, in our ovaries religion too, we crush fascism and patriarchy."
Photo by the author

WHY HAVING A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Feminism, according to bell hooks, is a broad vision for the rights of all bodies, identities, voices, and viewpoints. (hooks 2000, xi) Hooks articulates, "feminism movement happens when groups of people come together with an organized strategy to take action to eliminate patriarchy." (hooks 2000, xi) Feminism is one most powerful movements of social justice. Spatial practices, including architecture, urbanism, and the arts, have never been neutral in social struggles. Quite the opposite, these spatial practices have been central to making visible, confronting, and naming social and spatial struggles. These struggles of everyday life may include equal access to spaces and resources and representation.

When these socio-spatial struggles are amplified due to wars and other conflicts, the power structures in the social setting become much more complex, and the role of spatial practices becomes more obscure. This research focuses on the complex socio-spatial environment of Nicosia, having a feminist perspective to examine how power (e.g., political hegemonies and social injustice) has been restricted and reconstructed through the city's spatial form and qualities. Having a feminist perspective to read the socio-spatial conflict of Nicosia is essential as it can help develop new forms of activism, dialogues, and alternative projections over the conflict. I view this research as a provocative reading of the frozen conflict and as food for thought on what knowledge and imaginaries are necessary for engendering social change in Nicosia's city and its societies. I believe that the first step toward change is to develop a more gender-sensitive reading of the current dispute.

WHY MAPPING
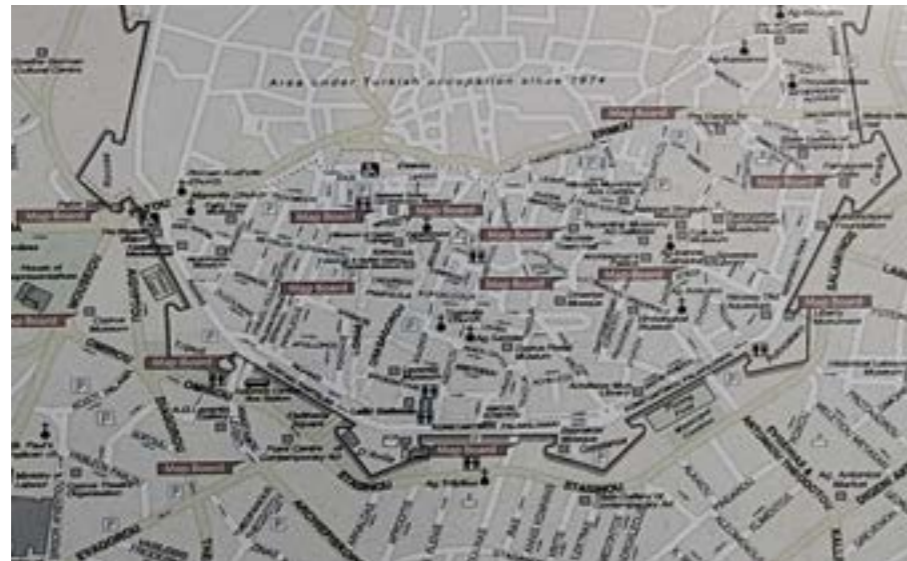
Mapping, according to Nishat Awan, can open the imagination to other possible futures, and for this, it has both criticality and agency in thinking 'otherwise.' Awan uses mapping to express the experiences of those who have journeyed across geographies and cultures. She articulates making maps as a situates, experiential and social practice. In the case of Nicosia, mapping can draw attention to invisible voices that have an important contribution to the conflict. Mapping can open up discourses on how the city's built environment and urbanization contributed to the conflict, how it affects it today, and how it can affect it in the future. Finally, the visualization of the spatial qualities of the city and how these affect women's lifes, can make it easier for designers, planners, and politicians to imagine alternative futures for the city of Nicosia and its conflict.

Maps have the ability to depict different realities by distilling and privileging some information over others. For this, maps are always political, and we should pay attention to what they represent, how they depict, and who makes them.

Histoty

CYPRUS

Cyprus is strategically located on the Eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea and in the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Cyprus' location made it regularly a target for conquerors and brought the island into the spotlight of international politics. Between 1571-1878 Cyprus was under Ottoman Empire rule. Under Ottoman rule, religion and culture created ethnic distinctions that privileged Muslim minorities and distinguished its interests from the traditionally Greek non-Muslim population. Social and commercial relations between the ethnic groups were open and active. During that time, distinct ethnic neighborhoods were developed in Nicosia, having TC residents primarily in the north and GC residents primarily in the south of the city. Nicosia's center (walled city) had a mixed commercial zones that tied the two residential quarters where the different ethnic groups coexisted (Calame, Charlesworth, and Woods 2011, 125).

Nicosia

0   25   50 km

Cyprus 1878

Greek Priests blessing the British Flag at Nicosia
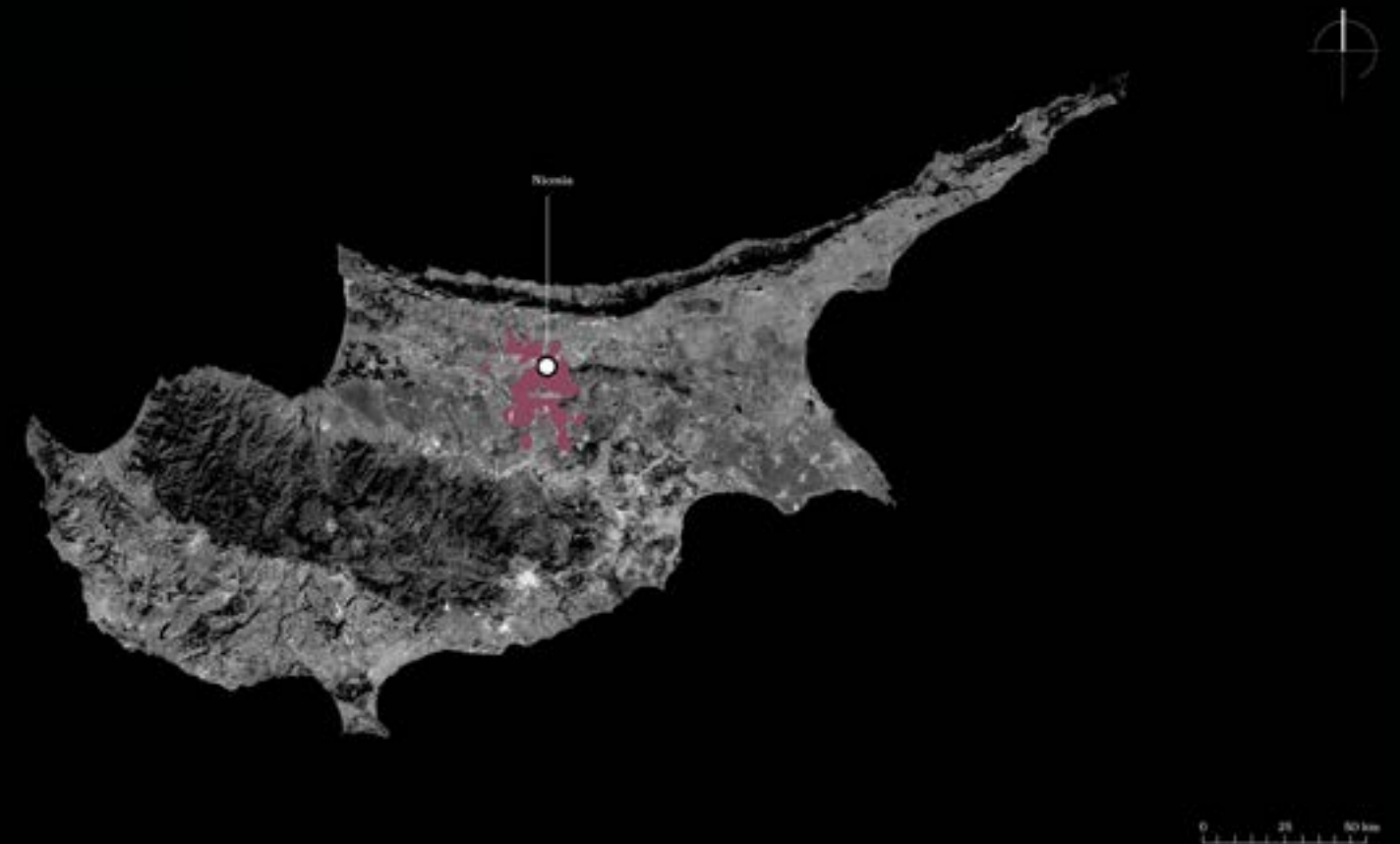
British occupation
(1878-1960)

