# DESIGN

FOR

UNCERTAINTY

PLANNING FOR A SOCIO POLITICAL DIVIDE

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Design for Uncertainty
Planning for a socio-political divide

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Turkish Republic of Northen Cyprus
Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti

de facto: northern side
de jure: recognised only by Turkey

Kyrenia
Kyrenia
Girne

Pentadaktylos

Morphou
Morphou
Guzelyurt

Mountains

Morphou Bay
Kolpos Morphou
Güzelyurt Körfezi

Nic
Leuk
Lefk

Akamas
Peninsula

Tylliria Region
Tylliria
Tylliria

Troodos Mountains
Troodos
Trodos

Paphos
Pafos
Baf

Akrotiri
(UK)

Limassol
Lemesos
Limasol

Karpaz Peninsula / Karpasia / Karpaz

Pentadaktylos / Beşparmak

P e n t a d a k t y l o s

Famagusta Bay
Kolpos Ammochostou
Gazimagusa Körfezi

cosia
kosia
oşa

M e s a o r i a P l a i n s
M e s a o r i a
M e s a r y a

Famagusta
Ammochostos
Gazimagusa

Paralimni
Paralimni
Paralimni

Dhekelia
(UK)

Kavo
Greko

Larnaca
Larnaka
Larnaka/Iskele

Republic of Cyprus
Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία
Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti
de facto: southern side
de jure: all the island

part*3* *Design for Uncertainty*

Abstract

This dissertation will deal and focus on the several actions to be taken to propose a conservation, reuse, or requalification project in a particular, uncertain and difficult context of a divided city. The final aim will be the proposal of a masterplan, or better, of some scenarios for the requalification of the division area and thus for the two sides of the Cypriot capital, Nicosia, whose deeper investigation was allowed thanks to the opportunity of doing a semester abroad in the capital of Cyprus.

After an analysis of other case study, namely Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar and Gorizia, the focus will be in finding analytic tools to divided cities. The aim is not to find a definition, but more of a classification: some parameters, a step-by-step approach in studying what happens in a divided city, in order to calibrate the social and urban analysis for the case of Nicosia with a stable methodological baseground. This baseground will be preparatory for the employment of a particular tool of analysis, derived through urban sociology: in fact, a campaign of interviews, within the local population insisting in the city of Nicosia, will collect information, perceptions and aspirations in order to create different masterplans, or strategies, to follow, in order to requalify and regenerate the Buffer Zone in downtown Nicosia. These strategies are then defined and polished via a second campaign of interview, constructed according to the findings of the first. It will deal mainly with the professional opinion of local stakeholders involved in the issues, including high-caliber interlocutors such as the United Nation mission in Cyprus, or the representatives of both Greek and Turkish municipalities of Nicosia. This

second passage is needed to understand the common trend within the city, and to fit the desiderata of the interviewed population within the path and the strategies already envisioned for the city by the local decision-makers. Moreover, the opinion of the stakeholders, even with their different levels of power and involvement, defined a second scale of the project, going from an urban requalification masterplan to a localized intervention on a specific plot, using the investigated data to elaborate a design proposal. Already identified with the morphological analysis of the city, the defined intervention area will be Agios Kassiano/Kafesli district, in the East of Nicosia, and will insert itself in a path of rapprochment already identified by the local decision-makers.

To sum up, the paper will display three different scenarios, or phases, and will provide three operational masterplans for the whole of the Buffer Zone in downtown created starting from the acquired data, shaped into a planning tool of urban sociology. The perception of the urban population will be taken into account, and the opinion of involved stakeholders, whose interviews where based on the result of the urban population interview campaign, to identify an area to the conservation, reuse and refunctionalization, or better, reappropriation by both side of the island. The area of Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, through this process, will become a new checkpoint between the two sides of the island, in the form of an urban exchange point encompassing an area of the Buffer Zone accessible from both sides.

*part***1**

Analyse for Adaptation

**methodology and tools
for the analysis of
divided cities**

Chapter I
"A golden leaf in the sea"

The aim of this research is to investigate the possibility of an architectural and heritage intervention, with both spatial and social peculiarities, to a city that is divided into parts following a specific event and/or a moment in history.

The investigation will start by trying to define what is a divided city, in a more general attempt of giving a personal definition to the issue.
This task will be developed through the analysis of major case study of divided city, both present and past. The focus will be on Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar and Gorizia in this initial part, to give a thorough analysis of the causes and the factors that lead to the division of a city.

The factors and the causes of division will be then extrapolated and applied to the very same city in order to prove the logic of the reasoning. Those factors will then be explained and detailed by grouping them into three categories: the visible aspects - physical, cultural and ethnical division -, the semi-visible aspects - economic and social division -, the underlying aspects - historical and political division- (M.Zorko, N.Novak, 2019).

After this classification, a timeline of the process of division will be introduced for a better understanding of the urban, social and political process ongoing in those cities (R.Van Kempen, 2006). This theoretical basis will be the foundation of the hand-on research on the case-study city of Nicosia. The capital city of Cyprus will be analysed and "deconstructed"

to understand the social and spatial changing that happened after and during the division. In this initial urban analysis, the Space Syntax software will be employed to have an analytical tool supporting the design choices and the decision-making process.

A specification is needed here: the research is at risk to be biased and focused mainly on the southern part of the capital city; due to the pandemic situation of 2020, access to the northern half is precluded and lack of information is not helping the research[1]. The approach and the analysis are anyway meant to be citywide.

This will also transpire from the next part of the analysis, which will deal with a sociological approach to understand the populations opinions and perceptions about the division and

the presence of the Buffer Zone. The analysis will be carried out with a campaign of direct interview to inhabitants, commuters, temporary residents, followed by a second campaign of discussion of the results with stakeholders, in a participative process to suggest new ways of management of the Buffer Zone (Corbetta, 2015).

This peculiar area of Nicosia will be the focus of the architectural investigation. The participative process will come up with a shared strategy citywide, but that will be applied, particularly on the Green Line (European Heritage Days, 2008).

The strategic approach will be then declined into three scenarios: the city completely split and divided - closer to the actual situation -, the buffer zone as a shared international area - a foreseeable development -, and the city reunited - a long-term goal-. Those scenarios, readable also as three different evolutionary phases for the city, will provide a dynamic and proactive masterplan for the old town and the Green Line.

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1   the research period spans from September 2020 to February 2021, during the second wave of the CoVid-19 pandemic; the decision of the two communities to close the border crossings between the two sides of the island prevented the author from visiting in person the northern side of the island, ndr

Following this same path, there will be a focus on a building or a typology of buildings to provide an adaptive reuse intervention and a smaller scale, dealing with participative refunctionalization and restoration and historical memory issues. The final hypothesis that this paper wants to tackle is the possibility of imagining a possible path towards a bi-communal identity for the island of Cyprus through the revitalisation of the Buffer Zone, now a scar in the core of the island and its capital, but a future blank page for rapprochement.
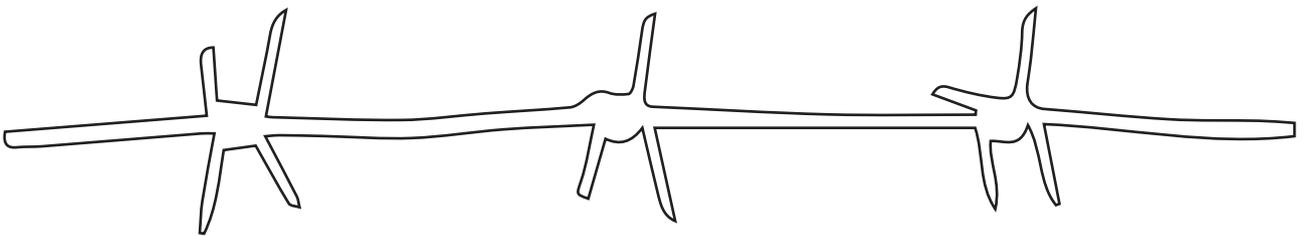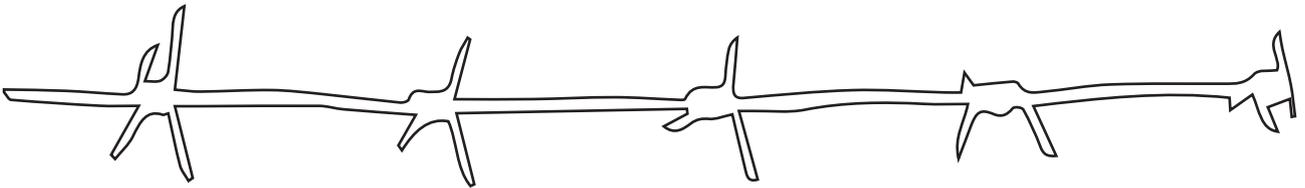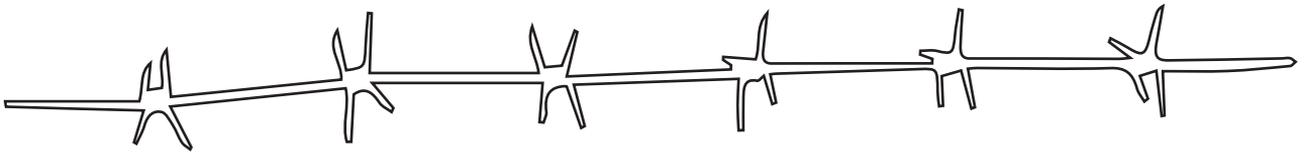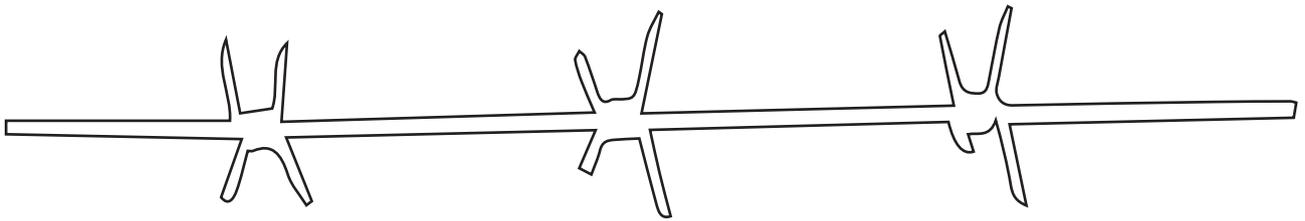
Chapter II
The definition of divided city

The phenomenon of a divided city is very rich and complex, and not very easy to tackle and unravel. No city is identical to any other, and the factors that create it and make it thrive are different, variegated and unique for each reality. This can apply also to the negative factors, the ones that undermine or destabilise the dynamic equilibrium of a city and can lead to its disruption.

Every city in the world can be considered a divided city, according to perspective the observer is looking at it (Vaughan, 2015): the poorest neighbourhood will feel a strong gap between themselves and the richest part of a city; communitarian and district identity, very strong in certain cases, split and break a city in several areas; finally, connections, transport and infrastructure can help a city to be united or,

if lacking, can lead to a perception of a distant city for those in the less-connected areas (Van Kempen, 2006).

The list of examples to understand the concept of division is long and does not stop only to physical and visible evidence: the crucial point is what lays underground, what is the social perception of a city by its own very population (Shdaimah, 2016). The population itself is here intended not only as the residents or the inhabitants, but it is broader, involving temporary users, commuters, tourists.

To continue further on the analysis is anyway necessary to find a common ground, a shared definition of **what is a divided city**. Several attempts have been made in the literature to tackle this open question.

II.1 what is a divided city?

A fashionable topic in nowadays literature, with several publications and papers about it, there are countless definition given to the concept of "divided city"[1]. Of course, the topic is delicate, complex and in some cases, it lies on a thin line, a boundary, between architecture, planning, politics and diplomacy. Being able to walk on this line, without crossing neither towards a politicisation and a nationalisation - towards one side or the other -, but neither towards a cold and detached determinism, looking only at abstract mechanism and modifications from above. It is provided here several definitions. The broadest one, from A. Casaglia (2010), states:

"Divided cities are defined as a territory where one or more borders, symbolic of material, divide ethnic, religious or national groups in conflict" (p.44)

It is of course a very general definition, but it helps framing the problem: it can be obvious to say, but it is important to state for clarity that every divided city emerge **from a conflict**. There is always a certain moment in time or a certain chain of events who led to the impossibility of further coexistence on the same territory of two

1　　A. Casaglia, Y.Carmenos, M.Sabrié, J.Calame , E. Charlesworth, R. Van Kempen, J.Nagle are some of the author in this chapter who worked on the theme of divided cities

or more groups of individuals. It can happen in **mixed-culture cities** that even coexisted peacefully and harmoniously for centuries. Those groups of individuals are related, and they feel a relation between individuals in the same group due to a common factor they share, being religion, culture, tradition or any other possible instances.

It is also interesting to look at how a city is divided, in its physicity. Those cities are the example of the **materialisation** of the already existing segregation between two groups. The walls, the Buffer Zones or the other partition elements are an expression of a **clustering of population** in separate areas even before the actual partition. As stated by Y.Carmenos and M.Sabrié (2017):

"les Chypriotes grecs oublient souvent de mentionner que le mur n'est pas d'abord lié au conflit avec les Turcs, mais préexistait à l'invasion de 1974" (p.4)
[Greek Cypriots often forget mentioning that the wall is not related to the conflict with the Turkish, but it existed long before the 1974 invasion.]

Another interesting point of view is expressed by Calame and Charlesworth (2012): in their analysis, they start considering a divided city as something **off-track** compared to the idea of city:

"A divided city may represent a departure from the regular development and structuring of urban environment, and therefore it may even be

considered dysfunctional, compared to a healthy city in which unity guarantees its adequate functioning" (p.18)

This strong point of view actually deals with the pre-concept in the common mindset that a city is a whole, is a single entity in all its shades and diversions.

But is it actually true that a city is a single entity? **A city is always divided** in several ways, both for mere and banal district boundaries, zip codes, but also for other underlying aspects: the economical level, with à-la-page district for high-income residents and popular low-income suburbs. As R. Van Kempen (2006) states:

"The undivided city is a myth and a utopia at the same time" (p.15)

Also, the dysfunctional aspects of a divided city should not imply that the city cannot work: as a **dynamic element** in the landscape, a city is a growing and moving collection of objects and individuals, and always rearrange and replace itself. It is obvious how a divided city like Nicosia actually managed to develop and thrive in spite of the division. It is clear, though, that there is a degree of truth in these dysfunctional aspects: a divided city always incurs in some problems, some shifting of importance, some discrepancies in the behaviour of its citizens.

Those aspects are not to be neglected but taken into consideration for any future development or strategy applicable to a divided city.

One of the most visible aspects for which a city ends up divided into two parts is clearly the feeling of belonging to a specific **ethnic group**. As J.Nagle (2013) said:

"Divided cities are defined by a violent conflict of ethnonationalism and characterized by semi-permanent ethnic cleavages, high levels of endogamy and social segregation." (p.1)

This is of course one of the main aspects, retraceable to almost all the divided cities taken into consideration in this analysis.

The concept of **ethnonationalism** (J.Nagle, 2013) is particularly important to understand several complex phenomena happening in a divided city. It is the deep feeling of belonging to a specific "minority" - which can also be actually not a minority - due to the fact of sharing a common ethnic adherence and appearance, with all the factors involved in belonging; this specific community is then politicised to develop a strong feeling of nationalism, projecting their feeling of belonging to an outdoor plan, actually giving themselves the right to be a "nation". When it is stated that the minority can be also actually not a minority, it was involved a phenomenon called **"double minority"** (J.Nagle, 2013): it is a complex effect in which, in an already segregated and ethnically separated territory, both groups of individuals feel like they are "the minority" and feel threatened by the other "minority", which is at the same time experiencing the same impressions.

It is already possible to see some common factors in defining what is a divided city. There is the presence of a conflict, **a breaking point** in history. There is ethnic tensions, with all the phenomena floating around this general concept. There is an adaptation in behaviour and development in cities like those, an imput towards reorganization that shift from the general concept of a city. There is the matter of religion, a crucial part of life for several individuals, and the spark for many conflicts. There is culture, in the sense of habits, intangible heritage, with its specificities and its peculiarity belonging to each group and dividing it from the other.

Those factors will be expressed and analysed in the following chapters, but the quest for a definition for "divided city" is still not closed.
It is possible to start asking: is there actually a definition? Moreover, **is there a need for a definition?**

A still picture of a dynamic situation, an uncertain territory, will not actually help the deepening of the analysis. It is far more important to actually extrapolate factors, causes and scenarios, by studying several examples, not to have an excursus or an historical analysis of divided city, but to extract tools and analytical means to propose a new scenario, **a planning tool for uncertainty.**
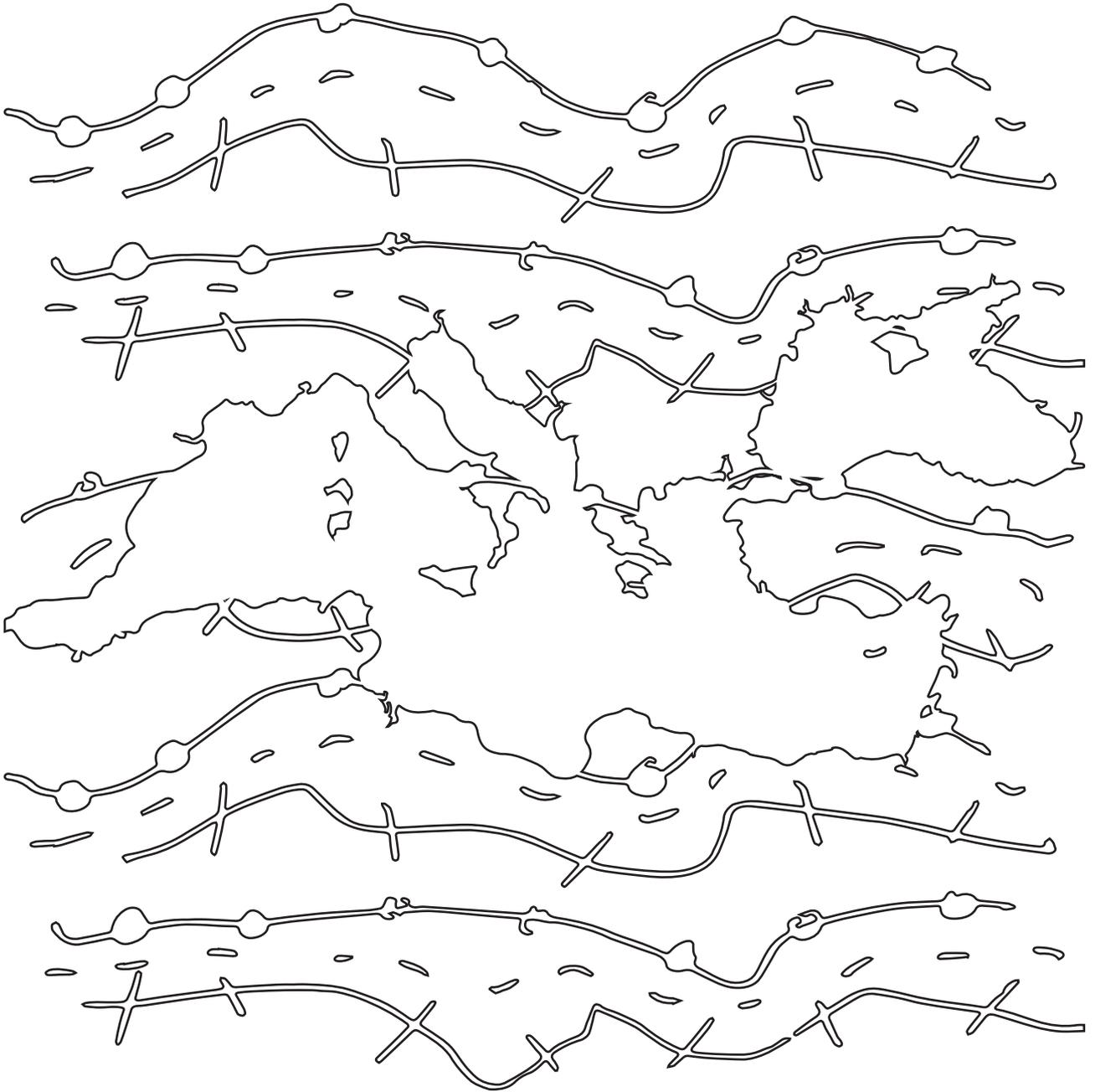
Chapter III
Case study in the Mediterranean area

The Mediterranean region is a cultural, social and political common area, characterised by different and singular specificities for every country and city lying in it. Nevertheless, some **common background** can be traced and use as a paradigmatic approach for their analysis.