HISTORY

From 1878-1914 Cyprus was under British occupation and administration, which emphasized ethnicity in Cypriot political affairs and gave Church leaders a monopoly over decision-making for the majority (three-fourth) of the population (Calame, Charlesworth, and Woods 2011, 126). Until the British occupation (1878), Nicosia was contained entirely within the Venetian wall and was a typical medieval full of private gardens, public fountains, and unpaved streets. In 1879, there was a first opening in the Venetian walls, followed by many more openings, which was the start for the city's expansion outside the walls, making the several nearby small villages the suburbs of a much larger city.

Between 1914-1960, the British occupation and the "Divide and Rule" strategy divided Cyprus in two communities, the Greek Orthodox Christians (75%) and the Turkish Muslims (18%), who primarily lived in mutual cultural isolation. The British gave an advantage to the Greeks on the island by emphasizing the Western culture. In 1930, GC pressured Britain to permit "Enosis", meaning the union of Cyprus

with Greece, which resulted in serious attacks between the two communities in the following years. In mid-1940s the British Colonial Government found the Department of Town Planning and Housing and created the Streets and Buildings Regulation Law. The aim was to control uneven development and improve the hygiene, ventilation, and water supplies in buildings to overcome the disease outbreak. During that time, the British government gave the authority to the local governments to publish land use and urban areas maps. This was the first effort to control the development of the city.

In 1955, an underground nationalist movement of Greek Cypriots called EOKA, abbreviation for "National Organization of Cypriot Struggle," was established. This group was dedicated to ending British colonial rule in Cyprus and uniting Cyprus with Greece. As a response, the TC created in 1957 their paramilitary group called TMT to counter EOKA. Despite their harsh interethnic relations, The TC and GC recognized a shared desire to achieve Independence from Britain. (Calame, Charlesworth, and Woods 2011, 130).

During the post-war period (1939-1945) villages around Nicosia expanded, and by 1958, they were merged with the city due to the escalating growth and the creation of residential areas. By this time, the walled city was given over to workshops and shops, and in residential terms, it had become a lower-income area ("Nicosia Municipality - Urban Development" n.d.).

1956 British soldiers add a barbed wire fence to a crossing point between the two communities in Nicosia

1958 Soldiers at the same location allowing Greek Cypriot government employees and women to pass through the Turkish Quarter

Independence
(1960)

In 1959, the two main ethnic communities combined their efforts to fight against the British colony. Turkish and British diplomats signed the London and Zurich Agreements (Calame, Charlesworth, and Woods 2011, 131) that in 1960 signalized Cyprus as the Independent Republic with autonomy and democracy and asserted its sovereignty as a member of the United Nations and the Council of Europe. Nicosia became the capital of the Republic of Cyprus. Limited authority was granted to external guarantor powers (Greece, Britain, and Turkey) regarding the future of the Republic (Calame, Charlesworth, and Woods 2011, 131). The British retained two sovereign areas in the southern part of the island. According to the constitution, the population in Cyprus was divided into two communities based on their ethnic identity. Due to rapid population growth, urbanization, and industry development, a revision of the first Town planning Bill was initially made by the British, arranging a plan for the whole island and publishing it in 1974, just two months before the invasion and division of the island. growth and the creation of residential areas. By this time, the walled city was given over to workshops and shops, and in residential terms, it had become a lower-income area ("Nicosia Municipality - Urban Development" n.d.).
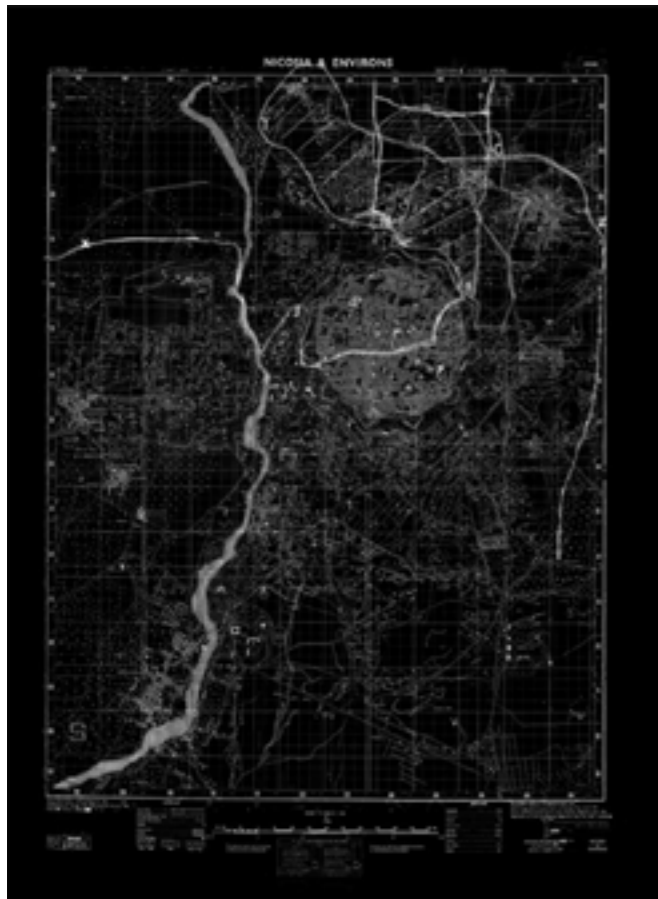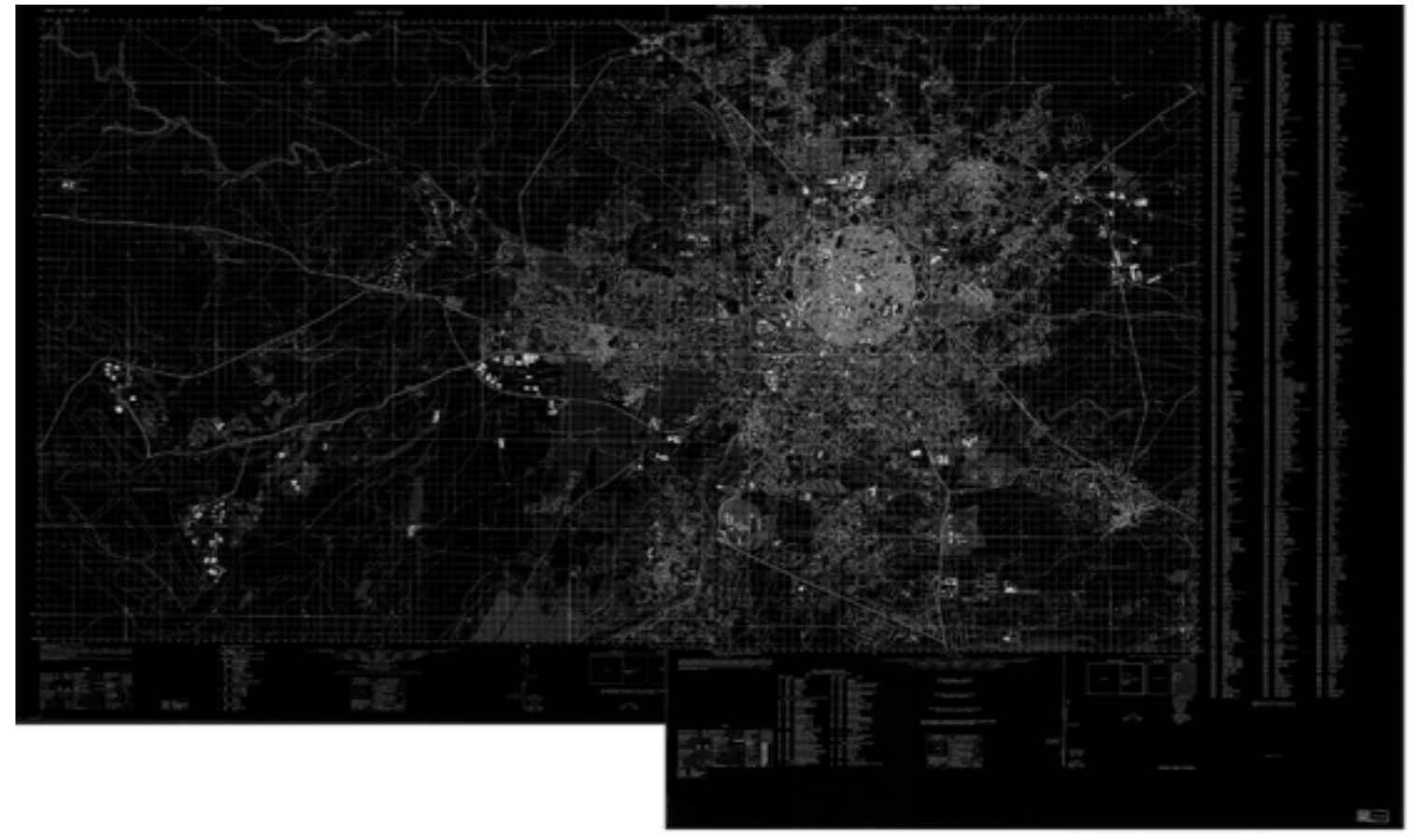