The spatial and social specificities of the region led to several conflicts and clashes over time, thus allowing the investigation of urban changes and shifting in city morphology. It is in this region that it is possible to find most of the cases of divided cities in the world, or at the very least of divided city that are in this specific situation due to historical, social, political and cultural divided (Silver, 2010).

The common background of the Mediterranean basin also allows the thorough analysis of common factors, having thus a theoretical base to work as foundation for further speculations.

The cities in consideration will be described in detail in the following paragraphs of this chapter. The analysis will start with the major cases of Beirut and Jerusalem, two emblematic divided cities that, even though they are almost united now, still suffer from **social and cultural segregation** (Calame, Charlesworth, 2012): in the first, religious clashes lead to a civil war dividing the city for several years and requiring the intervention of foreign powers to settle the situation, in a precarious situation that is far from recovery even nowadays; in the second, the never-solved Palestinian problems and the series of wars and clashes involving Israel

and its neighbouring countries led to a de-facto united city, but with disagreements and disappointment still lurking under the ashes of a continuous conflict.

Following the path of religious and identity separation, the next case study, Mostar, shows all the difficulties and the obstacles of **coexistence** of two souls in a city (Bittner, Hackenbroich, Vöckler, 2010). The Balkan wars in the nineties, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, exacerbated those conflicts leading to a complete division of the city between Christian Croats and Muslim Bosniaks, in a long clash that was solved only after several years and after several destructions in the city.

An example related with the Balkan issues and the creation of Yugoslavia is the city of Gorizia and its Slavic counterpart of Nova Gorica.
A still divided city, crossing the border between Italy and Slovenia, it did not undergo violent clashes or destruction, but it is an example of a divided city that **never reunited**, but settled an agreement becoming a **twin-city reality** that

is now strenghtening the ties, but was once spread across the "Iron Curtain" during the Cold War. (Aebischer, 2018).

III.1 Beirut:
a middle eastern
religiously divided city

Religious and cultural division (Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, Christian Minorities and the Maronite Church) lead to conflict and civil war between the two soul of the settlement, and in general, of the country. The conflict in the "Green Line" and the action of the Western power on it did not helped towards a fast and clear solution. The purpose of each side of the conflict was anyway the final reunification: division was never a hoped solution (Al-Harithy, 2010).

The city was always split between **two communities**: Christian and Muslim residents, respectively on the Eastern part and on the Western part. The polarization was always felt, since the Ottoman rule and going on to the French colonial period, with few mixed districts, especially in the downtown, but with a strong sectarian identity. This pattern of **pluralism and sectarianism** has always characterised Beirut patterns, and was felt stronger and stronger with the urbanization of peasants and other immigrants from mainland Lebanon, especially the Maronite minority.

This minority, that in the years became most of the population, was the one that gained importance after the independence in 1943, picturing Lebanon as a Christian stronghold in the middle east, in contrast with Muslim countries and the newly instituted Jewish state of Israel.

But the majority status of Christians was challenged by the continue immigration of Muslims from Palestine and neighbouring country. It was the basis of a domestic struggle still felt nowadays, with the creation of a secular state. As stated by Calame and Chalmesworth (2012):

"Creating an heterogeneous secular state would lead to power struggle between the majority and the minority factions, weakening the authority of the central Lebanese government in the eyes of its neighbour" (p.43)

The international situation was not in favour of Lebanon, with the collapse of the Unite Arab Republic and the **Six-days war** in 1967, increasing the issue of Muslim minority fleeing into Lebanon. The outbreak of the struggle is of difficult origin: several sects and minorities were involved, namely Shia and Sunni Muslim, Druze, Armenian Christians, Catholics, Maronites and Greek Orthodox. The **religious melting pot** that Lebanon was, was not able to contain anymore all those different influxes and currents.

Pushed by international pressure from both the Arabic world, namely Jordan, and the powerful southern neighbour, Israel, Lebanon soon lost power and control of its own land, culminating with 1973 Israeli raids on the

coasts of the country. Moreover, the huge number of Palestinian refugees were living in poor condition in a already dense city, and they were demanding the government aids but also a firm instance against Israeli attacks.

Those international trends and policies reflected into the city situation: already as early as 1958, the city started being physically divided between East, rich Christian district, favouring nationalistic tendencies, and West, poorer Muslim sectors, with pan-Arabic ideas. **Barricades** started emerging in the middle of the streets, blocking several passages between the two sides.

The situation exploded in 1975, with several attacks to political leaders and protests in the streets. The already-felt division led to an ultra-polarization of the city, dividing even more and creating the casus belli for clashes, killings and revindications. Deliberately, barricades grew and completely severed the city in two. The boundary, called **Green Line**, ran north-south in the city along the major axis of Damascus Road, creating a de facto no-man's land filled with debris, rubble and burned vehicles. As an observer stated (Davie, 1994):

"It was very clear on the ground: symmetrically ruined building, rubble on the streets, up-ended, mined or booby-trapped containers, sandbag at every window." (p.51)

Normal life and mixed neighbourhoods disappeared- the city was completely sectorised. The situation was upheld for almost fifteen years, until a feeble agreement in 1989, which lead to the dismantling of the Green Line. The country and the city are struggling to rebuild themselves, but they are showing a great interest in reconciliation, with a feeling of **Lebanese nationalism** against previous divisions. The actual civil war that happened, even though the city is still polarised, is kept in the past, but the Green Line is still a mental boundary for several inhabitants, which find it hard to mingle and to go freely to the "other side".

Beirut, 1974 - 1990

1. *Beirut Clock Tower*
2. *National Assembly of Lebanon*
3. *Martyrs' Square*
4. *American University of Beirut*
5. *Green Line*
6. *Beirut International Airport*
7. *Raouche Rocks*
8. *Beirut Port*

500m

West Beirut (Muslim, pan-Arabs)   East Beirut (Christian, Nationalists)

III.2 Jerusalem: a proposed division

Jerusalem is one of the most complicated case of divided city: is it a solution? Is it a temporary solution? The main issue are the different perspectives in the matter: the "right" to a promised land for Jews and Israelis, and the "invasion" perspective of the Palestinians.

Jerusalem, one of the most disputed cities - i.e., the long history of Crusades - in the world throughout its history, is a peculiar settlement, according to some analysis of the Old Testaments and the story of King David (Calame, Charlesworth, 2012),

"[King David] founded his capital in this unlikely place to serve the interest of political integration and social reconciliation" (p.87)

Skipping immediately to modern history, the first tensions emerged during the **British Mandate of Palestine** in the 1920s, due to several factors: the oppression of the British colonial rule, the massive immigration of Jewish people in Palestine due to the insurgence of antisemitism in Europe, and the sealing of the border with Lebanon, which provoked a serious blow to the economy of the city. The last straw was then the **Balfour Declaration,** in which the British politician granted the right for a "promised land" to Jewish people, following the great influence of the Zionist movements in Europe. As stated by Calame and Chalmesworth (2012):

"[there was a] shift of tension from solidarity against foreign administration to inter-communal rivalry" (p.95)

that this last passage caused, thus increasing the first ethnic, religious clashes. After the Second World War, the context changed again: the horrors of the Holocaust produced an upheaval in international support for an Israelite state, and found the colonial power, the British government, crippled by the war and unable to keep control of the area as before. The gradual loosening of the British control meant a deeper division between the two communities: the divide et impera motto of colonialism was showing its fruits. The result was a initial, **patchwork partition** of Jerusalem in 1947, without consistency in the territory and without a specific boundary in partition.

Jerusalem, 1948 - nowadays

1. *Old City of Jerusalem*
2. *Temple Mount*
3. *Zion Square*
4. *Knesseth / Israeli Parliament*
5. *Mount of Olives*
6. *Hebrew University*
7. *Yits'Hak Navon Jerusalem Train Station*

500m

West Jerusalem (Jewish)   *East Jerusalem (Muslim)*

Following unsuccessful negotiations, a civil war broke out, polarizing the city between Jews and Palestinians, with construction of spontaneous barricades. After six months of conflict, a definite dividing line was traced, cutting the city in half: it was a strip of territory, very narrow, cutting in the immediate proximity of the Old Walled City, with barricades, barbed wires and surveillance positions, controlled some by Israeli soldiers, some by Jordan soldiers.

The two cities followed a different path in expansion: while **West Jerusalem** thrived thanks to immigration and constant economic aids by western powers, the East side of the city found itself landlocked, with a shrinking population, and only one border-crossing point, thus suffering a severe economic blow.

The proper division lasted 19 years. The Six-Days war in 1967, the defeat of the Jordan army, meant the **capture of the eastern part** of the city, along with large chunks of Palestinian land. This annexation is still not recognised internationally, with few exceptions, but as the reality of the fact the city is considered a single one.

This is far from saying that the city is united. As every divided city, it underwent a peculiar process of duplication: two hospitals, two schools, two municipalities, two business centres, which are still now visible, even though under the Israeli unique rule. The services are highly sectarian, with specific facilities destined to a single ethnicity. The population of the city itself still divides along the former border, with few points of contact and few interconnections.

New, fancy projects of renewal of the city are undergoing, to give it the appearance of a modern, unite metropolis - for example with the construction of a new, modern tram line (Yacobi, 2015) -, but far is this goal, and reaching it becomes harder. The border, no more physical, becomes now a **mental border**, a fracture dividing the city some residents know, to the city the same resident does not know how to navigate. It is what Yacobi (2015) calls neo-apartheid. To quote his words:

"The neo-apartheid city to come will enable the vast majority of territory and resources in the Jerusalem metropolitan area to be controlled by Jews, while the Palestinians will remain constrained to several enclaves, lacking real sovereignty". (p.584)

III.3 Mostar:
united city,
divided in war

The city of Mostar was a divided city for the long years of the Balkan conflicts after the **dissolution of Yugoslavia**. Also, in this case, division was never a proposed solution, but the division was deeper: not only religious (Catholic Croats, Muslim Bosniaks and Bosnians) but only economic and social (Bittner, Hackenbroich, Vöckler,2010), Richer catholic Croats minorities on the west, poorest muslim Bosnians in the east.

The city was the centre of the conflicts after the 1992 declaration of independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the central federal government of Belgrade. Following the clashes that were happening all over the Balkans – like on the Croatian cities of Knin and Vukovar – the city was **under siege** for months by the Yugoslavian federal troops, leaded by Serbian extremists, that brought havoc and destruction to the historical city centre, being its location exactly in those territories claimed to be part of the **"Greater Serbia"**.

The constant conflicts with the separatist Bosnians and Croats did matters worse. After the end of the siege, tensions between those two factions emerged and in 1993 a program of ethnic cleansing carried out by Croatian paramilitary forces, pushed Bosnian residents away from the west side, traditionally Croat, to the Bosnian districts along the river. And this ended up with the division of the city along the **Neretva river**. As a memory of the struggle, the old **Stari Most**, a medieval bridge connecting the two banks of the river, was bombed and destroyed in 1994.

The city ended up being split for years, and only in 1996, following the Washington Peace Treaty, free circulation was allowed within the two halves of the city. The city was of course prostrated by years of fighting, with the eastern Muslim district almost flattened and the very city centre abandoned and in ruin after the introduction of a **Buffer Zone** to separate the two communities, running along what was before the main boulevard, or **Bulevar**, of the city.

The situation nowadays has improved significantly, with the reconstruction of the historical symbols – such as the already mentioned Stari Most – and the UNESCO listing of the city centre as a **World Heritage Site**. There is still anyway a strong cultural, religious and social division, that reflects also in the economic level and the quality of life of the two communities (Nuhefendić, 2013).

At a superficial analysis few differences are apparently shown between the two situations, but at a closer look it is clearly identifiable how the new part of the town, on the western side,

gained importance and still now remains the new business district of the city, rivalling with the historical old centre on the Neretva River.

This is the direct consequences of the division and the abandonment of the city centre, that still did not recover from the clashes, and also by the **exacerbation of the economical division**, being all the business areas and the factory in the western side of the city. The west, already possessing several of the factories thrived, while the eastern part, pressed between the river and the mountains, suffered a lot in the years of the division.

Mostar, 1992 - 1995

① *Central Mostar No-Go Area*
② *Old Bridge (Stari Most)*
③ *Mostar Hospital*
④ *Mostar Train Station*
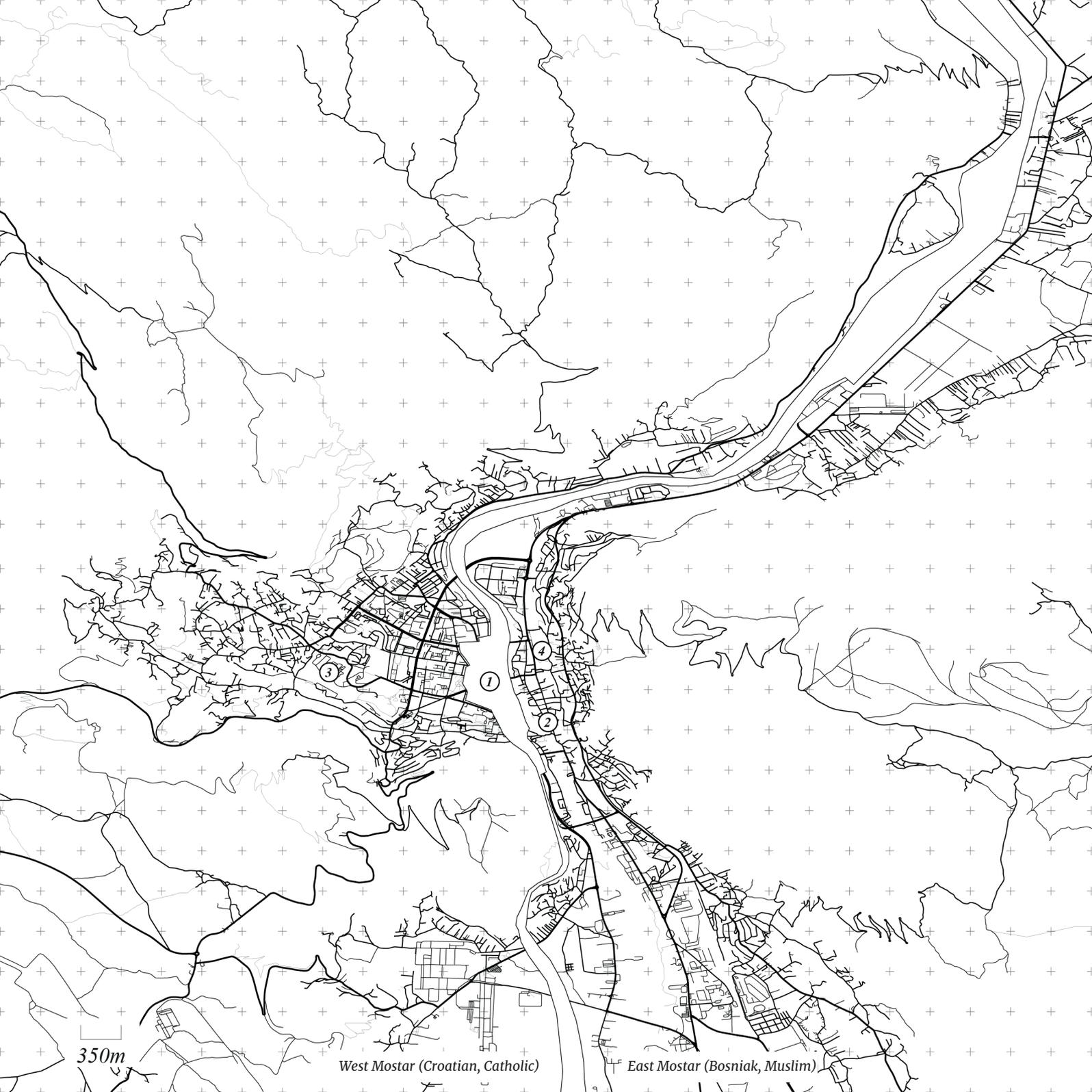
350m

West Mostar (Croatian, Catholic)   East Mostar (Bosniak, Muslim)

III.4 Gorizia and Nova Gorica: an Italian case

A city that was united until WWII, then separated again after it, also having the crucial role of border between the "capitalist" west and the "communist" east. The physical sign where clear, the spine wall in front of the old train station being only one of the few.26 The entrance of Slovenia in the European Union brought new life and new integration to this 50-years-old divide city, but unification is yet to come.

Gorizia, or Görz in German, is a city lying in the far east of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region of Italy. One of the largest cities in the **Austro-Hungarian Empire**, it was ceded to Italy after the First World War. The beginning of the clashes between communities happened with the forced Italicization perpetrated by the **Fascist regime** in the 10-years period before the Second World War (Lusenti,2010).

After Italy signed the armistice in 1943, several purges involved the Slavic population of the city, mainly by German army occupied troops. The city suffered several losses and destruction and came out from the conflict very wary.
Its destiny entered the diplomatic fight between post-war Italy and Yugoslavian government about the sovereignty over itself and the port city of Trieste. After the **1947 Paris Agreement**, the city was forced to give Yugoslavia almost 30% of its territory, which formed the Slovenian city of Nova Gorica.

Considered a **"small Berlin"** in the cold war era, the city was completely divided by a concrete and barbed wire fence, part of the infamous Iron Curtain. The repercussion on the city were an exodus of Italian and Slovenian communities from one part to the other of the border, thus creating two distinct identities, ethnically pure.

Nowadays the situation is clearly better, with free movement between the two countries and a joint government body, the Gorizia-Nova Gorica Urban Area, but the two halves of the city remain culturally and ethnically completely divided. Also, economically, the Italian side as a predominance of productive activities, leading to the phenomenon of **cross-border commuting**. The analysis shows how the divided city meant a loss of importance in the eastern, Slovenian part, while the consolidated city centre in the west, Italian part grew stronger.

After the settlement, the equilibrium changed and we can now see a pattern typical of a single city: clearly the lack of hard border, passport-checking and custom check helped the symbolical value of Gorizia and Nova Gorica as a **single entity.**

Gorizia and Nova Gorica, 1945 - Nowadays

① *Gorizia Castle*
② *Gorizia historical city centre*
③ *Nova Gorica new centre*
④ *Nova Gorica train station*
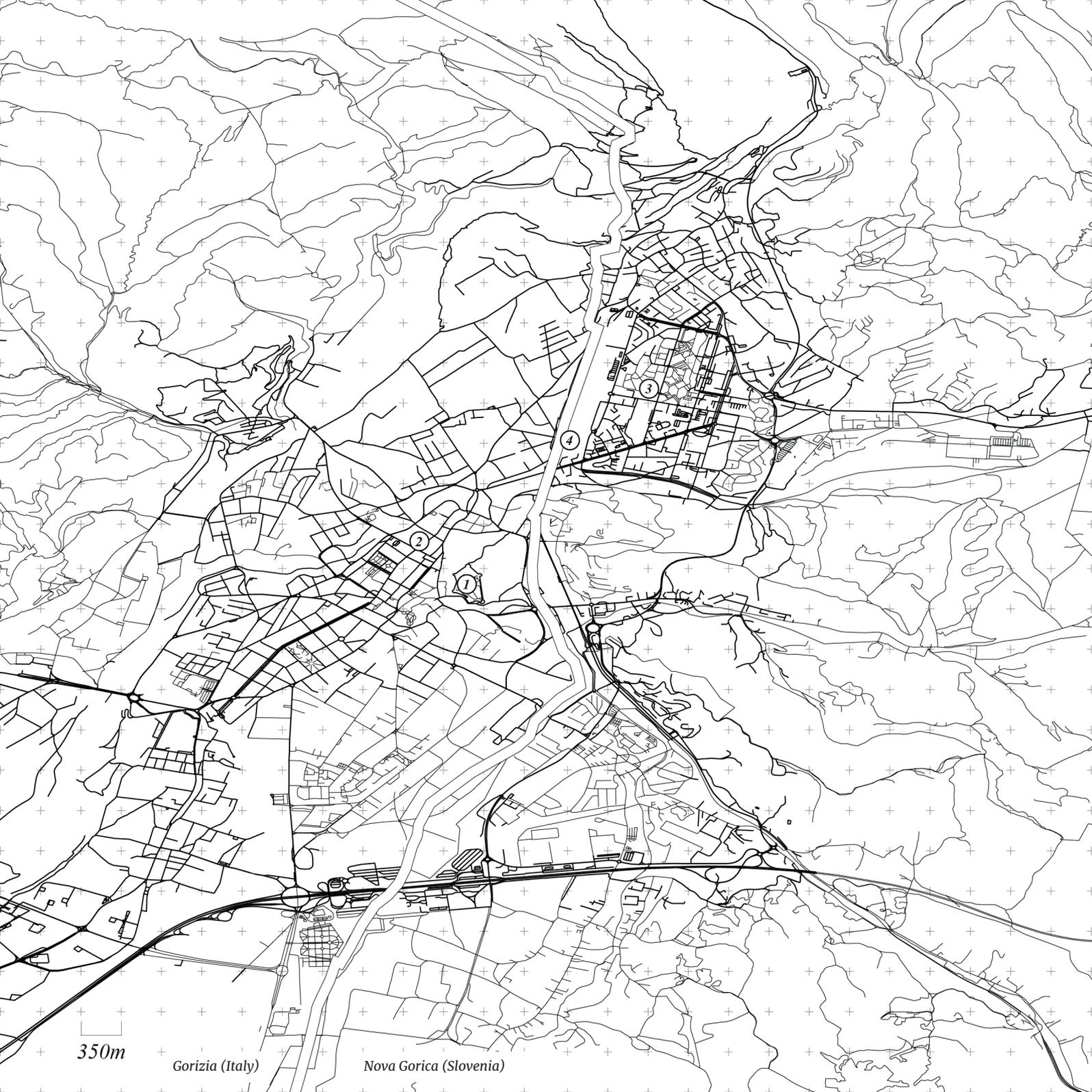
350m

Gorizia (Italy)   *Nova Gorica (Slovenia)*
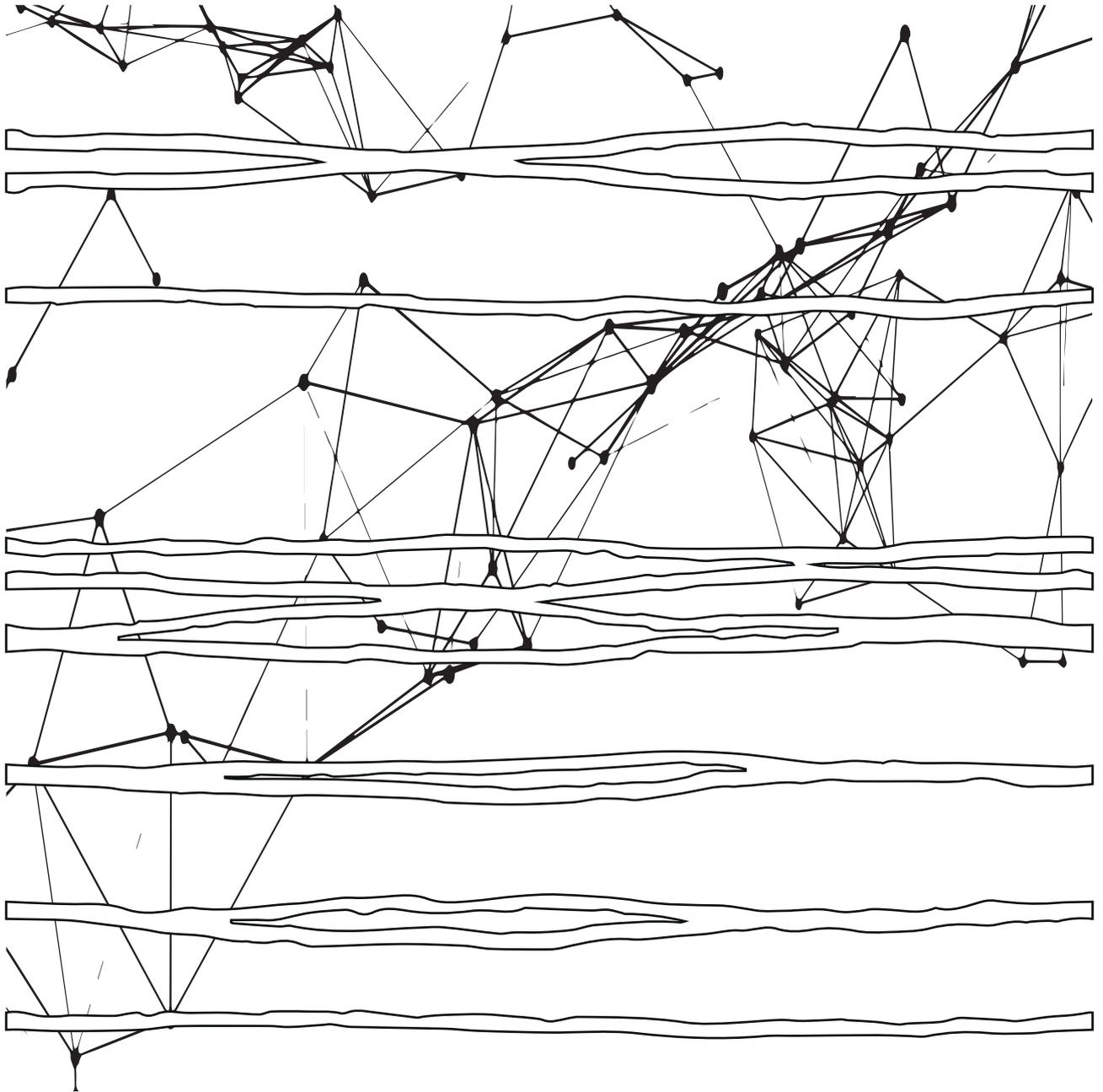
Chapter IV
Classification
and methodology

After having analysed several cases of divided cities, it is necessary to make order and to organize the different aspects of the division under a classification.

This is the task that it is expressed in this chapter: finding factors, but, moreover, tackle the issue of divided cities. As stated, a clear definition of the issue is almost impossible to make but having some **analytical tool** to deepen the understanding is the key for the result of this work.

Through the analysis of the divided cities in the Mediterranean region we can see that there are very different scenarios for division, and every city followed its own path. It may be a repetition of the findings of the previous

chapters, but the question is firstly geopolitical, in order to understand the issues going on in a determined region of the world, and so on the urban environments of said area. It is for this reason that the previous analysis was rooted in the **historical understanding** of the facts that led to a partition.

It is crucial to state that to make order, some factors will be introduced. Those factors have a double value: they can be causes, effects of a division, or both. This means that some of those aspects appears before the proper partition, some come as direct result of it, while some others transcend the singular timeframe of division, but they are part of a larger tendency, or flux, that stretches over the city history. For a better understanding, a specification will be

presented for every factor, when needed.

Those factors are nevertheless presented together, and not divided according to their "causality ratio": the only division is the concreteness of them, and their grade of perception in the city. This is not by chance, but it is derived through the analysis of the cities and, more in deep, by the perceptive understandings found both in literature, in residents and in other individuals that are or were exposed to the reality of a divided city at a certain point of their path. It is a perceptive focus in which this research is interested about, as it will be stated clearly in the following chapters.

After the analysis of the factor and their use for a comparison between divided cities, the chapter will deal with the **identification of a process**, a common *fil rouge* that every divided city follows, with clearly a certain discrepancy ratio. The classification followed here is taken from the literature (M.Zorko, N.Novak, 2019), and the module will be applied to every city to verify if they follow it or if there are some differences. Those differences will be then analysed to understand why they happened and for which reason.

IV.1 The different factors and cases of division

In Chapter II, some common factors were introduced. Those factors derive from an analysis of the existing literature (M.Zorko, N.Novak, 2019) on the subject, and they are extrapolated from the definitions and the attempts at classification which were made, in order to find a specific list of factors, their classification, their levels of importance and their impact on the city.

Those factors will also be applied to the cities analysed in Chapter III, to see their differences and their discrepancies, and help understand the lacking and the strong point of each one of them. Those factors will be used to understand the degree of division of every city taken into consideration, and in particular of the main case study, the city of Nicosia. Moreover, the different elements will help understand which is the **prominent motive** for the division, and so the underlying factors that brought to it. As M.Zorko and N.Novak (2019) are stating in their research about divided cities:

"[some] sets of criteria within which divided cities have to be considered when rethinking a geopolitical perspective on this issue: divided cities are an empirical state of fact and appear across the globe." (p.159)

This empirical state of the art of divided city is fundamental for this research, since it puts this analysis in a "scientific" level, allowing to treat divided cities as objects to compare, study and eviscerate. Of course, this simplification of the concept of the city is just applied here for clarity of analysis.
Quoting the same authors:

"In divided cities, it is hard to separate society from the space and time. Therefore, human geography and global history is often included in the analysis of divided cities, divided societies and urban conflicts." (p.160)

This last sentence is important to understand that the factors are not only physical, meaning related to space and actual division, but they are deeply rooted in social process, cultural environment and economical aspects.

IV.2 *The visible aspects: physical, cultural and ethnic division*

The first categorization that can be done is the collection of visible aspects for division. Those aspects are the more recognizable, even without and expert eye or a deep study.

A) Physical division

The first of those aspect is the physical division. Again, this is strictly related with the **visibility of the partition** of a certain territory. It seems like a basic requirement for a so-called "divided city", but this principle is not at the base of the phenomena: a city can be still divided even without the presence of the barrier.
Also, this physical division can be both made of artefacts, like walls, barbed wires, barrels, such as in the case of Nicosia, but it can be also a geographical boundary, like the Neretva river in the case of Mostar. As stated by M.Zorko and N.Novak (2019):

"Physical obstacles may vary from artificial ones, namely, wall, wire, logs, concrete blocks, all the way to the natural geographic obstacles or no man's land." (p.164)

Of course, a physical partition of a city generates different approaches and point of views, but also new **morphological and genetic transformations**: main streets now can be perceived as minor roads, passages are now just courts, avenues are just linear parking, and so on.

B) Cultural division

Another clear aspect, immediately recognisable, is the cultural division. It is again a matter of visibility, but it is here more related to **intangible factors**. It is the measure of how two groups, or communities, behave differently one from the other, both in traditions, folklore, culture and belief. To quote the same authors (Zorko, Novak, 2019):

"Mental borders also may vary, but they often go along some historical or identity artifacts [...] self-perception of population within certain divided city may vary in correlation with personal self-identification." (p.164)

The spotlight on self-identification means that the city, but actually the communities living in it, are finding common themes and common elements inside their own group of individuals, in a way to divide "us" from "them"; this is also related to the identification of symbolic places, areas or monuments, around which a community is centred: this tangible element of the panorama helps creating a **feeling of belonging**, a reference point for the whole community.

C) Ethnical division

From all the visible factors, the ethnic division is the shadiest ones. It is also challenging to describe and to analyse, due to the difficult definition of "ethnicity" and of the belonging of an individual to a specific one. It is probably possible to talk about "ethnical antagonism". As stated by J.Nagle (2013):

"divided cities are not mere reflections of wider regional geopolitics; they are often the very ground upon which ethno-national conflicts emerge and are sustained in the long term" (p.78)

Usually those conflicts are self-emerging: the more it is felt the belonging to a particular group, or ethnicity, the more the contact between groups are low, increasing the feeling of **intergroup mistrust**. This pattern of behaviour is not something emerging only in particular realities or after a conflict: several areas in the world are affected by the same issues. American cities are **ethnically segregated** for the majority of them, with white, upper-class districts and poorer, black suburbs. European cities facing immigration created cluster of areas dedicated to new residents: it is the case of the now up to date **"Chinatowns"**, to look at a positive example, but it continues with other daunt example of poor, segregated districts at the outskirt of the cities hosting a majority of immigrants. All those example of segregation lies at the base of a conflict, an they are of course exacerbated in specific cities in which the "original", or so called, population, is already split into groups and communities.

Nevertheless, citing again J.Nagle:

"Whilst the divided city is a central matrix for ethnonational conflict, it is also a dynamic social and political environment in which antagonistic ethnic identities can be challenged." (p.79)

So, there is again the duality of the city in the human panorama: on one hand, it is the cluster in which conflicts and tensions are visible and eviscerated, but at the same time its dynamic structure lead to a series of adaptation and rearrangement that actually row against the current of the conflicts.

IV.3 The semi-visible aspects: economic and social division

The second category of factors are defined as semi-visible, due to their long-term approach and the need of a deeper study to identify them and their impact on the city. It may be improper to call them semi-visible, though. This term should be interpreted in a broad definition: they may be visible and appear clear, but to understand their causes, their impulses and their path for the future is challenging.

D) Economic division

Probably an expected factor to take into consideration, **economical levels** define the shape and the evolution of a city. It is not always a factor of division, though, but it is a common data verifiable in any city all over the world: they are shaped clearly around a usually rich centre, and they spread towards poor neighbourhoods in the suburbs, except for some valuable lands for upper classes - like hillside areas, etc. -.

In other words, to have an example (Zorko, Novak, 2019) non-related to the case studies of this dissertation:

"In Colombia, national fragmentation of society is reflected in the country's capital Bogota. This city is completely divided [...] critical juncture that provokes division was tackled by enormous income differences between Bogota's inhabitants." (p.168)

In divided city this factor is important, but a clarification should be made: this element is taken into consideration not as one of the causes of the division, but as one of the **outcomes**. The theoretical approach may be daring, but it is possible to pass from causes to effects, because they both rely on the social and spatial analysis of the city. Thus, avoiding it, will risk losing some useful descriptive elements. In fact, also the physical division is an outcome, and not a factor, as they are the ethnic and cultural division. This will be clarified further in the following paragraph and sub-paragraph.

Typically, in a divided city, there is one half that is clearly the richest, while the other is left behind. This happens for several reasons: a previous distribution of population with already an evident difference of wealth, like in the division of the rich Christian side of Beirut against the poorer, Muslim side of the city; a better economic stability of one area over the other, with presence of more factories, industries and economical poles, such as in Mostar, where the Croat parts was home of all the industries of the city in comparison to the Bosniak part; a better international political backing, for the cases of Nicosia and Jerusalem: the officially internationally recognized area of the city - Southern Nicosia and Western Jerusalem - show a bigger growth in comparison to their respective Turkish and Palestinian parts.

E) Social division

Social division is a complex aspect involving several **behaviour and habits** predominant in both communities. Apart from the common aspects, some ways of living can define a group in opposition to the other. It is necessary to speak about social environment, in order not to separate the spatial features from the behavioural features, since they are in a circle influencing each other. The discriminating factor is, as said before for the cultural division, a matter of **mental belonging** to a group and not to another. Citing the same paper (Zorko, Novak, 2019):

Divisions in social environment mean an identity belonging or:

"non-belonging to a group of people [...] Identity in this sense presumes self-image and personal self-relation towards one or the other fraction in a divided city." (p.165)

This can be verified in the different aspect of **social life**: one group gathers in a specific place, while for the other group the same area has not a significant importance; one group follows certain habits, while the other has different or modified ones.

Another discriminating factor can be sport: on group is related, for example, to a specific football team, while the other is supporter of another. The sport matter is more complex, since there can be a cross-group belonging, but it is important to be cited to understand that also something that is not considered such severe difference is a deep factor for people.

Fairly speaking, social and cultural differences usually overlap: places of gathering can vary according to the symbolic identity one group gives to them, in contrast with the other. But this is of course an expected outcome, since all of those factors cannotbe considered separated from each other, but there is always an overlapping and a syncretism between factors

It is still useful to consider social and cultural aspects under different lenses, since the first deal with behavioural elements in everyday life, while the other also includes a superior plane of reflection, the one dealing with tradition, folklore and history.