Under pressure from Greece, Turkey, and NATO, Cyprus becomes an independent state.

1964

1966

1967

Physical Division of Nicosia

1956　　　1957　　　1960　　　1964 and on
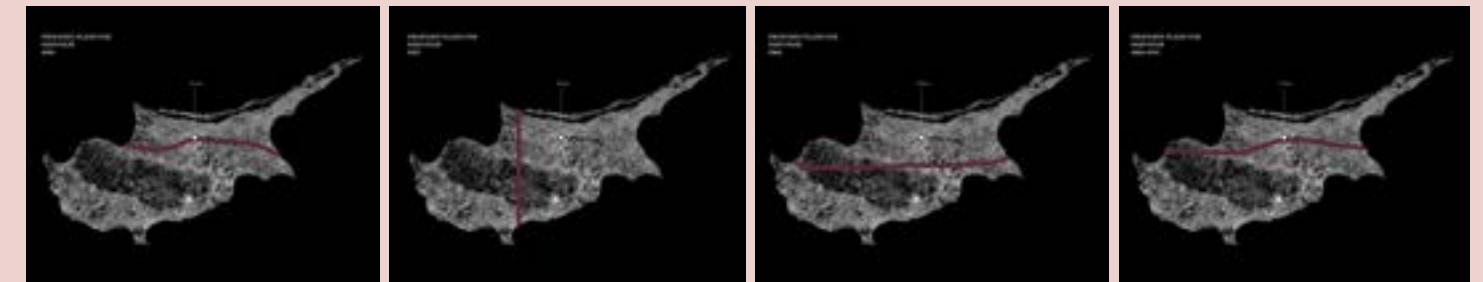
The division after 1974

After Cyprus' decolonization, tension and violence between the communities prompted in 1963 the British soldiers to erect the first temporary physical barricade along the Mason-Dixon line (in the position of today's buffer zone, previously the main commercial street of Nicosia, and even earlier the Pedieos River bed) that divided the physical space of the city. After extensive discussion and revision by all interested parties, this barrier was transformed into the "green line," a double-layered partition line between the GC and TC with a significant no man's land.

The Green Line was only designed to cease conflicts and save lives during uncertain periods of negotiations (Calame, Charlesworth, and Woods 2011, 133) but remains in its position until today. The green line lowered the intensity and frequency of inter-communal violence in Nicosia, but resulted in tens of thousands of Cypriot refugees formally establishing the boundary (Calame, Charlesworth, and Woods 2011, 133). TC and GC abandoned their homes and property to seek surety in friendly enclaves. Following rapid urbanization and social change after the Independence of Cyprus, the city spread into a continuously expanding built-up zone.

In 1964, Cyprus' conflict became a matter of the United Nations Security Council. Dutch and British troops monitored the ceasefire and controlled the sensitive boundary areas to maintain and restore law and order in Nicosia. Initially created by the British to reduce the tension in Nicosia, the division converted into a ceasefire line patrolled by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force (UNFICYP) (Brooke n.d.). This division led to the separation of municipalities, commercial centers, institutions, facilities, and services. It also led to the segregation of the educational systems, the rejection of the NATO Peacemaking Force, and the Enosis plan. Dutch and British troops came to patrol the ceasefire and control the boundary areas. The troops constructed "barbed wire fences, roadblocks trenches, and other fortifications" (Calame, Charlesworth, and Woods 2011, 134) that crisscrossed the island, and especially Nicosia. The fortification followed a standard military protocol to minimize contact between the TC and GC, which encouraged hostility and segregation between the two communities.

Invasion and forcible division

By 1974 the tension remained at a breaking point. The Turkish troops landed in the North of Cyprus and occupied one-third (37%) of the island, enforcing partition between north and south. Turkish forces had established the "Attila Line" whose path corresponded largely to the Green Line established eleven years before (Calame, Charlesworth, and Woods 2011, 135). This division led to a second displacement, and a nearly perfect homogeneity was achieved in the island. People flee their homes, and this internal displacement resulted in a major growth in the Greek-Cypriot part of the island. The UN-sponsored peace talk resumed, and the UN peacekeepers (including both TC and GC soldiers) were assigned to patrol the buffer zone. Since 1974, the southern part of Cyprus has been under the control of the internationally recognized government of Cyprus, and the northern part under the control of the government of Northern Cyprus. The Island plan of 1974 was revised and implemented in the TC and GC parts accordingly. Since then, many laws and master plans (e.g., the Town planning Law) enacted and partially implemented. However, this did not foster the relationships between the different communities.

In 1983, the northern part of Cyprus declared Independence as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a state recognized only by Turkey. The sovereignty of the self-declared country was rejected by the UN and the Republic of Cyprus. During the years of the above events, the creation of masterplan, the political talks, and the participation in the negotiation tables were made primarily if not exclusively by male politicians. Women were excluded entirely from these processes. In 2000, United Nations' Security Council (UNSC), recognized the gendered nature of war and peace processes and formalized it in the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security' (known as UNSCR 1325). (cite)

TERRITORIES
after 1974

National

Republic of Cyprus

Turkish Republic of Northern
Cyprus (de facto state)

British Sovereign Base Area

United Nations
Peacekeeping Force in
Cyprus (UNPC)

0   25   50 km

TERRITORIES
after 1974

Regional

Greek-Cypriot part

Turkish-Cypriot part

Districts

0   25   50 km

TERRITORIES
after 1974

Turkish Republic of
Northern Cyprus
(de facto state) 37%

Nicosia

UN buffer zone 4%

British Sovereign Base area, 3%

Republic of Cyprus 58%

0   25   50 km

UN BUFFER ZONE

THEN AND NOW

The UN buffer is both a physical and a conceptual boundary. It encompasses many spatial, social, political, and philosophical meanings. Competing geopolitical agendas and social narratives have made this Green Line a physical and psychological wound that fragments ecologies and splits societies. The length of the UN buffer zone is approximately 180km, covering three percent of the landmass, dividing Cyprus into two parts and enclosing abandoned buildings, local ecosystems, and small settlements. The buffer zone's porosity changes as the conflict's status shifts and highly depends on how citizens use its space. Since 2003, nine crossing points opened along the UN buffer zone, allowing mobility between Nicosia's north and south parts. The opening of the crossings transformed the buffer zone from militarized to urban in specific locations. It now acts as an "in-between" boundary and a safe space for communities to come together. Despite the porosity of the buffer zone, and the citizen's ability to cross anytime, the UN, TC, and GC military forces still patrol the two sides of the ceasefire. This surveillance seems like a paradox and raises questions on what they try to protect and keep safe. Expect from human movement, the buffer zone forcibly disrupts the mobility across the walled city, blocking the mobility of more than twenty streets inside the walled city. This disruption is made through barbed wire fences, sandbags, and oil barrels among other things. The buffer zone may appear as the wound of Cyprus' territorial conflict but is in fact a space of opportunity, reconciliation, and reconstruction.