IV.4 The underlying aspects: historical and political division

The underlying aspects are the deepest level of investigation into the matter of divided city. They are rooted in historical and geopolitical tensions and modifications, that led to the outcome of divided city. Those factors can be properly seen as causes of division, but also as outcomes of the division, especially the political factors. It shows a degree of rearrangement following the division but rooted in the causes of it.

F) Historical division

Those factors can properly be seen as causes of division, but they still make themselves visible in everyday life. In general, it is possible to say that they are the answer to the question **"Was there a moment in which division happen?"**.

This question can be interpreted in two ways: the first one assesses if the split happened suddenly, following a conflict or an international, or better transnational, agreement; the second investigate if the partition happened following a decade-long period of clashes, inter-communal fight and turmoil.

Of course, the two possible answer are not completely on the two extremities of the spectrum, as described for a matter of simplicity, but there is a whole variety of situations and happenings that led to the division. In very few cases it is possible to say that a city was partitioned in a specific moment: the only example can be Jerusalem, divided between Palestinian State and the new State of Israel, but also in this case the agreements took several years, and they led to a series of conflicts in the period following them.

Usually, the division happens after **clashes and long fights**, and usually without bi-communal consent: it is mostly the action of one group over the other, to prevent for example ethnic crimes or hatred between the communities. It is the case of Nicosia, in which the norther part of the city, and in general of the northern part of Cyprus, unilaterally declared independence after the Turkish invasion in 1974. In this case, also, the separation happened after a decade of fight and proposed division in area of interest.

G) Political division

The political division is a measure of how the divided city rearranged itself after the division. It is a resilient adaptation of the two parts to keep the city working. It usually deals with the creation of **different political institution**, both at the scale of the city - municipality, boards of government - and at the scale of the country, with the institution of two different government. This political division reflects at the level of the general institution. To quote Zorko and Novak (2019):

"Already mentioned institutional division as a part of this criterion, could be seen in the domains of education, transportation, or, for instance, sport. In the context of education, there are publicly funded schools or universities that exist as parallel structures and, thus, duplicate the contents of lectures." (p.166)

The matter of educational institution, here aforementioned, is only one of the aspects of a political divide, but it is a fair example to understand the dissociation and the double existence of institutions insisting on the same territory, working in similar ways but with no relation with each other.

Another political divide to keep in mind is not only the institutional one, but also the ideological: two different government with two **different policies** can affect the partition of the city - i.e., Berlin -.

In some cases, those institution find some common grounds and start a **cooperation process**; it is the case of Nicosia, where the two governments started cooperationg since 1979, first finding an agreement for a common water treatment plant, and then creating a shared architectural and planning board, the Nicosia Masterplan Team. Those scenarios and those steps of cooperation will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

IV.5 Rationalisation of factors and comparison

The description of the several factors can be tricky to be used for an operational analysis. In this paragraph will be carried on a process of rationalization and comparison of the factors, in order to convert them into tools.

The first action to be considered will be the extrapolation of levels of "severity" per each factor, in order to tackle them and use these levels as numerical values to analyse the various case study.

Physical

1 Natural:
the city is separated due to the presence of a physical natural border, being it a river, …

2 Artificial:
the city is divided through barricades, in the first instance, or a proper wall, in a second time

3 Guarded Artificial:
the city is separated by a wall or a series of blockades, and there is presence of armed guards along the perimeter of the division

Cultural

1 Background:
the traditions, the folklore and the historical memory of the city is different from one sector to another

2 Linguistic:
not only the traditions, but also the language, and so the way the space is perceived, changes

3 Cultural–Religious:
traditions, folklore, history and religion is different from one side to the other; it may include also a linguistic difference, but it is not a fundamental factor

Ethnic

1 Tolerant:
there is coexistence of the two communities in some mixed district or in the whole city area

2 Sectarian:
there are few mixed areas, and most of the population lives in ethnically homogeneous clusters

3 Polarized:
the two communities live completely separated one from another, and there are occasional clashes and violences

Economic

1 Emerging
there is a slight difference of economical level between the two sides, but the scissor is not extreme

2 Separating
there is a difference in economical level that splits the population, sometimes with the creation of poorer districts

3 Manifest
the difference of economical level is clear and evident, and leads to a polarization and a creation of a "rich" district against the "poor" slums

Social

1 Overlapping
the two communities share a similar lifestyle, habits and behaviour in the use of the space

2 Gathering
the two communities share the majority of the space, but they have a determined and exclusive gathering area for each of the group

3 Lifestyle and Habits
social life and use of the space is completely different, with no mingling and sectarianism in relationships

Historical

1 Sudden
the division between the two groups happened fast and in a specific moment of time, sometimes with a third-party intervention

2 Violent
a period of clashes between the communities ended up in a complete division of the territory

3 Long-lasting
it can include the previous two, but the origins of the division are rooted in the past, with several decades of mistrust and polarization

Political

1 Factious
the two communities identify themselves into different factions and sometimes different political parties

2 Facilities
the two communities use different facilities (hospitals, schools, etc.) that are exclusive for one of them

3 Governmental
the two groups are completely split, and they refer to two different "twin governments", with a doubling of institutions

The values are investigated per every case study and they are focused on two moments of time: the city at the beginning of the division and the city nowadays. This dichotomy in time is useful to understand the difference occurred if there are any

Those graphs represent the attribution of value per every city analysed, according to the conclusions reached in chapter III. The area covered by the graph is clearly bigger if analysed during the division, since the factors were multiple and complex. If the areas on the graph are summed up, it is possible to understand the different critical points of those cities during the division by looking at their peak, their distribution and their overlapping.It is visible that the critical points were the physical, cultural, ethnic, social and political division. It is not an unexpected result: those friction points are obviously the main causes of a city division. It is interesting anyway to see the overlapping of those factors: the darkest areas are clearly shifting towards the physical and political factors, the crucial one in this initial part of the division. The matter in this timeframe is purely geopolitical, and it is not the main topic of this dissertation. It is anyway interesting to note those peculiarity, in order to draw a parallel to the situation in those cities nowadays. The next graph shows exactly the aforementioned situation:

The first disclaimer to make is that the historical factor is no longer needed in a present-day analysis, since there is no need to understand the past causes of division. It will be anyway

taken into consideration in the first part of this graphical analysis.

It is immediately possible to see that the cities that are now "reunited" have a dramatical fall of their areas on the graph: Beirut and Mostar are reduced significantly. This is the result of a political reunification under a certain single political entity; it is something that is not visible in Gorizia, still a cross-border city growing apart, and Jerusalem, enchained by a wall separating it from the Palestinian land. In those case of political reunifications also other factors fall: the physical boundary is clearly no more present, the economical level is more or less sanded to be equal, and the cultural division is more flexible.

It is again interesting to see what happens if the areas on the graph are overlapped. Compared to the previous overlap, this is shifted clearly towards a different part of the circle: the social, cultural and ethnic one.

Someone may ask why there is the need to find those different aspects, which may seem rather obvious: the actual aim of those analysis is not to have a still image, a photograph of the cities. It is rather to identify the field of actions, the places in which there is a possibility of operational movements towards a stabilization of the situation.

If in the first overlap the field of action was purely political and political science based, in this there is more freedom: the role of the

Elements of division aerial graph, at the beginning of the division

Beirut
Mostar
Gorizia
Jerusalem

Physical

Cultural

Ethnic

Economic

Social

Historical

Political

Beirut
Gorizia
Jerusalem
Mostar
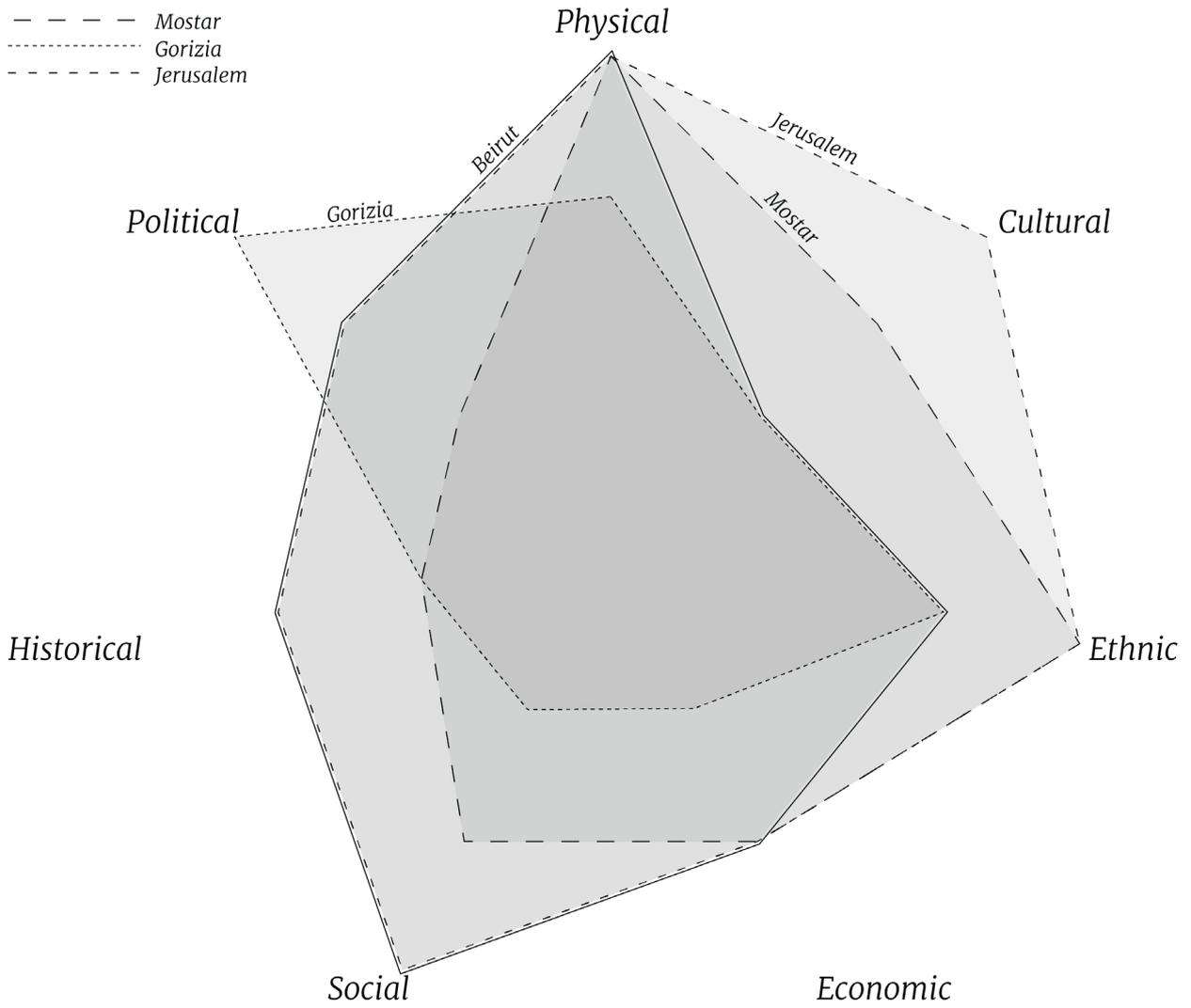
architect, or in general of the planner, can tackle social and cultural issue by installing new areas, new function; by bringing back a common historical memory above the division; to create new gathering spaces.

This statement should not be read as a eulogy of the planning, but it is to be interpreted as an operational mandate to try and propose some solution, based on the field analysis and on the perceptive analysis that will be explained in the following chapters.

Elements of division aerial graph, present times

——————— Beirut
— — — — Mostar
·········· Gorizia
- - - - - Jerusalem

Physical

Political

Gorizia

Jerusalem

Cultural

Beirut

Mostar

Historical

Ethnic

Social

Economic

51
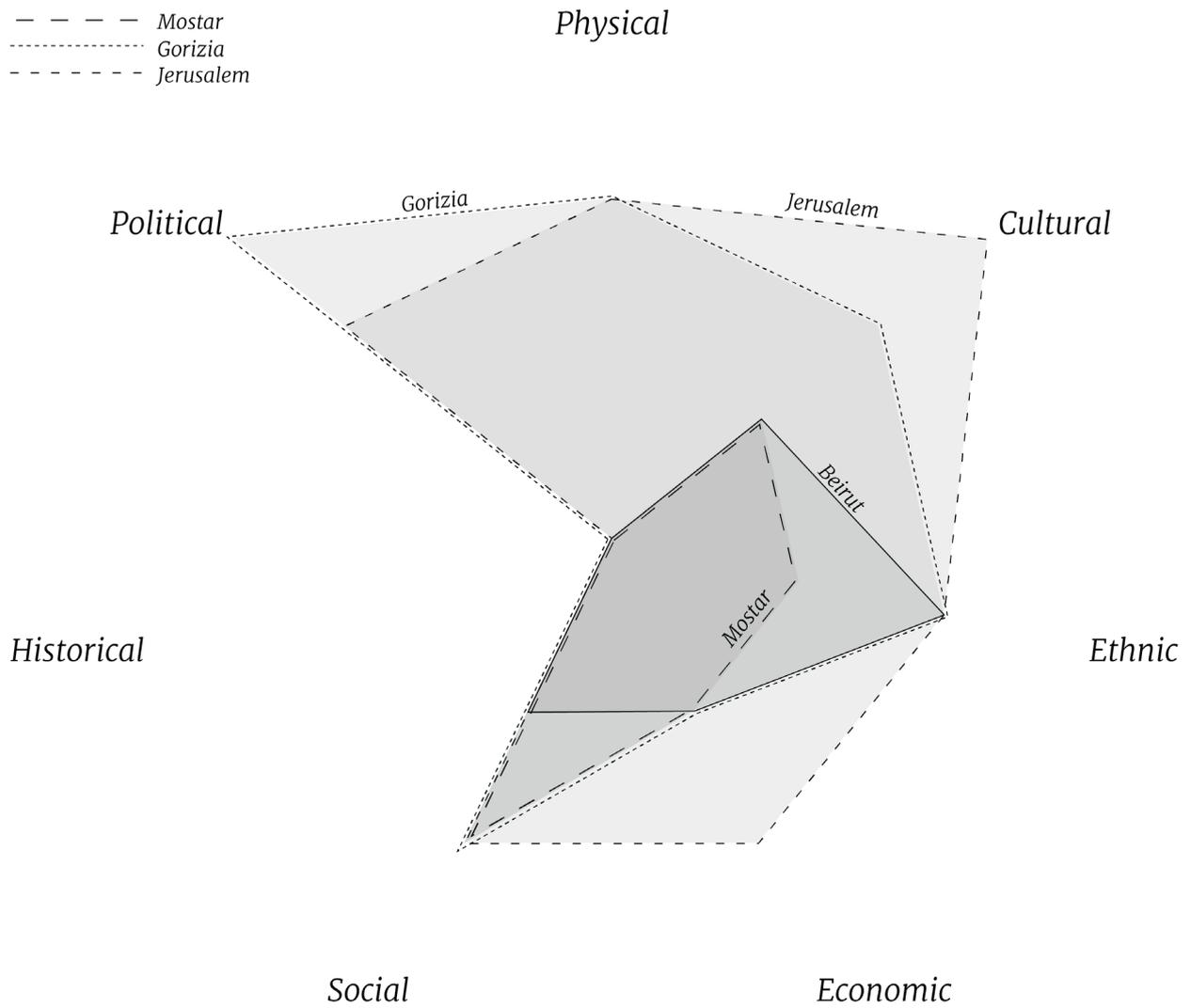
IV.6 What happens to a divided city?

A divided city is never a static element. It is a process of division, followed usually right after, or after a period of stabilization, by attempt of rapprochement. Where those cities place themselves is important to identify in order to evaluate the degree of reunification, but it is also fundamental to understand where the city stands in the process, and, in the case of Nicosia, to calibrate the action to be taken. In fact, the creation of one, or more, scenarios of action for the division of a city has to pass through the identification of the issues and the trends brought forward by the partition, to adapt and being rooted in feasibility.

Again, usually the division is the materialisation of social, ethnic and cultural tension, and the physical appearance of it is usually the result of a process of clustering or segregation. According to several scholars, like N.Kliot and Y.Mansfield and their work, later reused and adapted by J.Calame and E.Chalmesworth (2006), there is a possible classification and a step-by-step analysis of what happens to a divided city (Kliot, Mansfield, 1999).

The first step is the *Pre–Partition*, in which the city works as a single entity and with a certain degree of internal separation between districts and so on. It is in this phase that, in monitoring a city patterns, it is possible to see some beginning omen of division: there can be a clustering of ethnicity, with an alignment in districts and the avoidance of others; this is what happened in Nicosia before the actual division, with bicommunal clash between the ethnicities and the politicisation of the ideas of union with Greece, supported by Greek nationalists, and the aspiration of separation, the answer for the dreaded union by Turkish Cypriots. Those are signals of the ethnic politicisation, with the different ethnicity following different leaders or ideology, but moreover almost creating two separate civic lives.

After those signs it is clear that the *Actual Partition* is not far ahead. This phase can be seen as the most violent one, with clashes and struggle between the communities: it is not a case that usually the division is made to separate those two different forces and to create areas of inference that are separated by each other; it is the case of the separation of Beirut and Jerusalem, to cite a few (Rokem, 2012). In Nicosia, the starting point can be seen in the Cyprus Crisis of 1963-64, culminating in the massacres of the Bloody Christmas in 1963, with the death of 200 Greek Cypriots and almost 400 Turkish Cypriot; it was the harshest crisis since 1961 indipendence of the island, and resulted in almost 20.000 Turkish Cypriot forced to flee their villages, escaping into guarded enclaves all over the island.
It can be the result of a proper political up-scaling, following the politicisation issues, and can be rooted in what is called double-

minority syndrome, a particular phenomena in which both communities feel overwhelmed and threatened by the other.

Right after this phase there is the *Initial Division*. It is still a violent phase, with a growth in hostility, the border materialization and consolidation, sometimes with fortifications and armed guards. It is the emerging of a proper no-man's land, a buffer zone, with reduced but continuous clashes. The Buffer Zone can emerge after a process of boundary etching, in which both communities claim the territory going building buy building and field by field. In Nicosia, the initial point of division was the Turkish invasion in 1974, following the Greek nationalist coup: from that moment, the already mentioned Turkish Cypriot enclaves consolidated in the North, creating a Turkish occupation zone; several Greek Cypriots living in the North, and several Turkish Cypriots living in the South were force to displace, in a population exchange, on the respective side of the divide, now split by a hard border and a Buffer Zone.