THE URBAN SPACE

TODAY

After 1974 and due to the internal displacement, the southern part of Nicosia has experienced urban sprawl that resulted in unequal urban development in the two parts of the city and outside its walled center. As the conflict transforms, so does the urban space of Nicosia and vice versa. The built environment remained almost intact in time, but the use of buildings and the dynamic of the buffer zone are changing over the years.

Nicosia Today is an urban settlement separated by the UN buffer zone into two approximately equal parts. TC live in the north and GC live in the south. A common characteristic for the walled city today is that there is urban informality in both parts. Nicosia's walled center is Today a hub for bicommunal interaction. Its urban form and small scale offer opportunities for the formation of social ties among the ethnic groups and rebuilding trust and confidence among them.

"Today, two Nicosias oppose each other as two alien bodies, without an inherited sense of common citizenship rooted in ethnic links, belonging to two nations put on opposed fronts by history. Both sides of the city have lost their central character and have become suburbs of vaster worlds far away."

Richter Malabotta, 2001

MASTER PLANS

"The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources; it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city."

David Harvey

Before and after the division of 1974, many masterplans for Cyprus and Nicosia were created but were either rejected or partially implemented. Many of the masterplans were bi-communal efforts, but none of them, has managed to change the spatial character of the buffer zone, or have an actual impact on the social aspect of the conflict.

In 1978, there was an agreement for the preparation of a common sewerage system that would improve the existing and future living conditions of Nicosia's inhabitants. In 1979, there was an agreement for the preparation of a common Master Plan. In 1981, a bicommunal multidisciplinary teams prepare the common planning strategy for Nicosia. The team prepared a flexible adaptable plan that was divided into two phases: phase one (1981-1984) included formulating a

general planning strategy for the Greater Nicosia, and phase two (1984-1985) included preparing a detailed operational plan for the city Center. The plan for the city center focused on the preservation of the heritage for all the communities in the city, to prevent further decay due to socio-economic and physical reasons. The Master Plan has social, economic, and architectural objectives for the rehabilitation, revitalization, the preservation and restoration of the urban space of the walled city. The Master Plan also included planning objectives (E.g., balanced distribution of mixed-use areas, and density development in harmony).

Finally, the Masterplan recognized the buffer zone as the most important "gluing area" for the functional integration of Nicosia. Recognizing the deterioration process of the buffer zone, the Master Plan targeted efforts in recording the architectural heritage in the buffer zone and the establishments od measure to save the collapsing buildings. After twenty-two years of designing and changing Nicosia's Masterplan, some policies and goals have been indeed implemented. These goals included a new shared vision for the city center, active involvement with all interested parties, and raise of citizen's awareness regarding preservation needs.

THE DIVISION

TODAY

After 1974 and due to the internal displacement, the southern part of Nicosia has experienced urban sprawl that resulted in unequal urban development in the two parts of the city and outside its walled center. As the conflict transforms, so does the urban space of Nicosia and vice versa. The built environment remained almost intact in time, but the use of buildings and the dynamic of the buffer zone are changing over the years. Nicosia Today is an urban settlement separated by the UN buffer zone into two approximately equal parts. TC live in the north and GC live in the south. Except for the spatial and ethnic division, there is also a gender division. Women use the urban space differently, and their everyday movements manifest the creation of a shared and common territory. From a social aspect, women in Nicosia tend to engage in caring and humanitarian roles instead of politics and economics. Engagement in these roles and the public sphere would challenge the traditional norms and social pressures (Hadjipavlou 144). Women, especially younger ones, struggle to challenge their traditional roles (Hadjipavlou 2010, 143). They all acknowledged their role as crucial in building good and trusting relationships among all communities and solving the Cyprus conflict (Hadjipavlou 144).

1571-1878
Cyprus under the Ottoman Empire rule

Distinct ethnic neighborhoods

Mixed commercial zones in the center (walled city)

Greece the Greek Cypriot community rejected the Macmillan plan and the UN took charge.

GC and TC communities combined effort for independence from Britain. Indipendence after reaching agreement on a constitution in the London and Zurich Agreements.

Referendum for the Enosis.
Establishment of EOKA - a Greek Cypriot Fighter's Organization

British Cyprus-after 300 years of Ottoman rule (1914–60)

Military occupation

British - Crown Colony

UN peacekeepers were deployed on the island.

Physical division of Nicosia by a military border. Internal displacement.
Creation of the Green Line and the ceased fire.

Separation of municipalities, commercial centres, institutions, facilities, and services. Segregation of the education systems and physical division

Civil conflict: Former paramilitary commander took the place of the president.
Turkish forces occupied 37% of the island.
Second internal displacement: nearly perfect ethnic homogeneity.
UN peacekeepers were assigned to patrol the buffer zone.

Nicosia's Masterplan: undergound infrastructure

Agreements for the preparation of a common sewerage system.

UN-sponsored peace talks resume

FORCIBLE DIVISION

Turkish Cypriots controlled an area declared itself as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognized only by Turkey.

The United Nations Peacekeeping Forces maintain a buffer zone between the two sides.

The Cypriot government did not recognize any sovereignty that the Northern Cypriot administration may have and therefore do not allow international flights or free trade with the North.

Preparation of a details operational plan for the City Centre

Nicosia Master Plan enacted

Greek and Turkish Cypriots demolish barriers dividing the old city on Nicosia, paving the way for another official crossing point on the "key" commercial thoroughfare.

The Gender Advisory Team (GAT) is a core group of women who are interested in seeing gender equality integrated into the peace negotiations in Cyprus as well in all the peace building processes post-conflict.

1914   1925   1950   1956   1959   1964   1967   1971   **1974**   1978   1981   1983   1984   1985   2001   2007   2009

1878-1914
British protectorate of Cyprus

Greek-Cypriots under the umbrella of the Orthodox Church- in a political, social, educational, and religious affairs level

Church leaders were the decision makers for the majority (3/4) of the population

1930

Greek Cypriots demanded the union of Cyprus with Greece (Enosis).

Serious attacks between the two communities.

Creation of TMT a Turkish Cyprito paramilitary group to counter EOKA.
Installation of barriers and 5 check-points in Nicosia by the British.

Archbishop Makarios, head if Enosis Campaign, deported to Seychelles.

1960

Nicosia becomes capital of Republic of Cyprus
Autonomy and democracy according to a constitution
that distributed power at the national level according to ethnic quotas.

Cyprus is formally a member of UN and The Council
of Europe under the leadership of the Greek Orthodox
Archbishop Makarios.
Limited authority was granted to external guarantor powers (Greece, Britain, Turkey) regarding the future of the Republic.
Britain retained two sovereign parts.

Turkish troops land in the North. The Turkish invasion began on 20 July 1974.

Turks occupy 1/3 of Cyprus, enforce partition between north and south.

The southern part of Cyprus has been under the control of the internationally recognized government of Cyprus and the northern part under the control of the government of Northern Cyprus.

1979

Agreement for the preparation of a common physical masterplan.

A bi-communal multi-disciplinary team was formed to prepare a common planning strategy for Nicosia.

Formulation of a general planning strategy for Greater Nicosia.

2000

United Nations' Security Council (UNSC), recognized the gendered nature of war and peace processes and formalized it in the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security" (known as UNSCR 1325).

2002

Easing of border restriction for Cypriot civilians.

The Annan Plan for Cyprus (also known as the Cyprus reunification plan) was a United Nations proposal for reunification, was developed, calling for a referendum.

2003   **2004**

Cyprus became part of EU as a whole country even though 37% is occupied

Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots cross island's dividing "green line" for the first time in thirty years after Turkish Cypriot authorities ease border restrictions.

Green Line checkpoint at Ledra Palace established.

Countermapping

WOMEN'S ACTIONS

REmapping Nicosia

WOMEN'S ACTIONS

ORGANIZATION, MARCHES, AND MORE

Marches and protests are often described as having specific characteristics that include the contestation of and resistance to power, bringing together a particular community, and being public in nature. Protests create a sense of community and de-functionalize the urban space "by interacting its usual business, transport, work, and specialization." (Awan 79) By doing so, protests interrupt the hierarchical order of class society; they disturb the class relations between the diasporic bodies and their hosts. (Awan 80) These marches increase the group's territory participating in it in the public space. It is not the scale of the protest that matters most but the audience.

Women's anti-occupation actions and actions for peace in Cyprus date back to 1975 when they formulated the "women's return" movement. Because of their marginalization and invisibility, it was easier for them to assemble in space and access places men did not have. The movement organized marches in several areas of Cyprus, where thousands of women stood up in front of the Turkish army and requested the liberation of Cyprus.

After opening the buffer zone's crossing in 2003 due to an easing in diplomatic relations , women from both sides of the divide came together for the first time in almost thirty years. Their interaction sparked a set of multi-communal initiatives for peace. Despite the geographical proximity, there is a vast socio-psychological distancing among women in the different parts of Nicosia; they have different living standards, experiences, and perspectives.

Before the buffer zone opened, the two communities had no interaction, and the only information they had for one another was through oral histories, memories, and narratives. These unofficial initiatives started locally but have attracted international attention to Nicosia and the Cypriot conflict. This attention made women and their actions visible in the local scale too. However, they are still excluded from most official peace negotiations processes. Through self-organization, women of the movement united their voices to make Cypriot's conflict visible to the international community.

Today, women use the walled city and its buffer zone to come together, organize, and plan actions for peace. Their efforts take various forms, such as arts festivals, conferences, and the formulation of solidarity groups. Their use of the walled city and the buffer zone as safe spaces opens up a new reading of these spaces that challenges the current narrative of their hostility because of the social and territorial conflict. Although the buffer zone can signalize safety, women frequently need to "claim integrity, security, and safety of their own bodies" (Mohanty 2003, 2). Understanding the spatial dynamics of Nicosia's buffer zone through the way women use it can help designers and planners better understand the transformative nature of the conflict and how the aforementioned multi-communal efforts can exert political pressure to affect it.

Examples of the afforementioned organizations, groups, initiatives, festivals, and more actions are presented below.

1.Women's

movement

POGO, 1959

2.FEMME FEST

2022

1.   Women's movement POGO (involved with political movement AKEL), 1959

The Progressive Women's Movement of POGO (Pancyprian Federation of Women's Organizations) is a non- governmental organization that is connected with the AKEL party. POGO is recognized as one of the main organizations in Cyprus having activities which focus in gender equality and social justice. One of POGO's main focuses in the common struggle of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot women for peace in Cyprus. At the same time, the movement is an active member of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), where it acts as the Vice- President. POGO maintains an active role in the international progressive women's movement and "acknowledges the significance of international solidarity towards all suffering women irrespective of their country of origin." Their actions vary in form, including among other things written issues and a FemmeFestival.

source: http://www.pogocy.com/

2.   Femme Fest, 2022

The FEMME FEST Cyprus took place in May 2022, and was the first festival for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Cyprus. The festival aims to cultivate gender equality in Cyprus by discussing gender issues, women's presence and activities. Through the various activities, the Femme Fest aimed to increase the visibility of women and to challenge gender stereotypes. The Femme Fest was realized as part of a joint organization to the POGO women's Movement, the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality and the Municipality of Nicosia and is supported by the National Mechanism for Women's Rights and the Organization's Youth Initiatives Cyprus Youth. Its duration was for one full day on a Sunday, in order all people-even women domestic workers who only have a day off on Sunday to participate. It also had free entrance for all. It included several panels and tables showcasing women's work in several fields. It also presented institutions, organizations, and collective sealing with gender issues. The festival included various thematic centers, parallel discussions and workshops, theatrical, dance, and musical performances.

source: https://www.facebook.com/femmefestcy/

3. Women's Return

1975

Women's anti-occupation actions and actions for peace in Cyprus date back to 1975 when they formulated the "women's return" movement. Because of their marginalization and invisibility, it was easier for women to assemble in space and access places men could not access. Women walked in the city and knew by heart the urban fabric and the exact location of the Greek army, the military blocks, and the potential ideal crossing places. During their every day walks (e.g., when they would walk their dogs, take their babies for a walk, or go for shopping) they "scanned" the urban space to recognize what areas are better for their marches. This way, women knew the length of the buffer zone and its qualities.

The movement organized marches that took place in several areas of Cyprus, where thousands of women stood up in front of the Turkish army and requested the liberation of Cyprus.

Women participating in this movement would very carefully select the meeting places of their marches. Their goal was to meet the Turkish army and secretly capture on camera that the army was Turkish and not Turkish-Cypriot and that they exerted excessive violence.

Women's return first march ended badly; the space that took place was not ideal. The buffer zone in this area was wide, and during women's efforts to cross and arrive in the north, the United Nations caught the marches participants and sent them back to the South. After this unsuccessful event, women of the movement started to keep secret the places where the marches would take place. Only two or three of them -the founding members- knew. They invited participants of the

marches to meet in Central areas of Cyprus (e.g., Eleutherias Square, Nicosia). From there, participants would be taken to the meeting places and starting point of the march. To avoid leaking of information regarding the starting point of the marches, they would be excess number of busses, all of them with closed curtains. Some of them were empty and would be driven toward unrelated locations to confuse the Greek authorities (e.g., the Greek police) following them.

However, party interventions to end the movement and a massive imprisoning and violence towards its participants by the Turkish army, led in 1989 to the last anti-occupation march of the women's return movement. After that other politicized versions of these political movements tried to emerge (for example under the name Women's Movement return), but did not succeed.

source: https://www.digital-herodotus.eu/

3. Women's Return, 1975

From 1975 to 1989, women of different social classes, ages, professions, and political opinions came together and created a dynamic group that for several years was present intensively with marches inside and outside Cyprus. The movement was called "Women's return," and claimed that it is the right of refugees to return to their homes, and all Cypriot citizens to move freely to their homes and the Cypriot cities. The marches took place in several places of the city, where thousands of

women stood up in front of the Turkish army and requested the liberation of Cyprus. Through self-organization, women of the movement united their voices, to make Cypriot's conflict visible to the international community. Women united their forces despite their different sociopolitical opinions and political lines, and they managed to achieve small but impressive victories to the Cypriot conflict, such as crossing the buffer zone despite that was blocked by the UN for Peace keeping in Cyprus.