If the division of the city gets more consolidated, there is the *Midterm Division* phase. In this particular case there is a stabilisation of the situation, with a decrease of intensity of the conflicts and, sometimes, their complete end. The border is physically present, and it is going to stay, thus giving a feeling of normalization. In this phase usually starts to appear new generations that never saw the city united and now perceive it only as half, but whole at the same time. It is then a matter of perceptive normalisation. Due to the almost 50 years of division, Nicosia passed through this phase, considering that the conflict is so radicated that its physical manifestation, the Buffer Zone, is considered as a part of the city panorama.

In every case the city is never completely severed. There is always some degree of porosity. This is the next phase of *Rapprochement*, in which cross-border movement is controlled but allowed, and there is a sort of dynamic unification between the two sides, both for shopping, working, tourism and several other. The rapprochement is visible also at an higher level, with the emerging of some programs of cooperation between the governments, and even the presence of some shared institution and governmental boards. In Nicosia, these processes of rapprochment started really early, with cooperation dating back to 1979, and culminated in recent years with the opening of the eight checkpoints along the Buffer Zone and a dynamic flux of people between the two sides. This dialogue was also brought forward tahnks to shared institutions, such as the Nicosia Masterplan Team, under the aegis of the United Nation Mission.

It is possible to say that Nicosia probably places itself into this step: the consolidated division and the Buffer Zone are not perceived as a dangerous element for the island peace, but they are completely normalized in the perception of the people of Nicosia. The cooperation mechanisms between the two

sides are also strong and long-lasting, with processes of bicommunality already activated, either by public initiatives or via the mediation of the active citizenships, or the civic society, with events or activities open to both sides of the divide.

Those actions are all pushing towards the next step, the proper *Unification* of the city, reverting back into a single entity. This desired outcome is anyway the trickiest of the passages, since it involves integration issues and other unpleasant problems that a long-term division clearly caused on the people's mindset. The aim of the investigation in this dissertation will be the understanding of which actions chan be taken to continue along this path, and to propose a new space for rapprochment, and potentially for future unification, in the city.

part 2

Investigate for perception

*a sociological approach
to the matter of
divided cities*

Chapter V
Nicosia: the last divided capital

The city of Nicosia is a unique reality in the world. A Renaissance "ideal city", with its intact Venetian walls; a mixed and welcoming city, called home by several minorities and cultures; a capital of a country with strong European ties, but with huge middle-eastern and Levant influence; **a capital city for two entities**, the legitimate Republic of Cyprus and the unilaterally independent Turkish Republic of North Cyprus; a divided city, in which walls, barrels and barber wire are part of the panorama; the "last Berlin", the l**ast divided capital** city in the world.

The city is divided between two different governments: the **Republic of Cyprus (RoCYP)**, internationally recognised as the only legitimate government, and the **Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC)**, considered a "pseudo-state"

by the southern government and recognised only by Turkey on the international level. This division cuts the city right in half, passing in the middle of the Old Walled Town and splitting the Venetian walls in two. But the division of the city is more rooted in the past. As D.Oktay (2007) states:

"Although the largest communities, the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, have shared the island of Cyprus for the last four centuries, at no time have they integrated on a large scale, owing mainly to differences in language, culture and history" (p.232)

It is so a long-time division, even before its physical appearance and the severing of the city in 1974. The two communities were always

living along, but not together; there was a matter of **coexistence, but not integration**.
Quoting the same scholar (Oktay, 2007):

"[…] the Turks and the Greeks, were already living in separate residential areas defined by their religious centres: the Turkish districts (mahalles) were located around the mosques, while the Greek districts developed around the Greek Orthodox churches" (p.234)

The friction point started appearing after the independence forms the British rule. If before that moment, the two communities worked together against a common enemy, each one with their own paramilitary groups – Greek's **EOKA** (Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston / National Organisation for the Cypriot Struggle) and the Turkish Cypriots' **TMT** (Türk Mukavemet Teskilati/Turkish Resistance Organisation) -, now the gap started to be felt seriously by the population. And so were the never-abandoned idea of *Enosis*, the joining of Greece by the Greek communities, and the *Taksim* idea, the splitting of the island felt by the Turkish Cypriots, in case a union with Greece would have happened.

The fragile government and the constitution of the new Republic of Cyprus were not received happily by the population, who saw those as a compromised solution. The election as Prime Minister of the **Archbishop Makarios III** in 1960 was another blow to the bicommunal agreements. The agreements between Great Britain, Greece and Turkey gave the island a governmental framework in which the power was distributed along with **ethnic quotas**. This legal background was put in practice in a situation that was not pacified, and with several contrasts between the two communities: in other words, the **legal integration** happened before a proper social and cultural assimilation. To quote J.Calame and E.Chalmesworth (2012):

"For all practical purposes, the constitutional government of Cyprus was a stillborn, short-lived compromise brokered under pressure between moderate parliamentarian and militant nationalists." (p.131)

The physical division happened in 1963, with the clashes between the communities ongoing since several months. In the last days of that year, after the killings of what became known as **"Bloody Christmas"**, a ceasefire line was promoted in order to bring peace in a incandescent situation. The line, passing along Ermou Street, the old commercial core of the city, was nothing but temporary, and it consolidated into nowadays border. It is actually since 1963-64 that the city, and the island, were divided, with the beginning of a proper **"ethnic alignment"**: Greek in the south, Turkish in the north.

The final act was a direct consequence of 1967 Greek Coup in Athens, that started the military Junta government and a rise in Greek nationalism. The **Junta** staged a similar coup against Makarios in 1974 guided by a new paramilitary movement called **EOKA-B**, that miserably failed, with the final objective of promoting the Enosis.

After this moment, the situation escalated pretty quickly: Turkey, one of the three main foreign power involved in Cyprus' diplomacy (along with Greece and the United Kingdom) decided to military intervene in the island, a right that was constitutionally granted by the new Constitution. In the so-called **Operation Attila** (Calame, Charlesworth, 2012), the Turkish army landed on the north cost and started a march towards the south, that was stopped only along the ceasefire line: now, from **Morphou/ Güzelyurt** runs a line until **Famagusta** dividing completely the island, and its capital city right in the core of its medieval city.

This historical excursus was a key to understand what happened to the city, and why the situation is so complex and hard to develop towards a reunification. **Several proposals** were put on the table, from a complete division of the island since the creation of a federal state, as proposed by UN Secretary-General **Kofi Annan** in 2004 (United Nations Security Council, 2003).

None of them actually saw the light.

V.1 criteria matching and step of division

The city of Nicosia fits perfectly in the methodological background of the paper, already assessed for other divided cities. The factors of division are summed up here.

For the **physical division**, it is clear that the situation did not change drastically from the division time to nowadays: walls, barrels, barbed wires and fences are still present, and the **military presence** is visible in the city, both by the Cypriot National Guard and the UN soldiers.

The **cultural division**, as tricky as it is, is not very perceivable. The two communities have different religious faith, different languages and even a different alphabet to complicate matters. Nevertheless, **traditions and folklore** is shared between the two communities, so a beam of hope is visible taking into account those matters.

Ethnically, the city of Nicosia, and the whole island in general, are completely divided: after the clashes in 1963 and the actual division in 1974, the population fled to the respective areas, resulting in **ethnical homogeneity** in the two halves of the country.

Also, **economically** the division is perceivable.

Even though both parts have a high standard of living, the southern, Greek part is clearly the richest of the two, thank to international backing, while the North side suffer from **embargo** and **not-recognition**. It is perceivable also after the opening of the checkpoint, when the flux of Greek Cypriot to the north increased in order to buy products and goods at a cheapest price, also thanks to the economic value of the **Turkish Pound** compared to the **Euro**.

Looking at the **social perspective**, the polarisation in culture and in space also led to a complete different social life, with very few mingling and mostly directed from the North to the South. Even though the lifestyle and the habits are not different, the two communities clearly differ in **social spaces**, frequenting and visiting areas that are completely separated one from the other.

Historically speaking, the turmoil and the clashes occurring before the division are **deeply rooted in the past**, and the island was almost always sharing two identity. If before those two were joined in a shared "Cypriot" identity, now it is harder to find such a nationalistic spirit, if not related to ethnicity.

⤤ **fig. V.1** UN soldiers patrolling the Buffer Zone in downtown Nicosia
AFP, June 14, 2018, from "New border crossings open in divided Cyprus", TRTWorld, November 12, 2018,

➔ **fig. V.2** Greek Cypriot leader Anastasiades (left) and former Turkish Cypriot leader Akinci (right) sharing a traditional cypriot coffee
Reuters, May 2015, from "How elections in Cyprus might affect the peace process", E.Karpazli, TRTWorld, January 23, 2018

Finally, on the **political side**, the two sides of the city and the island are completely autonomous one from the other, even with some degrees of cooperation. There are **two parallel governments** and a **duplication of institution**, each one considering the other as illegitimate. The fact that only one side has international recognition makes things worst.

It is visible using the same graphical analysis as before that the situation in Nicosia did not change considerable. A wall is still erect at the very core of the city, and polarization is at its extreme consequences. In the following pages, graphs are displayed.

The analysis carried on considering the years of the strong division shows how the case of Nicosia encompasses all the other case study, thus being classified as probably the most severe and complicated matter. All the factors are at their maximum, with the single exception of the economical level, perceivable but not extreme.

The situation **did not really change** too much with the passing of time, from the initial division to the situation nowadays. A strong political division is felt and perceivable, and the physical and cultural boundary are present. The social division probably is on the healing path thanks to the **opening of the border crossings** in Ledra Street and in Ledra Palace, thus avoiding a complete severing of the city and a sort of dynamic mix (Broome, 2005). The same dynamism can be found in the ethnic division,

that it is now less felt thanks to the flux of workers, especially from the Northern side to the South; even if temporary, it is a small signal in regaining "normality" of working side to side with the other long-divided community.

Again, if no political actions can be taken, there are ways, through the tools of planning, to make the city feel and be felt in a different way. There can be a requalification of the border, the renovation of bordering buildings in order to have a different perception and image of the physical division. There can be an action towards the cultural division, by bringing back a shared historical memory, through a careful planning and functionalization of certain areas. There can be actions addressing the issue of social separation, by providing shared common gathering area.

The possibilities are several, and the proposals presented in this paper are only some. Some of this planning scenarios will be further discussed in the following chapters.

↗ **fig. V.3** Man peeking through the barrells in downtown Nicosia, taking care of the wild plants growing
TRTWorld and Agency, July 4, 2017, from "Why are Turkish troops in Cyprus?", E.Karpazli, TRTWorld, July 5, 2017

➙ **fig. V.4** Aerial view of Nicosia; it is visible the main church of Faneromeni (bottom, right) and Selimiyye Mosque (middle, right)
AP Archives, May 2015, from "Plan to encourage Cypriot Maronites to return home", TRTWorld, February 13, 2019

V.2 urban and historical analysis: Space Syntax for understanding

Special acknowledgment to Ilaria Geddes[1], provider of material and of several hours of explanation

The city of Nicosia underwent a series of morphological and spatial transformation over its century of existence. It is fundamental to understand those modifications in order to adapt and to design for a city that is always changing, and always uncertain about its future development. To do so, the **Space Syntax** software is used. In this case though, instead of just analysing the situation before and after the division, the software is used to investigate the stratification, the layering of modification that led to the actual situation.

To do so, a series of map is used in order to understand the whole process. The earliest map identifiable is the cadastral map of **1880,** at the very beginning of the **British rule** over

the island, while the latest is the modern city of Nicosia, mapped as far as 2019.

The choice of starting at 1880 is strategical, because it shows how the recently British-colonised city was all included into the perimeter of the old Venetian walls, still maintaining all the characteristic of the Ottoman and Levant influence both in the **urban fabric**, with narrow roads and cul-de-sac, and in the architecture of the main buildings.
It is also important to note the old riverbed of the Pedieos river. Historically flowing through the very centre of the city, it was deviated during the Venetian rule in order to use it to fill the new moat; nevertheless, a canal was left in the middle of the city, in the old riverbed. This canal actually marked an initial separation, with Ottoman government building on the north, and Greek churches and religious centres in the south.

But why it is important to note for the morphology of the city? The attention is put on the fact that the hygienist current followed by British rulers imposed the covering of this canal, thus creating the brand-new Ermou Street, the new core of the city, that became the commercial centre and the melting pot for the two communities. As Y.Papadakis (2006) states:

"This road which bridged the old riverbed in its entirety became the major commercial axis of the city, a trading zone which would draw the multi-ethnic inhabitants of Nicosia together for

Nicosia, 1881

400m
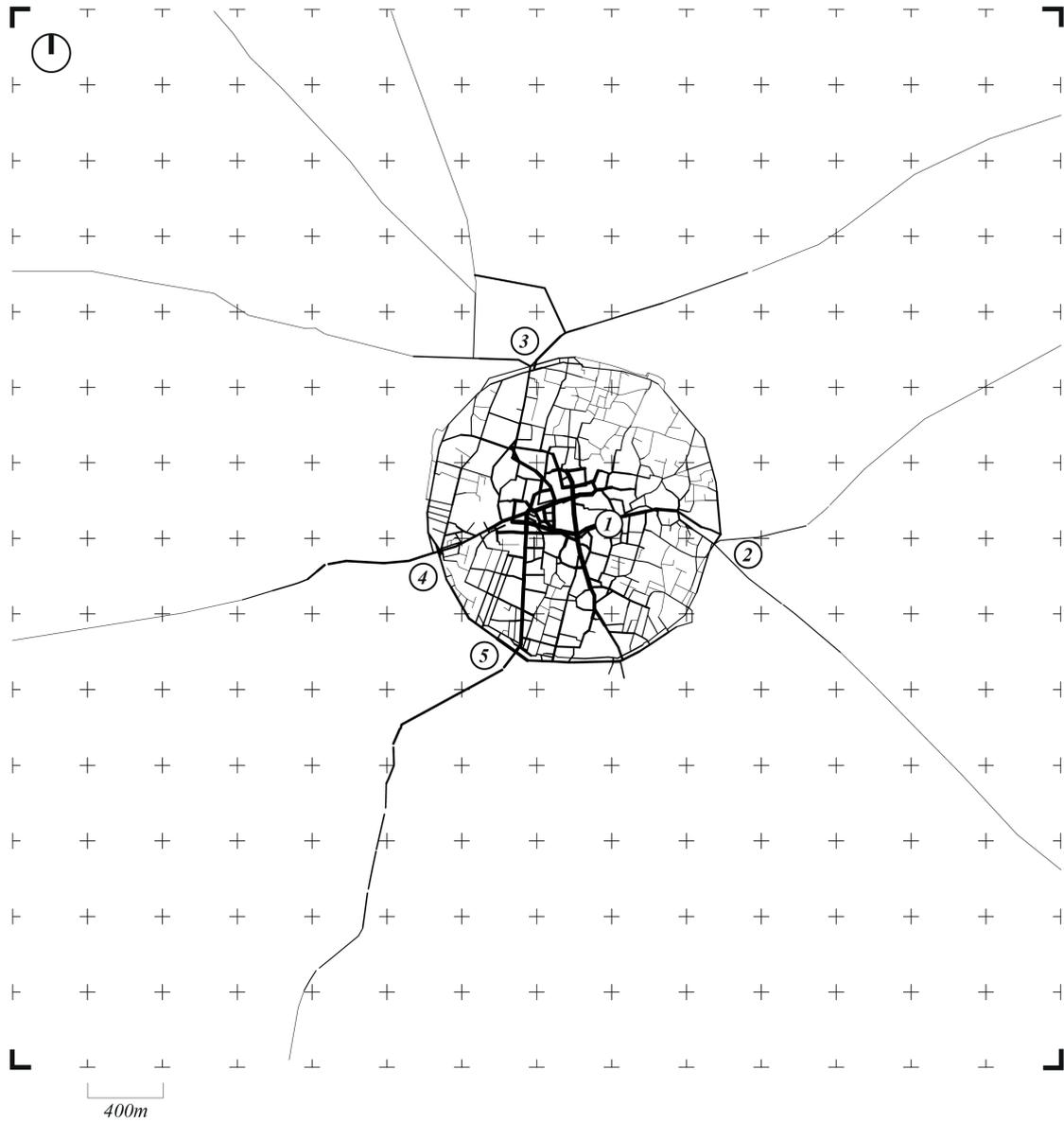
① *Ermou street (east to west axis)*
② *Famagusta Gate*
③ *Kyrenia Gate*
④ *Paphos Gate*
⑤ *Limassol Gate*

more segregated streets

more integrated streets

commercial exchanges. It thus brought people together, bridging ethnic particularities for purposes of trade". (p.1)

Thus, again it is visible a division and an attempt to overcome it, a new area working as a link between the two halves of the city. A link that worked very well, becoming the commercial core of the whole city in those years.
The next period analysed is **1933**. In the middle of the Interbellum period, the city under British rule started to thrive and to expand, even outside the walls. The British government of the island moved several facilities outside the medieval town, to avoid congestion and not to replace several old buildings already existing (Stylianou, 1989). We can see that in the opening of the Hospital, the Museum, the Public Garden and the English School in the proximity of Paphos Gate, an attempt in modernize and **"Europeanise"** the capital of the British Colony of Cyprus.

It is notable how the city started expanding radially from the centre to all the directions: in the North, thanks to the presence of the train station connecting the city with Morphou and Famagusta; in the south, with new planned rigid grid, in the west, with the aforementioned public buildings, and in the east, incorporating in its growth the villages of **Palliouriotissa and Kaimakli.**

Proceeding to **1956,** it is remarkable the development and the expansion from 1933. New roads and new planned grids started appearing

around the city, with even some architectural experimentation like the **Nea Polis/Yeni Sehir** district in the northern part of the city, with its radial plan and its Garden City allure. It is also clearly visible how different roads and bridges were opened, connecting the old town with its new parts outside the wall, but causing some damages to the integrity of the walls structure. The seed of the new centre, defined by the British in the area between Paphos Gate and the old "Limassol Gate", now **Elefteria Square**, reached full development, being the actual attractor of fluxes in the city. At the same moment, the old town started losing prestige and importance, with more interconnected areas and services being placed outside the walls.

The turmoil and the clashes following the independence from the British rule, the ethnical conflict between Enosis supporters and Taksim fans did not bring good luck on the city. The troubled years of the actual united Republic of Cyprus were few, and not much can be said that was not already explained in the brief historical excursus.