4. Cyprus Youth council, 1996

5. KISA: Action for equality, Support, and Antiracism, 1998

4.   The Cyprus Youth Council (CYC) ,1996
The Cyprus Youth Council (CYC) is a volunteer, non – governmental, and non – profit organization. Its aims is to promote dialogue and cooperation between young people in Cyprus while also connecting them with youth in Europe and the world. CYC expand its impact by operating in continuous cooperation with the European Youth Forum. The issues they address have to do with human rights and equality, employment and social issues, active citizenship and life-long learning, non-formal education and youth policies. The CYC aims to act as a platform communication and exchange among all the youth NGOs in Cyprus. For this, they organize events, seminars, workshops and activities in an effort to a space for its members to exchange good practices, interests and experience on any topic related to youth. The CYC is open to all Cypriot youth and includes Turkish-Cypriot member organizations.
source: https://cyc.org.cy/en/

5. KISA: Action for equality, Support, and Antiracism
KISA is an NGO, with a vision to promotion an all-inclusive, multicultural society. Its aim is to stop racism, xenophobia and discrimination by cultivating the interaction and mutual respect of diverse cultures and promoting equality and respect for the rights of all people, irrespective of their gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, nationality, ethnicity, race, color, creed or beliefs, and overall diversity. KISA's action is centered on topics related to Migration, Asylum, Racism, Discrimination and Trafficking. Its actions raise awareness on these topics on the Cypriot society to achieve change in the legal and structural framework and policies in these fields. KISA's work, include providing information, support, advocacy, and mediation services to migrnts, refugees, and victims of racism, trafficking. KISA is promoting the integration, empowerment and self-organization of migrants and refugees. KISA operates independently but also cooperates with various stakeholders and independent institutions. It is also an active member of European and international NGOs and networks.
source: https://kisa.org.cy/

6. Hands across the Divide

1999

7. GAT: Gender Advisory

Team, 2009

6.   Hands across the divide, Cyprus Bi-communal Women's Group, 1999

The "Hands across the divide" group, which started as a need to address concern regarding the restriction of women's basic human rights of free communication because of the conflict, division, and militarization of Cyprus. The group is particularly concerned about the continuing international isolation of women in the TC community and the lack of opportunities they have. The group is hoping to address issues of exercise of power in both communities, where women have been excluded from decision-making concerning basic issues (e.g., peace process and social, economic, political, and cultural policies).

source: http://www.peace-cyprus.org/

7. The Gender Advisory Team (GAT), 2009

The Gender Advisory Team (GAT), started in 2009, and consisting of civil society activists and scholars form both communities. The participants have hands on experience and extensive knowledge on gender issues. The team strives for gender equality, respect of women's human rights and advocates for women's participation in the peace process, by ensuring active participation in peace negotiations. By organizing conferences, workshops, and seminars on gender, citizenship, and peace processes the GAT's work focuses on addressing the diachronic failures regarding peace negotiations.

source: https://www.gat1325.org/

8.   Queer Cyprus-

Kuir Kibris, 2007

8. Queer Cyprus, 2007

Queer Cyprus came together initially as "Initiative Against Homophobia" (HOKI). IWn 2007 HOKI applied to the local authorities in Northern Cyprus to become a fully established and recognized association. Their actions take many forms such as events, publications, support groups, and queer art. HOKI requested to repeal several regulations to the head of the Parliamentary of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, stating that the rules "provide the main framework for regulating discrimination against sexual orientation, and they

have not been revised since British colonial time."

Later, in 2010 HOKI organized an international conference, "Solidarity and Networking Conference Cyprus 2010," in co-operation with the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) – Europe and hosted by the Journalists Union. The event highlighted homosexuality's recognition as a crime and judged this is a "violation of human rights." were arrested and held in custody charged with 'unnatural intercourse.'

During this case, HOKI "raised alarm at the arrests which led to protests from Members of the European Parliament, and international human rights organizations." HOKI also exposed that the Cyprus north media normalized attitudes of hatred and fed "homophobic reports and comments to the public." This story was covered by local and international media, raising the issue of the continued existence and use of the law. Finally, in 2011, HOKI hosted ILGA-Europe's family exhibition Different Families, Same Love in Nicosia (north), and its

opening included a range of media (e.g., state television). This event "receiving positive press coverage and provided a different and positive facets of the LGBT community to the general public."

Source: https://www.queercyprus.org/

9.   Cyprus Women's

10. Women's

Lobby

2008

Movement of

Environme-
ntalists, 2009

9. The Cyprus Women's Lobby, 2008   source: https://www.womenlobby.org/

The Cyprus Women's Lobby, an umbrella network of 16 women's organisations and non-governmental organisations, was formed in September 2008 and brings together a wide range of women's organisations and NGOs throughout Cyprus. The mission is the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, to combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women, and to ensure the full participation and active involvement of women in decision making processes.

10. GYKO (Women's Movement of Environmentalists), 2009

GYKO aim on the intervention and participation in social, labor and political issues concerning women. The movement protects the environment, helps in the development of environmental knowledge and awareness in Cyprus, and spreads the idea of the ecological movement as a component of global sustainability, quality of life, health and the right of citizens to a healthy environment. They also aim in the participation of women in the political and public life of our country becomes more massive and substantial. The movement aims in taking the necessary decisions to promote women's demands and solve the problems they face as individuals and as a group, in the creation of a cooperation and information network for the provision of technical, scientific and legal assistance to initiatives of a local nature as well as the creation of an infrastructure to serve the above purposes. Their actions take the form of a proposal to public sector bodies in the design of legislative initiatives and the implementation of measures that specifically concern women, studies and research within the framework of the Association's subject matter, to impact the decisions regarding Cyprus, with the aim of mobilizing women who are inspired by the ideas of Ecology and saving the environment.

source: https://el-gr.facebook.com/gykocy

11. Syspirosi

atakton,

2013

The movement's efforts take also into account environmental crisis, as Cyprus has a richness of natural resources than put the island into a very vulnerable position. The island in under a massive competition for domination whish resulted in today's wars and conflicts. The movement therefore, is fighting "towards social liberation and emancipation from local and foreign sovereignty." They recognize Cyprus as one of the most militarized areas worldwide, with people living there being trapped in the frozen nationalistic conflict. The movement support elite's privilege and worker's (especially those from other countries) exploitation. Syspirosi Atakton has various action in Nicosia trying to reflect of what is happening to the wider Cypriot society. They fight for addressing the nationalistic division, the invasion of capitalistic interests, the church which today is the largest land owned in the city, having its own vision of "development."

Their actions take the form of festivals (e.g., Ecopolis festival), marches (e.g., Beyond Europe: going for the revolutionary 8th of March), discussions, protests (e.g., The United Cyprus park is declared), festivals (e.g., genders and power), and many more.

source: www.syspirosiatakton.org

11. Syspirosi atakton, 2013
Syspirosi atakton is an anarchist, anti-authoritarian, and anti-oppressive movement with a goal to "deconstruct and undermine the structural forms of the current socio-political system and put into practice alternative forms of socio-political organization. The member's experience of the city made them participate to an international antiauthoritarian network, promoting ideas of self-organization, self-legislation and solidarity.

The movement addresses issues related to the present political dynamics, recognizing current states of emergency, such as military invasions, oppression and social repression. The movement's participants are marching in an effort to fight the system of capitalism, hierarchy, and patriarchy. They support the structural interlinkage of the afforememntioned three aspects and believe that their actions should take into account matters of class, race, and gender.

12. Urban gorillas,

2013

13. Buffer Fringe

Festival,   2014

12. Urban gorillas, 2013

Urban gorillas in an NGO based in Nicosia. It consists of "Urban enthusiasts who envision creative, healthy and socially inclusive cities." The multi-disciplinary team has designers, visionaries, and activists who are united by their shared vision and enthusiasm for constantly improving Nicosia's city life. Through various urban regeneration, community engagement, and participatory workshop and many more, the team aims to transform public spaces into dynamic, groundbreaking and inclusive spots, to nurture civil society and to influence policies. Team members have expertise in various disciplines such as arts and architecture, urban design and planning, landscape design, environmental engineering, economics, and many more. Urban gorillas, have been active in city-making projects and are driven to investigate novel solution of urban futures in Nicosia. The outcome of their project is visible in Nicosia's urban environment, in the form of installation, festivals, exhibitions, research and publication, workshops and other events. Urban gorillas primarily focus on public space, creating tailor-made and creative solution for positive socioenvironmental impact in the urban space.

source: www.urbangorillas.org

13. Buffer Fringe Performing Arts Festival (BFPAF),, 2014

Buffer Fringe Performing Arts Festival (BFPAF), is a social solidarity and social responsibility festival, providing spaces of encounter for artists and audiences. The festival call artists to engage with emergent narratives and challenges preconceived ideas of the "other." The festival take place in the home for cooperation, but also expands and take the form of a walking tour in the buffer zone and the walled city on Nicosia. In 2016, Buffer Fringe became an international festival and expanded beyond the buffer zone with all activities taking place in different venues that had historical or social significance across the divide. The festival asks different themes every year, such as to 'Define the Buffer Zone'. This invitation created the space (physical and metaphorical) for artists, scholars, architects and students from Cyprus and the world, to propose their own immersive ways to speak about buffer zones.

source: https://bufferfringe.org/

14. UN: Women's

walks and

talks, 2015

15. CLIO for gender,

2016

14. Unite Nations, women's walks and talks, 2015

"Women's walks and talks" consist of walks are organized along the Pedeios River followed by an interactive discussion on women's inclusion for the future of Cyprus. Participants meet in the Ledra's Palace hotel which is located in Nicosia's buffer zone. The organizing group is the CVAR and the Turkish Cypriot University Women's Association, in cooperation the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and UNFICYP. There, women from both sides can come together in a neutral territory and discuss about peace and other common issues.
Source: https://peacekeeping.un.org/
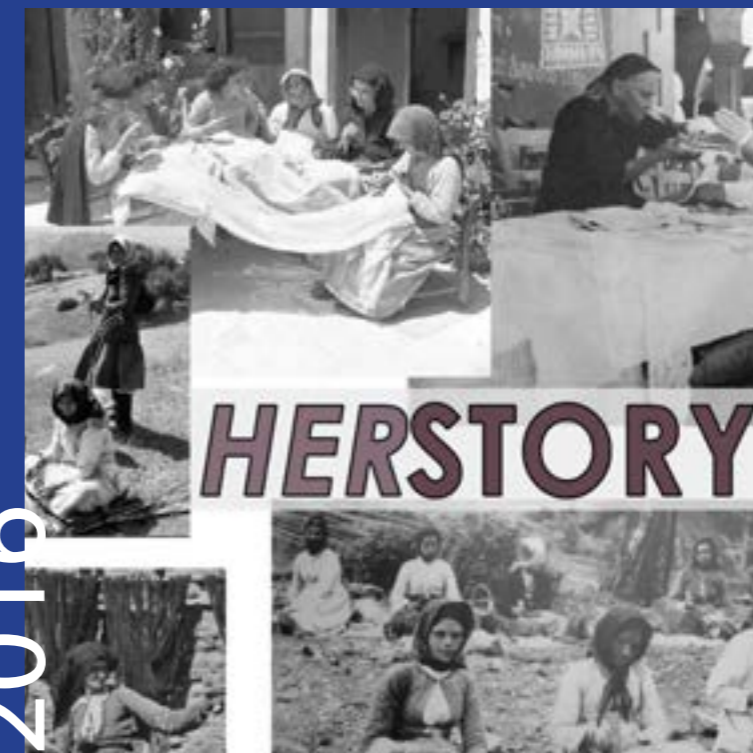
15.   CLIO for gender, 2016

Women and gender are almost absent for Cyprus' historiography. "This is apparent in multiple occasions: school textbooks, academic literature, the urban landscape and the absence of female statues or street names. History-telling remains male-centered. This creates a context in which society assigns more value to the contribution, activities and achievements of men, suggesting they are more worthy than those of women. Thus, ignorance and negligence, in terms of women's history, have a negative impact on the ability of contemporary individuals and societies to overcome gender stereotypes and become agents of positive change. By confronting this ignorance, the project will contribute towards the direction of gender equality through an innovative path that will first acknowledge the gap in historiography in regards to women and the fact that history remains gender biased. Second, it will reconstruct this history in a way that brings specific, neglected aspects of this history in the forefront."
source: http://www.clioforgender.com/

16. Center for

Gender

Equality & History, 2017

17. Theater

production

'Iphigenia in Aulidis,' 2017

16.   Center for Gender Equality and History (KIIF), 2017
KIIF is a non-profit and non-governmental organization based in Nicosia, aiming to promote research and action on Gender Equality and Gender History in Cyprus and the world.KIIF aims to promote scientific and research-based knowledge and action for gender equality. The approach of its members puts emphasis on the empowerment of all genders and LGBTQ people. They aspire to build a space for its members to reclaim their past future based on "scientific knowledge, mutual respect, social justice, individual freedom, human rights, participation, democracy and equality."
The organization recognizes that Cypriot history, derives from

women's and gender's invisibility in the Cypriot society. The organization's aim is to help forgotten narratives and histories to be heard and used as a tool towards empowerment and reflection. The aim is to advance our understanding of the present and contribute to the shaping of the future of gender relations by better understanding the roots of patriarchy, homophobia, gender hierarchy, and so on. Their activities include General Meetings of its members, where the majority of which are open to the members to observe and participate in the conversation.
source: https://kiif.com.cy/

17. Theater production 'Iphigenia in Aulidis,' 2017 by Magdalena Zira
Euripides' "Iphigenia in Aulidis" took place in the buffer zone. The location of the theater production was very important as it allowed for a site-specific play of the tragedy. There was a parallel narrative between Euripides' drama and the interpretation of the play in Nicosia's buffer zone. One od this productions' goal was to help the viewer follow their deep phychological paths and confront the horror that man is capable of creating. The play draw parallelism between the ancient drama and today's Cypriot conflict.
source: www.magdalenazira.wordpress.com

18. Network

Fighting Violence Against Women, 2019

19. Xarkis festival,

2021

18. Network Fighting Violence Against Women, 2019
This Women's Network was brought together by the outrage its participants feel about violence against women and the diagnosis of Patriarchy as a weapon that rationalizes and normalizes violence. Their starting point is not a shared identity or shared experience and participants of the movement embrace their differences. They recognize that not all women are the same but each of the is different. he Network's activities include but are not limited to protesting against everyday sexism, protesting for justice for killed women, fighting against rape by the state, and many more. This Network has a clear political stance, which makes

its relations with other politicized groups (e.g., Women's movement POGO) strange. Their organization is horizontal participation, meaning that they operate on the based on a model of participatory democracy without hierarchies. Participants of this Network are various women that hold positions in official political groups and are Members of the Parliament. The Network embrace, among others, women who have been victims of violence in the past and those who want to help others to get out of the cycle of violence, anxiety and vulnerability.
source: https://medinstgenderstudies.org/our-networks/

19. Xarkis Festival, 2021
Xarkis Festival is an award-winning, international Arts Festival roaming communities in Cyprus. It is hosting an array of events in Nicosia's city or online via Zoom, including KaFEMio, which is a self-organized gathering, where participants are discussing about the negotiations in Cyprus and women's position on them and the Cypriot civil society.
  What is being omitted currently with regards to the negotiations? "
To start with, although women in Cyprus were and still are in civil society initiatives for peace, women are still excluded from the negotiation processes. Since the 1960's it is reported that

only 4 women, 3 Greek Cypriot and 1 Turkish Cypriot, played an important role in important decisions concerning the Cypriot problem. There is no official rule mandating an equal number of women to be included in the negotiations." Xarkis festival in collaboration with KIIF has also hosted sessions related to the impact of the conflict on women and other underrepresented members of the community. This sessions tried to strengthen these people's voices and to identify how they can be better included in the negotiations table.

source: https://xarkis.org/

20. Kores Xapolites,

2021

In the previous pages I p In the previous pages I presented only some initiatives that prioritize women's percpectives and opinions. There are of course many more of them such as the Queer Collective, Accept Cyprus, Queer waive Cyprus, Unchained rebel women CY, and the office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality.