The next map it is possible to look at is actually almost 40 years later, in **1990**. It is recognisable how the division did not affect the city growth: having a hard border at its centre, the city **sprawled** to the south, in the southern part, and to north-east and north-west in the north side.
Of course checking the map, it is possible to see the different level of development: if the northern part of the city looks like a medium sized settlement, the southern conurbation

Nicosia, 1933

400m
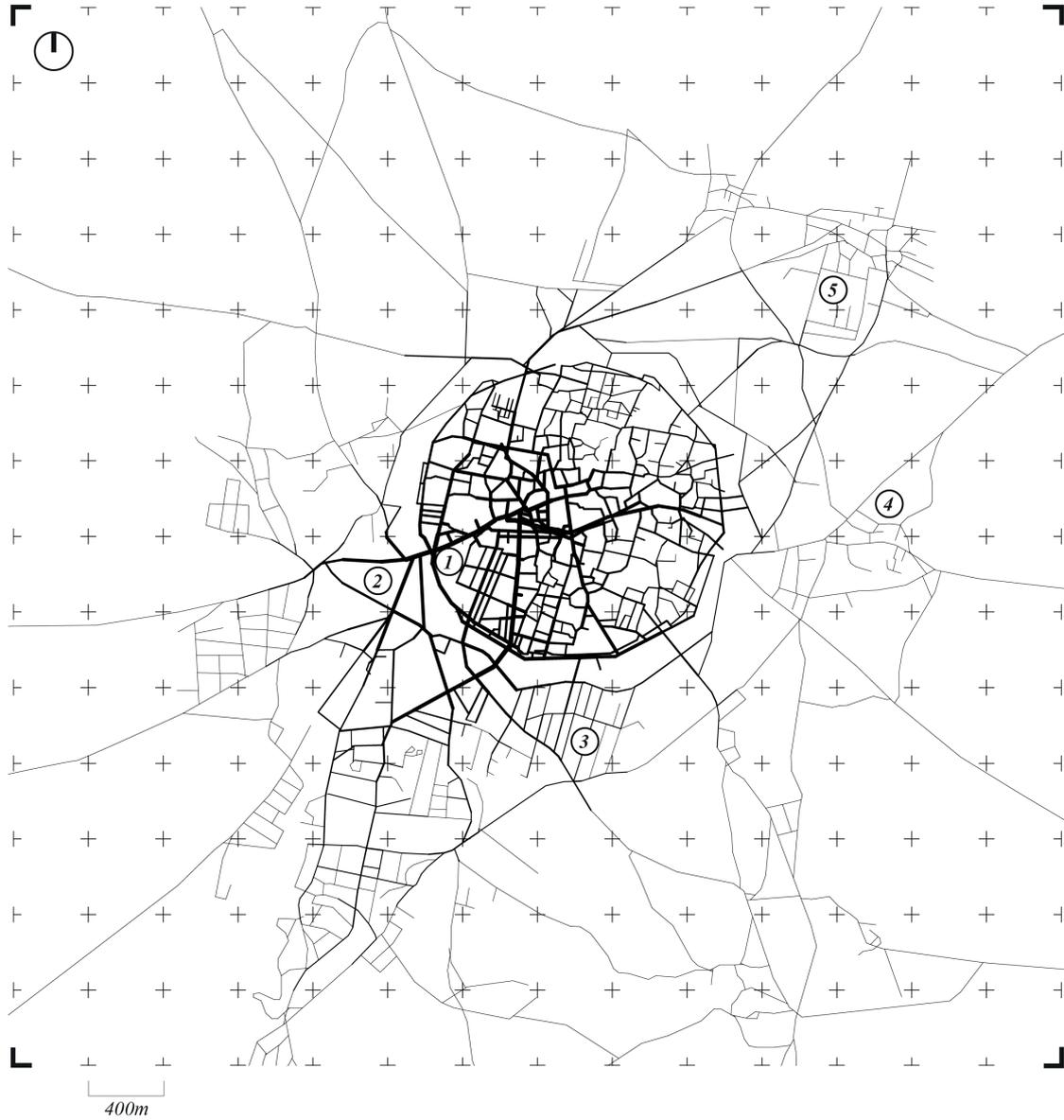
① Paphos Gate
② Municipal Garden, Hospital and Museum
③ Southern grid development
④ Former village of Palouriotissa
⑤ Former village of Kaimakli

more segregated streets

more integrated streets

Nicosia, 1956
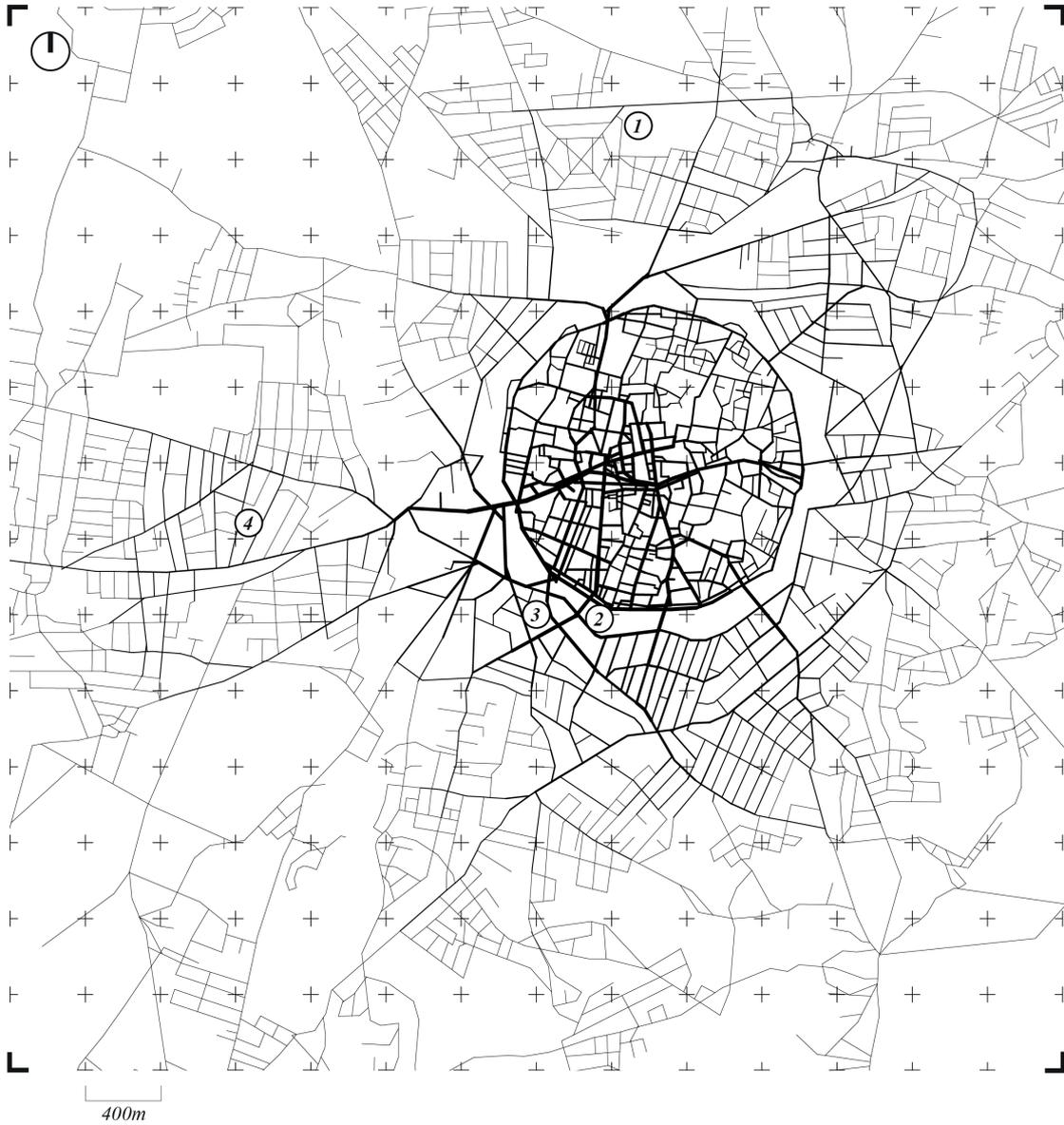
① Nea Polis/Yeni Sehir garden city

② Old Limassol Gate, now Elefteria Square

③ New business core

④ Agios Dometios city expansion

400m

_____ more segregated streets

▬▬▬▬▬ more integrated streets

Nicosia, 1991

400m

1 Buffer zone and partition within the city

2 South Nicosia business core (Arkiepiskopos Makarios Avenue)

3 North Nicosia business core (around Kyrenia Gate)

more segregated streets

more integrated streets

with large boulevard and industrial area clearly shows a different economical level.

The hard border gave anyway another interesting result: the appearance of **two different city centres** in both part of the town: the southern part kept the already established triangle of road - Makariou, Stasikratous, Evagorou - next to Elefteria square, while the northern part established its core in Kyrenia Gate, astride the walled town and the new areas. As C.Kypris (2019) stated:

"The division caused the south sector of the town to expand southwards and the focus of the urban life shifted outside the walls around Makarios Avenue […], nowadays the south- part of Nicosia is still expanding towards the perimeter integrating existing suburban areas" (p.2)

The last map, in **2019**, does not show several modifications. The southern part of the city kept sprawling, incorporating and absorbing even more villages and district. The northern part is expanding too, even if at a slower pace compared to the other. This map is still useful though, because it shows the different circulation and integration after April 2003 **opening of the checkpoints** in the downtown.

It is a slight modification, but it shows how the old town gained new interest and new attractivity. It is not a mere coincidence that it was around that time that major intervention project started in the southern half: the requalification of Ledras and Onasagorou streets, the state-of-the-art project of Elefteria Square by Zaha Hadid, the construction of the new Municipality Building.

The use of Space Syntax helped all those analyses. In fact, quoting again C.Kypris (2019):

"The Space Syntax theory has connected the perceptual ability of the moving user within the urban space with the structure of the space itself." (p.2)

This definition of the possibilities of analysis through this software is particularly poignant, since it explains how the syntactical definition of a city always converge with the perceptual **intelligibility** of the users towards the very same city.

To simplify, the integration analysis used in this chapter and in the following examples is the measure of how a segment, so a road, is **interconnected with other roads**: so, it answers the questions:

"if I have to go to any point A to any point B, how many of the possible paths between those two points actually pass through segment α?"

The more the paths passing through the segment, the more this segment will be integrated in the city.

It is not by coincidence that usually, those highly integrated segments are actually the busiest

Nicosia, 2019

① Ledras/Lokmaci checkpoint
② Ledra Palace checkpoint

③ Ledras/Lokmaci-Kyrenia Avenue axis (north-south axis)

400m

| more segregated streets

| more integrated streets

road, the ones that define the city centre and the commercial or business core. Poorly integrated roads are usually peripheric areas, cul-de-sac and mainly residential zones. This analysis is even more poignant in the case of divided cities because it shows the **radical transformation** that a divided city undergoes: main roads now lie in the buffer zone, former city centres now found themselves at the edge of the city, and so on.

To conclude this paragraph, it is useful to quote the work of N.Charamboulous and I.Geddes (2015), the latter helping in this research by providing several data other than instructions and tutorials on the software:

"The engagement of space syntax research with historical comparative studies of urban form has opened up possibilities for studying the relationship between urban development and social phenomena through time". (p.81)

Nicosia, 2021

① *Walled city of Nicosia*
② *Highway to Larnaka and Limassol*
③ *Highway to Troodos*
④ *Highway to Famagusta/Gazimağusa*

⑤ *Highway to Kyrenia/Girne*
⑥ *Municipality of Strovolos*
⑦ *Municipality of Lakatamia*
⑧ *Municipality of Latsia*

⑨ *Municipality of Aglantia*
⑩ *Vehicular crossing point of Agios Dometios/Metehani*
⑪ *Former Nicosia Airport (abandoned)*
⑫ *UNFICYP Headquarters and main camp*

more segregated streets

more integrated streets

800m
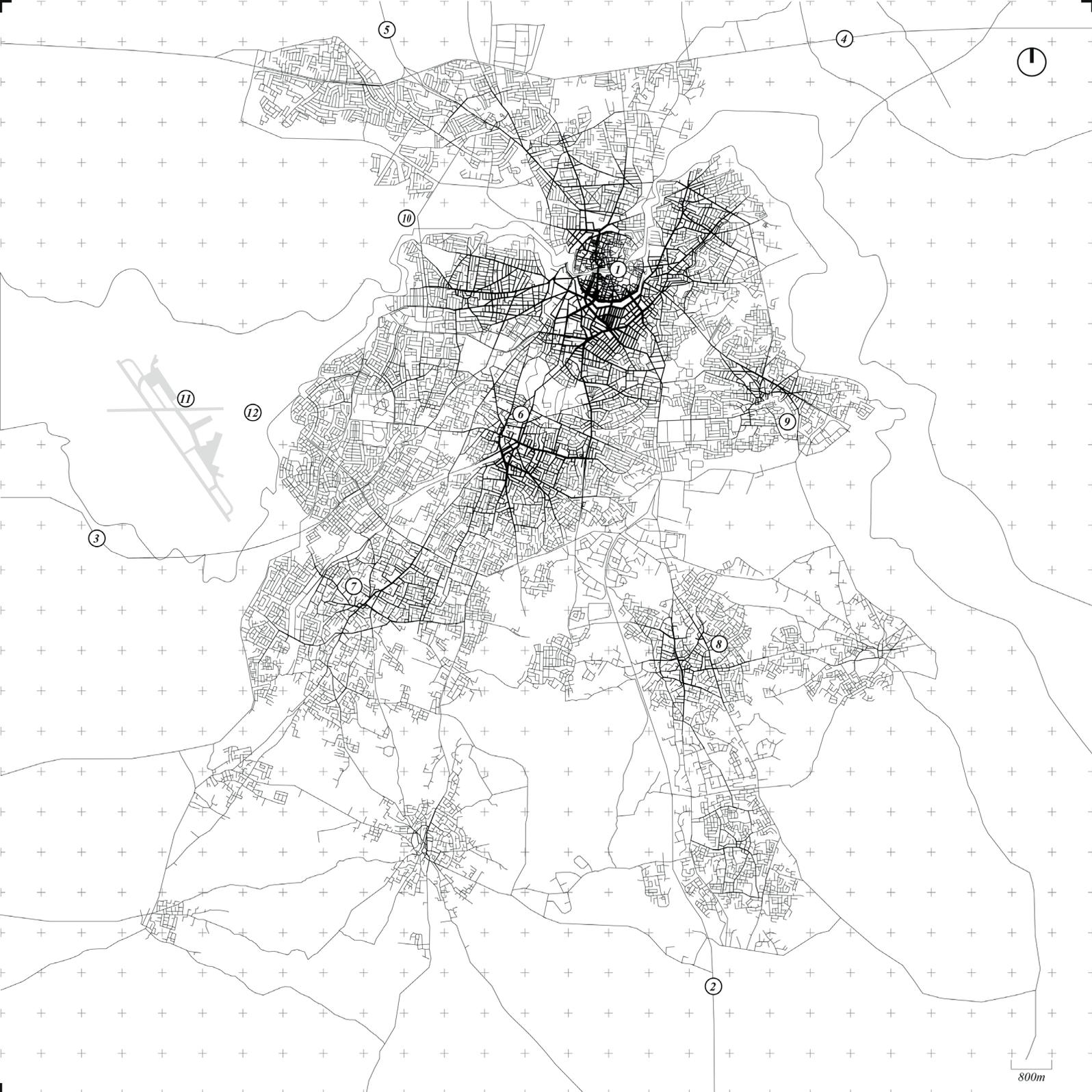
V.3 territorial analysis and choice of case study: the Buffer Zone

Several analyses on the matter of the divided cities are being displayed in this paper. The natural prosecution is the identification of the case study and the territorial analysis of Nicosia. It is necessary to keep in mind the findings of the previous chapters. As stated, the field of work will be the **social and cultural perspective** of the city, and the identification of areas that can be requalified in order to give a bigger symbolic value to the matter, without denaturing the appearance of the city. This will be focused on two different scale of project: one dealing with the city as a whole, and thus encompassing the whole Buffer Zone in the downtown of Nicosia, and one identifying a more precise area of intervention for the possible actions. The Space Syntax analysis also provided interesting insight on the spatial morphology of the city and its reorganization after the division: at a first glance it is immediately identifiable the **huge gap** left at the very centre: the space occupied by the **Buffer Zone.**

Thus, the analysis will be centred on the Buffer Zone area and the liminal zones, but always focusing on the Old Walled Town of Nicosia, due to its significant importance for both communities.

It is necessary to still proceed in other analyses anyway. Now that the morphological and spatial analysis is almost complete, there will be part for a operational and **policy-identification analysis**, to understand in which pattern the city is adapting and evolving.

The first analysis is the land use. To understand how the different districts inside the old city are developping, and which is their predominant function, its cardinal to propose new functions or to start designing anything. A punctualization is needed: it is almost impossible to find a **single map of the whole Nicosia**. Usually the map display only one portion of the city, both in the South and in the North, and joining them is a challenge. Here they will be presented as united, in the map proposed by the Nicosia Masterplan Team, and they will be compared due to the importance of identifying common trends. The major business and retail area place themselves along the **axis of Ledras Street** – in the southern part - **and Girne Caddesi** – in the north-. This part of the city was revitalised by the already mentioned border crossing, and it is now the touristic and commercial avenue. Nevertheless, in the southern part it is visible how the main business core moved outside the walls, next to Elefteria Square. In the North, also due to the different economical level of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the business core is not so developed and it is still

➔ **fig. V.5** Commercial development map in downtown Nicosia
from Constantinides, G., Ozen, G. (2004), Nicosia Master Plan: new vision for the core of Nicosia / Diagnostic Report, United Nation Development Programme, Nicosia

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■ Commercial	▨ Mixed-Without Workshops	□ Areas Not Surveyed
■ Moat	▭ Study Area	
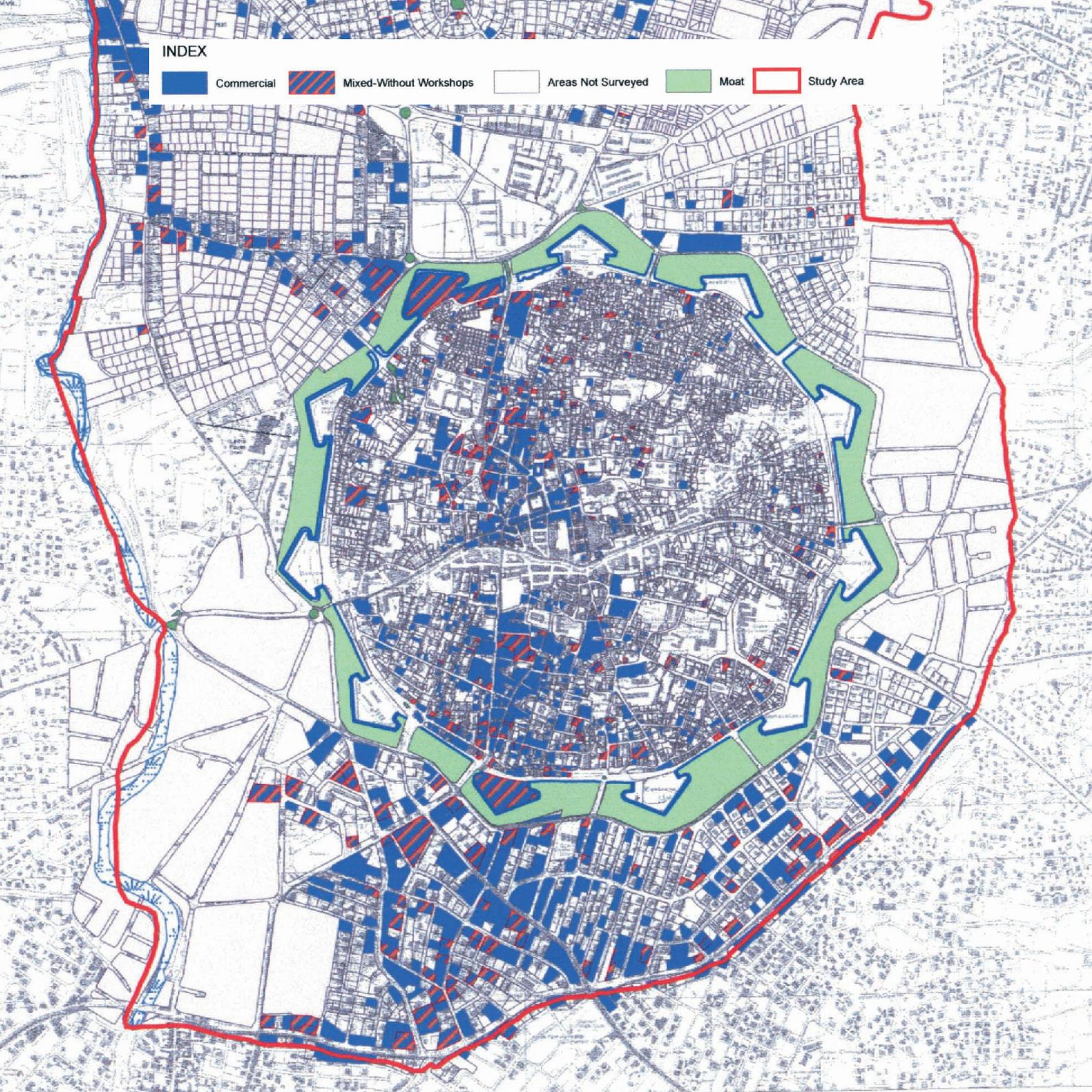
enclosed by the walls.

In general, the **western side** of Nicosia is more developed: in both sectors it is the mostly commercial district, with shopping avenues and other facilities. In the northern sector it also hosts several important monuments, such as **Agia Sophia/Selimyyie Mosque**, the Caravanserai and even several old Ottoman governmental building. The **eastern side** of the city is different in both sectors: if in the north is an almost depressed area, purely residential and with a dense urban fabric, in the south it hosts major important building, such as the Archbishop Palace and the Pancyprian Gymnasium. Moving closer to the buffer zone, always in the eastern side, the function is purely residential in both sides, with few attraction points and few interconnections with the other districts of the city. It is also the area in the downtown in which the Buffer Zone is larger, encompassing also Flatro Bastion, one of the eleven bastions of the city. The lack of connection, attraction and involvement will give a **perfect background for an intervention**, which will be in fact focused on this area, known as **Agios Kassianos/Kafesli**.

The second analysis carried out in this paragraph is the analysis of the architectural relevance status of the Buffer Zone buildings: being it the focus of the research, it is crucial to understand its morphology and the artefacts it encloses. The picture shows the **architectural evaluation** of the building encompassed, classifying their value and their necessity

of intervention. It is visible that most of the building are of average architectural value, but there are some important points, such as the churches of **Agios Georgios and Agios Savvas** and the **Old Schools of Agios Kassianos** in the east, and the complex of **Paphos Gate** and the Catholic Cathedral in the west.

Those analysis conclude the morphological, operational and strategic investigations of the city of Nicosia nowadays. Keeping in mind the findings and the juncture points, there is still another process to investigate: it is the perceptive analysis of the space, how it is perceived by the locals, both residents, commuters and visitors. This task will be carried out in the following chapter.

To conclude this paragraph, it is possible now to identify the area of work: if the strategic plan and the scenarios presented further on will deal with the whole Buffer Zone in the Walled City, the **architectural focus** will be on the area of Agios Kassianos. This decision is the fruit of the analyses: it is a isolated and poorly connected area, so a new attractor can actually benefit the whole district in both sectors; it is the largest area of the Buffer Zone in the downtown; it hosts several important buildings, like the aforementioned former schools and the church of Agios Georgios, which will help into bringing back a symbolic value of the city as a whole

➔ **fig. V.6** diagrammatic synthetic map of spatial structures
from Constantinides, G., Ozen, G. (2004), Nicosia Master Plan: new vision for the core of Nicosia / Diagnostic Report, United Nation Development Programme, Nicosia

Buffer Zone	Moat	Area affected by the Commercial Axis	Potential Consolidation CBD Area	
Area affected by the Buffer Zone	Manufacturing	Commercial Axis (First degree)		
Study Area	Residential Areas	Commercial Axis (Second degree)		
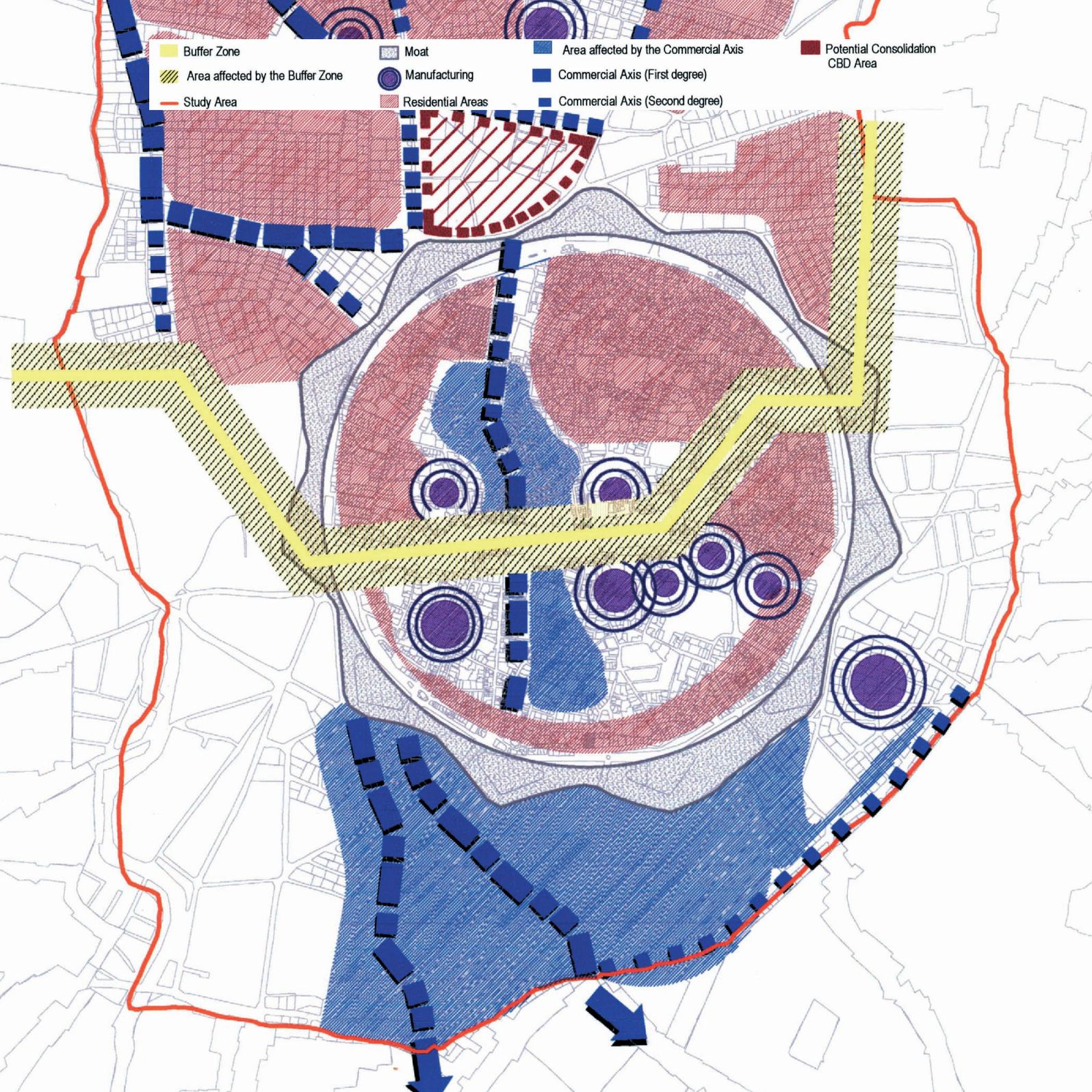
Architectural evaluation of the building in the Buffer Zone

■ Monumental
and exceptional value

■ Architectural value

■ Environmental value

■ Complementary value

■ Ruined or
not-fitted building

60m

④

⑤
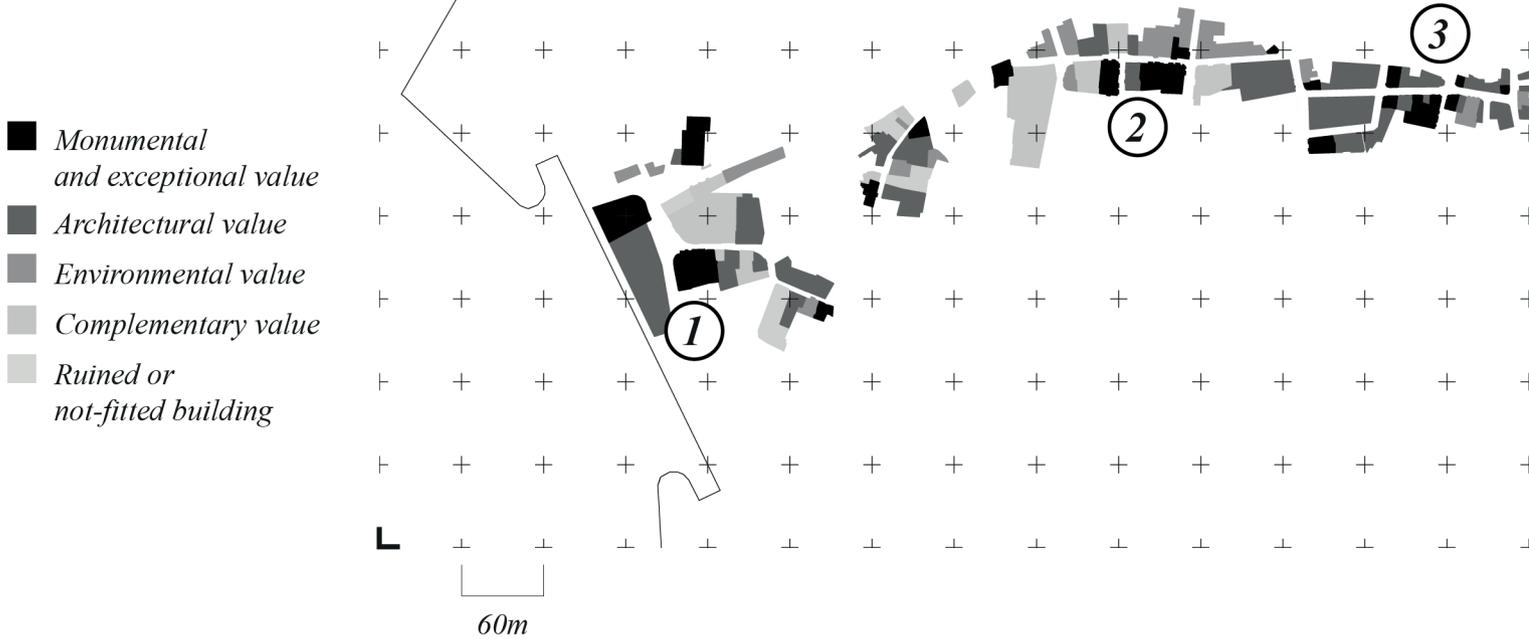
Paphos Gate ①
Catholic Cathedral
Kastelliotissa Hall

Ledra street ②
Eleftheria street

Trikoupi street ③
Bandabuliya Market

Agios Kassianos and ④
Agios Savvas church

Agios Kassianos school ⑤
Agios Georgios church
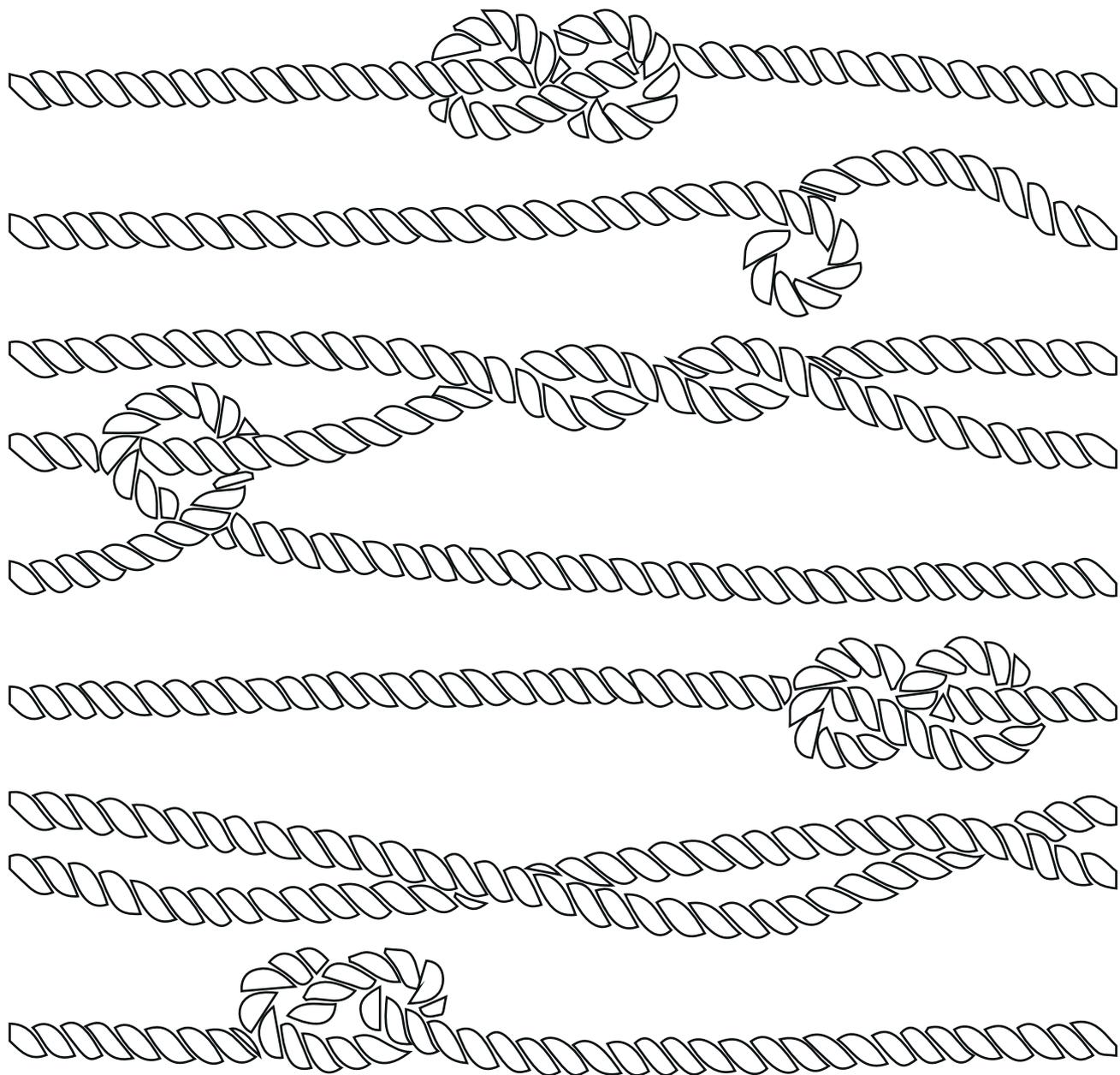
Chapter VI
Social aspects

In such a delicate situation it is fundamental to obtain the opinion of those directly involved in it, living all their lives in it and growing next and during this geopolitical conflict (Nagle, 2013). The social aspect is then cardinal to have a base for the design project, in a bottom-up participative analysis of **needs, changing, hopes and perspective** of local population towards any kind of intervention in the area.

It is important to note, though, that this process is not a mere refunctionalisation proposal collection. Of course, the interview sample will be asked about these matters, but the final aim is to catch and grasp the perceptive feelings, in stressing the symbolic element of the division and the Buffer Zone. This symbolic element, nowadays not discussed and avoided in general speech, can hopefully reactivate a long-lost historical memory in both communities. This aspect is crucial for a rapprochement of the two, but clearly the aim of this research is not to find a solution for an age-old problem: it is to drag the interest of the general public towards an exceptional area in the downtown, to propose a feasible and not-so-utopic refunctionalization and reuse, to finally put a spotlight on the countless **opportunities lying in the area**. It is possible to push forward in this aspect, actually stating that the whole research has a pre-set method setting: the whole research is based and founded on the social science methodology.

Asking itself a **"research question"** (Corbetta,

2015), the typical starting point of any sociological investigation, means also asking itself a "planning question", a "design question", and a "reuse question". The first in order to understand tendencies, policies and phenomena lying underground in the cityscape; the second, to analyse the possible project, formal and volumetric solution; the third, to interrogate and to assess the conservation issues and the symbolical value of this area. The initial point of the sociological analysis, the perceptive analysis and the symbolic character of the area, is also the final point of the analysis, dealing with reuse and conservation of important manufacts. It is a circle, a recurring question, a perceptive analysis not only as a function of the individual, but as a general widespread **symbolic-valorial aspect**. A new optic of valorisation, in this case meaning *tout-court* the attribution of values, or better, their re-emerging.

To sum up, the research question at the base of the analysis is how space influences and is influenced by the action of the subject, and,

specifically for this case study, it investigates how a particular space, the one of a divided city, can influence the local population and its **perception and behaviour in the urban space.**

The first step on which to base the analysis is asking, through a deep analysis of the people perception, what the division brought to the city of Nicosia, in order to understand consequences and strategy, both in the general population and in the historical memory. In this, it is important to underline that **"population"** is intended broadly as "public", "users"; these clarifications will be assessed in detail in the next paragraph.

The research question tries to focus on the objective **analysis of the behaviour** of the fluxes of people in space. It helps to understand how spatial transformation affect and modify behavioural aspects of the people, and vice-versa (Corbetta, 2015). It clearly states the dialectical relationship between space and users, both self-influenced by each other, and both generators of transformations.