20.   Kores Xapolites, 2021

Kores Xapolites in a feminist anarchic women's organization. I accidentally discovered them after my fieldwork in Nicosia as I encountered many of their graffiti in the urban space of the city. Kores Xapolites have a very active participation in reclaiming women's right in a patriarchal city and society like the one in Nicosia. They protest around women's rights. Recently they did a protest to demand abortion as a healthcare right, especially for women in the north, prompted by the decision of the Supreme Court of the USA to overturn the decision of "Roe vs Wade" which protected the right of abortion as a constitutional right. Kores Xapolites, in solidarity with the movement in the US took the streets against the banning of abortions. They demanded the right to accessible, safe and free abortion on demand until the 12th week, for all women living in Cyprus. In the north, abortion is still illegal, while in the south abortion became legal recently. Some other of their activities include the street parade "Reclaim the night," where they brought together dancers, performers, musicians, artists, singers, photographers, videographers, poets, make-up artists, technicians, academics, and more, to reclaim their space in Nicosia's center. Kores Xapolites also host other activities, such as movie screenings of feminist films and films narrating women's struggles, and a FemiKitchen.

Instead of a conclusion

The way people of different genders perform in the space, and especially in the urban space varies. The space informs bodies' movement and behavior and vice versa. Certain bodies' movements and experiences are disrupted, challenged, or even prohibited when an environment is contested. In the case of Nicosia, women and marginalized communities were highly affected by the conflict, and their voices were either censored or silenced, at least in public settings.

The walled city offers various places where women of both communities meet, discuss, and interact. Everyday life in the walled city is quite similar for the different communities; they assemble into public spaces (e.g., markets, commercial streets, plazas), private or semi-private spaces (e.g., art spaces, cafés, social spaces), religious and sacred spaces (e.g., churches, mosques). Many of these spaces in the heart of Nicosia support an alternative scene or the city's subculture. Specifically, local markets preserve communities' identity, community spaces (e.g., Open-air markets, performance spaces) activate public spaces keeping the walled city vibrant. These uses exist on both sides of the walled city, maintaining an everyday lifestyle

for the citizens across the divide.

What are the characteristics of the private and public domain in the two parts of Nicosia that mostly attract women and marginalized people? How do these places make them feel safe and free to raise their voices? Thses pages include a catalog of these spaces in both parts of the city and attempts to create a reading of the urban space.
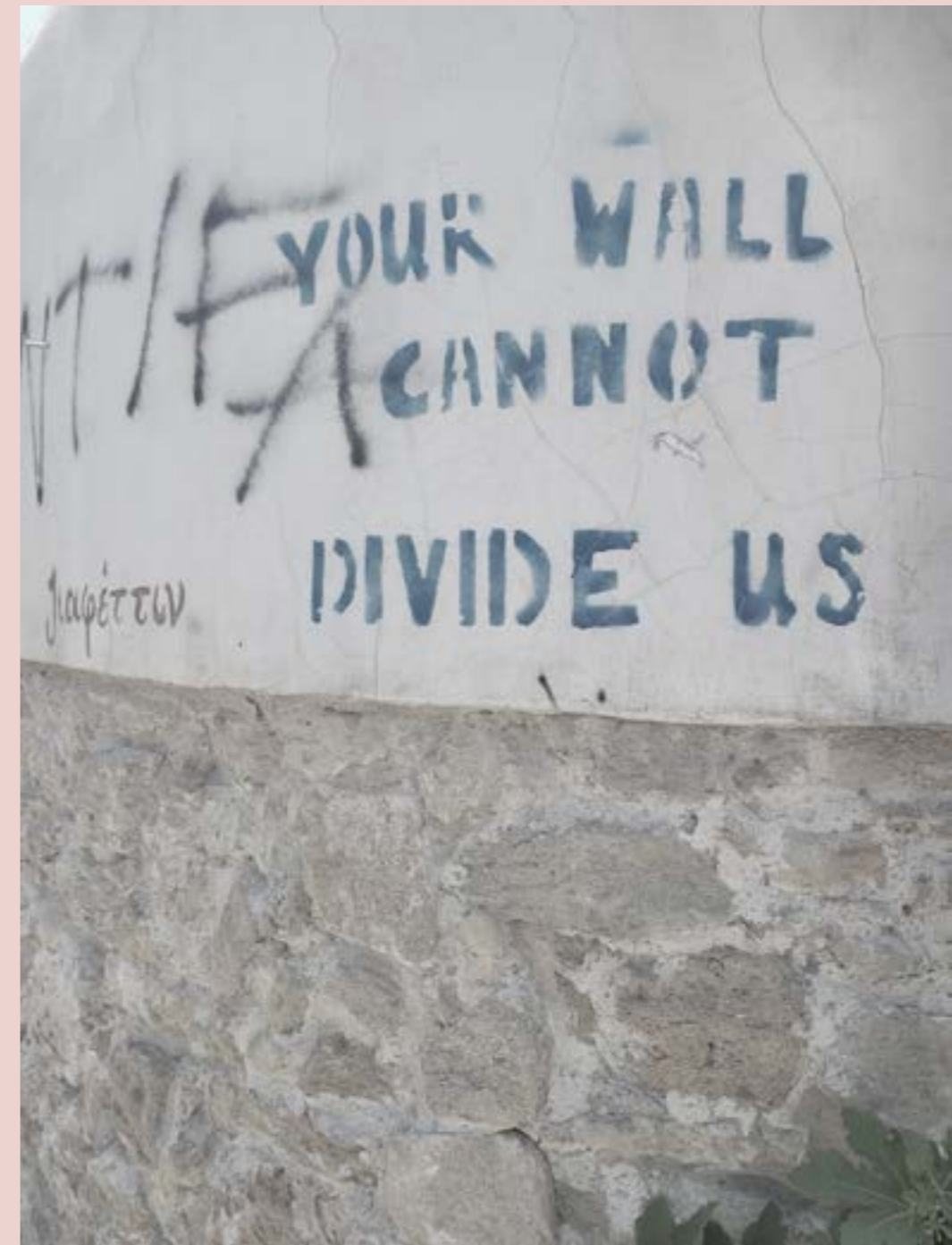
FUTURE PROJECTION

TODAY

Cyprus is a patriarchal and highly religious country. Both sides of the island have solid ethics and religious habits that oppress and discriminate against women. The war added an extra layer to the oppression that women experienced before. Women in Nicosia uniquely use the fragmented urban space. Their use of Nicosia's center as a hub for bicommunal interaction to cultivate cultural exchange, empathy, and dialogue challenges the nationalistic status quo. Nicosia's urban form and small-scale offer opportunities for social formation among the ethnic groups and rebuilding their trust and confidence. This use of the city affects and transforms the conflict, and thus it is important to examine them. To comprehend the current modalities and envision the future potential of Nicosia's conflict, we need to examine the official sociopolitical and planning efforts and recognize women's collective actions as a bright paradigm of coexistence and unity in Nicosia. Fieldwork is a crucial next step for this work to understand how women's use of space and their collective initiatives tackle oppressions and resist the conflict's dominant narratives. It is also essential for collecting information, as most of the available data (e.g., maps, statistics, photographs) are obscured and must do only with one of the two sides of the divide. The data I will collect in person will help me explore many scales and aspects of the urban space, including women's experiences, stories, and narratives. This project can make women's political agency and advocacy for peace visible.

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