This aspect is at the base of a urban sociology approach, or in a broader sense in a **geographical-sociological approach**, in which **space and users** are both agents and sub-agent, in a non-deterministic process.

The inclusion of space as indipendent variable into the reasoning actually detaches this analysis from a classical sociological analysis: this does not stop to the single data, but it goes in deep, it plunges into spatial analysis and geographical partition of fluxes, tendencies and behaviours; space is an independent variable, but it is clear that it has an influence of the subject. The result is clearly a very subjective and profound complex of answers, thus enriching the final outcomes for the design phase.

VI.1 the research question: what did the division bring to the city?

It is possible to say that analysing concepts like how tendencies and fluxes are localized, distributed and stratified is crucial to understand the dynamic changing going on still now. Probably, the layering of tendencies and fluxes is the crucial part for this research because it shows how spatial and behavioural modifications actually affect the perception of an **urban environment**, analysing the consequences on space and subjects, on citizens and places.

To sum up then, probably another way to put the research question, to make it more explicit and understandable, is asking which **social and spatial phenomena** occurred in Nicosia from the division up to now.

The first campaign of direct interviews, to test the public opinion about the matter, will be a campaign of in-depth interviews to users of the city. It is important to clarify though that the historical period this analysis is carried out is very peculiar and particular: the CoVid-19 pandemic situation is acting on social and **spatial behaviour** in unforeseeable ways, precluding several activities and thus having an impact on this campaign.

The results can be slightly biased due to that, but anyway maximum discretion is kept.

It was stated in the previous paragraph that this campaign will be delivered to the "users" of the city of Nicosia. This concept needs of course to be clarified, according to several theories. In here it is accepted G.Martinotti's classification of the four populations and, in general, of the NRP, or "non-resident population". In fact, Martinotti's taxonomy marks the passage into the analysis of post-modern cities, where the urban population where not divided anymore into "social classes", or "census", but they were organized accordingly to the "consume", or the way they acted differently into and towards the city. Those four categories identified are symptom and symbol of post-modernity and the complexification of the urban space. Martinotti observed the urban space and, as stated, idntifies category according to their way of "using", or "consuming", the city: those who lived, worked and consumed in the urban space are the residents, those only working and consuming are the commuters, those hopping from specific location from a urban centre to another are the metropolitan businessman, and so on. The new category are intertwined and flexible, and they are based on their way of day-to-day action on the city.

It is indeed a fact that the population and the users of a city are actually a **conglomerate of individuals** with a different approach to space. There can be residents, exploiting the city at its fullest; there can be fruitors, only attracted by some services; there can be tourists, only

using and exploiting dedicated services and areas. Another difference is the variety of backgrounds, cultures, age, family, traditions and habits, everyone differing from the other, with its own specificities.

VI.2 *in-depth interviews:*
new functions and ideas
for the old town

This can be clearly applied to the city of Nicosia: the capital city of a small but rich country, the beating heart and the core of the island in its entirety, where people at attracted and gather on a daily basis from all over the country.

To come back at the four populations identified by Martinotti, they are:

- the **Residents**, living in the area, a traditional user of the city with its own habits and routines.

- the **Commuters**, living not in the exact area identified as the "city centre", but on the outskirt or in other cities: it travels daily to the city in various ways, and it is directed towards specific functions and services.

- the **City Users**, that can be identified as temporary residents, tourists, exchange students, and all those subject that experience the city at its fullest but for a short period of time but coming from another background.

- the **Metropolitan Businessman**, a concept somewhat no more up to date, but identifying this specific subject, moving from town to town, staying and using the city for also long periods

of time, but always superficially and for specific events.

For the aim of this research, those four populations are re-elaborated and optimize, to adapt with the case study of the city of Nicosia. The identification of the populations was made through a micro-observation of the fluxes and the users insisting on the city. Again, a punctualization is needed: due to pandemic situation the access and the observation in the northern part of Nicosia is barred, so these descriptions can be biased towards the Greek side of the island. Nevertheless, the maximum attention was paid in order to gather information and contact to have a perception of the users and the dynamics (Constantinides, Ozen, 2008) of the northern part of the town. Keeping this in mind, the population identified are very similar to those mentioned above, the only difference being in the merging of the city user and the metropolitan businessman. They are:

- **Residents**: original Nicosian inhabitants, living in the walled city or in its immediate proximity, they experience the city at its fullest, using all the services and the spaces it provides; a sub-category can be found in those living inside the Walled City: it is a category identifyied during the analysis, and the dividing factor is the proximity to the border, which affects hardly the urban population at its closest contact.

- **Commuters**: people living in the outskirt of Nicosia or at least in the Nicosia District of Cyprus, which travel daily to the city centre

for work, study, shopping or leisure. They experience the city in restricted and particular areas of interest, focusing mainly on the principal attractors (business district, shops, public facilities)

- **Temporary residents**: temporary residents or new residents that just moved into the city or that are going to live in the city for a limited period of time. They experience the city at its fullest, like category A, but they come from a different background and they perceive it differently. The typical subject in this category are Erasmus students, immigrants or also local people moving into Nicosia from other cities/districts.

The fourth category should have included tourists, but due to the 2020 CoVid pandemic situation it was impossible to find enough tourists in Nicosia for them to become relevant for the interviews.

The objective of this interview is to design and rethink the walled city of Nicosia with an involvement of local population, obtaining indications to enrich and modify the scenarios, the strategies and the designs. In this, the architect has an active role: it is not the mere collector of suggestions to put in practice, but it is rather the decision-maker and the final designer, in a **bottom-up process** to create a final reuse, in the complex of a **valorisation process as a social practice**.

The method of interview is through a series of structured questions, always asked in the same order, giving complete freedom of answer to the interviewed. All the interviews are recorded, if the subject is willing, and then transcribed word-by-word, to guarantee the double hermeneutic circle between the interviewed and the interviewer, to avoid misinterpretation, preconcepts and reinterpretation.
The whole trace of the interview is not disclosed and shown to the subject, but just kept for the interviewer; the same happens with the scenario and the design suggestions already created, to avoid bias. In general, the trace of the interview is a funnel: the starting point deals with the city of Nicosia in its entirety, to go down towards an architectural and a restoration level going on with the questions. Of course, at the beginning of the interviews some personal questions are asked, like age, nationality, occupation and the name. The names will be recorded only by the initials (in bracket the original transliteration in the Greek Alphabet, if applicable) and the age will be established into age groups. The age groups in consideration are very broad and casual, because the main interest is the perceptive differences according to the category of population. The results of this interview will be used exclusively for academic and research purpose and they will not be made public, if not restricted and completely anonymous.

It is reported in Appendix A a template of the interview script asked to the subjects.

VI.3 stakeholders interviews: an expert eye on the analysis

The second interview campaign is conducted in a second phase, not parallel to the first. The subject of those interviews are expert and stakeholders, to have a competent eye on the matter and to share expertise in order to prove the policies and the designs proposed. If the main investigation area of the first campaign of interview was the personal experience and perception, these are **confrontation** about a theme well knows by the said expert, in a more **objective way**.

Of course, those themes of interest are extracted and cross-referenced from the result of the first campaign of interviews, to first sage the public opinion and then to propose and verify those intervention with the governance.

Also, here there are three spheres, or category, of subjects:

- **the Public sphere**, involving local institutions, municipalities, educational establishment such as museums, university and other public bodies that can share some knowledge and expertise about the governance ideas and policies.

- **the Private sphere**, involving big investors, various scale companies, stakeholders, and other economically driven bodies that can propose, verify or reject reuse proposal of the area, also in order to understand the degree of interest in investing and activate the area.

- **the Active citizens sphere**, or the civic society, they are groups of individuals involved actively in the city life and in its functioning, organiser of events and associations; an example for this can be the several NGO present on the territory, or the small citizens associations working in the reuse of the old town; or even religious guides like priests

The final aim of investigation is the deep understanding of the **system of the governance** of the city, those bodies and figures responsible of the art of governing, holding the reins of the changing and able to apply or to modify the strategies and the policies going on (Carmenos, Sabrié, 2017). It is of course a flexible system, in a continuous confrontation for predominance between all the category, but at the same time syncretic, with intermingling and common interest, with the utopic objective of having a perfect balance of power between the three spheres. This confrontational syncretism is clear especially in territorial policies and public actions, so in urban planning, because it is a peculiar aspect that involves and affect all the categories.

Chapter VII
Outcomes and
public suggestions

In this general analysis all the data will be considered, without any distinction of age, sex, and nationality. The aim is to have a general idea of the tendencies and the ideas of the public, keeping in mind the differences in the perception according to the different population group. The analysis is subdivided in macro-themes: the outcomes per each question are presented according to those themes, and not according to their numerical order.

The chosen way of presentation of the results is a descriptive one, due to the purely **qualitative** typology of the collected data. The following paragraph will include several direct quotes and transcription from the interviews, in order to bring the voice of the interviewee in a direct way.

In the next pages the interviewee will be classified according to their category, their age and their group of belonging, i.e. their spatial relation with the island of Cyprus, in order to bring clarity to the description.

old town residents

residents

commuters

temporary residents

94

The interviewee distribute themselves in:

residents
4 Turkish Cypriots + 7 Greek Cypriots
(of which, 1 Turkish Cypriot and 4 Turkish Cypriots are residents of the old town of Nicosia)

commuters
4 Turkish Cypriots + 6 Greek Cypriots

temporary residents
9 interviewee, different nationalities

which in total sum up as 30 total interviewee

According to age, gender and nationality:

age
10 interviewee whose age is 18 to 30 years old
12 interviewee whose age is 31 to 45 years old
4 interviewee whose age is 46 to 65 years old
4 interviewee whose age is 66 years old or more
which sum up for a total of 30 interviewees

gender
16 interviewee indentify themselves as female
14 interviewees intentify themselves as male
which sum up for a total of 30 interviewees

nationality
8 interviewees are Turkish Cypriot residents
13 interviewees are Greek Cypriot residents
9 interviewees are from different nationalities
which sum up for a total of 30 interviewees

VII.1 the perception of the division

The division of the city is felt like a **scar** for most of the interviewed, and only a very few percentage of the total of the sample is happy with the way the city is performing, or at least seeing the positive side of the division, such as the development of other areas of the city.

"In all senses, and it is hard for us to accept the occupation on our island… so also emotionally the people feel overwhelmed […] On the urban and architectural point of view I will say that we tried to reborn, you know? To develop our cities and reborn from the crisis of the war… To find new chances for our people"
G.A., Greek Cypriot, commuter, 18-30

"There are two cities now, probably now even too different"
I.H., Turkish Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

The opening of the border caused new hope in the interviewed, and also the awareness that a new **dynamic flow** started appear in the city, in both sides:

"I think that helped a lot… it changed positively in terms of local businesses and perceptions amongst Cypriots."
I.H., Turkish Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

and a small minority felt it as a negative

aspect, for safety issues mostly, but also in an interesting observation on the effect of the checkpoints in the areas that did not benefitted from them:

"Obviously they are creating black points, you know, like the areas which are not in use because the checkpoint is not there"
U.E., Turkish Cypriot, resident, 46-65

Half of the interviewed still consider Nicosia as a single city; the majority anyway considers "its" city only the part perceived everyday: this is a sign of the ongoing detachment of the two sides.

"I am bound to think about the Greek side because is the one I am living in"
M.M., Greek Cypriot, resident, 31-45

"No, I don't think in this city there is any wall or something… I don't prefer to divide it or call it "parts" or so… I am looking at it as one."
A.S., Turkish Cypriot, resident, 18-30

Most of the interviewed concur that living in a divided city has no advantage, and none of them indicates that the situation is favourable:

"Well there are no pros, only cons! I have the feeling that I got stopped from walking in my own city!"
B.G., Greek Cypriot, resident, 46-65

The main disadvantages are the economic gap between the two sides, which worries the

Turkish Cypriots (TC) and scares the Greek Cypriots (GC) in case of a unification, the physical separation, conveying the feeling of impossibility to grasp a part of the city, and the segregation of the two ethnic groups.

The presence of the Buffer Zone (BZ) affects an overwhelming majority of the sample, mostly mentally (thus including a deep psychologic aspect to it) and physically.

"For elderly people, it's more emotional… it's like a block you cannot go further, physically and in your mind. It's a border for us, a limit"
A.S., Turkish Cypriot, resident, 18-30

Some interviewed are still affected by the BZ, but are worryingly considering it as a part of everyday life, in a normalization of the situation:

"The Buffer Zone should not become part of the city panorama, we should not adapt too much to it!"
I.H., Turkish Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

Those in the sample which expressed a negative impact of the Buffer Zone on them also expressed which feeling it conveys: for most, the Buffer Zone is a lost and wasted area, with less and less sense with the passing of time:

"I see it as an unused part of the island, I see potential and land going to waste"
M.M., Greek Cypriot, resident, 31-45

The division is a topic that is deeply felt by the communities, and it is somewhat of an avoided topic. For lots of people the division conveys a f**eeling of "loss"** means that the partition and the presence of a BZ is an emotional weak point: the ways to react to that are either resignation or adaptation to the border, but also a perceivable hope for a solution.

VII.2 urban challenges and the image of the city

The second part of this chapter aims at investigating the general urban tendencies acting on the city, either related or not to the division. From a general investigation about the city and its necessities, the focus will go to the area of Agios Kassianos (AK) and will develop the symbolic image of the city.

There is a perceivable **lack of optimism** for the future of Nicosia, and most of the interviewed cannot see brighter perspectives.

"Apart from movement, it is painful... [the division] it is a reminder of the past... and a monument to the refusal to find a solution!"
K.A., Turkish Cypriot, resident, 66+

The main reasons for that are generational and political, with most of the interviewed expressing **mistrust in the current political agenda** of both the Republic of Cyprus (RoCYP) and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and hoping for a change of leadership. For another big sample, the main reason is the lack of opportunity in the city due to its situation of division and political stalemate. Those who expressed more pessimistic feelings feared problems of immigration and a consolidation (and acceptance) of the dividing border:

"I really hope that the current political agenda will somehow let us try at least to coexist together again, like we used to do before [...] the parts that are now acting as separated points become stitching points."
O.F., Turkish Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

"The younger generations makes me hopeful since they have travelled and see a lot more things, they are more open minded"
B.G., Greek Cypriot, resident, 46-65

"I want this city united!"
P.K., Greek Cypriot, resident, 46-65

Due to the lack of bright perspectives, most of the sample foresaw different paths for the future of Nicosia.
Most of them hoped for a "green change" in the city of Nicosia, with more careful policies about the environment and the **city planning**. It emerges also, even if in a small percentage, a particular attention towards conservation and requalification of the city image.

"I hope we go towards more environmentally friendly decisions, and we give culture a bit more chance"
N.H., Greek Cypriot, resident, 18-30

"I think it should be more carefully controlled all the actions taken in downtown Nicosia.. someone that controls the new strategies! Because I think now all those new project are just a show off, just for the image of the city!"
G.A., Greek Cypriot, commuter, 18-30

According to the sample then, the city needs to improve its image, mainly through a careful planning, to solve traffic and transportation issues, and through the institution of green and gathering areas:

"Infrastructure, like roads. [...] it's not about fixing a single hole, a single problem... and then green, public areas... It's about taking the whole city as an entire project and making the change throughout the city [...] I think that's lacking in Nicosia, a kind of a common strategy for all the the district of Nicosia, like a general master plan."
A.T., Turkish Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

"More regulations, like a commission, a cultural commission, to restore some of the traditionality of the city!"
V.T., Greek Cypriot, commuter, 18-30

About the image of the city, everyone in the sample was able to identify a symbol representing in the best way the city of Nicosia. A great majority indicated monuments and places all over the city, while only a few percentages stuck to the monuments in "their" part of the city.

It is important to express what it the "character" or the **"image" of the city**. This expression refers to what in Latin is called **"genius loci"**. As stated by Christian Norberg-Schulz (1976):

"Every "indipendent" being has its own genius [...] this spirit creates and give life to people and places, and stays with them from birth to death, determining their character or essence [...]. The genius represents something that "exists" or that "wants to exist", to use Louis Kahn's words" (pp.)*

It can be considered as the sum of all the characters of the environment someone lives into. It is then partially the natural environment, but also the artificial environment, and so the actions that the man had on the territory. And moreover, it is a factor of culture, of social life, of habits, of customs and of traditions. It is then clear that all those factors create the genius loci, but also that the genius loci express those factors, in a circle. Quoting the same scholar, it is possible to say:

"The two implicit psychological functions in inhabiting a place can be called "orientation" and "identification". To acquire a sense of security and belonging in a place, the man must orientate itself, so it must know where he is , but it must be able to identify itself with the environment, so it must know how a certain place is. [...] The identification means becoming "friend" with the given environment" (pp.)

This means that the identity of a person, and thus the identification of that person with a place, its function of the relation that said person develops with the space and the things composing it. And so the person identifies to the place he perceive he belongs to via certain aspects: it can be the materiality of the surrounding, a specific panorama, the skyline and the shape of the city, in an urban case.

All those aspects emerged in the interview, when discussing the "character", now identifiable with the "genius loci", of the place:

"I cannot count one or two actually, it's the whole city, it's really important by itself"
U.E , Turkish Cypriot, resident, 46-65

"I mean, I cannot distinguish any part or not of old Nicosia as a monument compared to others, because every layer adds something to its character. So for me, the whole old city, it's a monument on its own"
O.F., Turkish Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

Most of the identified monuments carried no ethnic/social specificity, and a great percentage indicated the **"shared monument"** symbolic meaning. Those identifying different symbolic importance for each of the community, identified a strong religious specificity to the monuments ("church and mosques"); interestingly, this functional-religious division cross the border, and people identify a religious building as a monument also in the "other side": on the other hand, not-religious specific monuments were mostly indicated in the part of the city the interviewed was from.

Most of the interviewed cannot identify a single spot but indicated as a symbol of the city its atmosphere, its features and its intangible character, as explained before; between the punctual monuments, the Selimyyie Mosque/ Agia Sophia Cathedral was the most common answer:

"[…] For example Agia Sofia, or Selimyyie Mosque… It used to be a cathedral and now it's a mosque […] That's actually a very good representation of the Cypriot identity. It's like started as something, then becomes something else shared by the two."
O.F., Turkish Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

When asked about Agios Kassianos (AK), most of the sample knows the area, even if it is more known in the Greek community. For Turkish Cypriot, it is considered as a run-down area, while in the southern side it underwent a program of renovation, making it known within temporary residents for its **"old town" allure**, and within residents, since several of them decided to move back to the city after those projects of renovation.

For most of the interviewed, it is an area with great potential and historical and architectural importance; nevertheless, its position close to the border and the lack of major axis passing from it represent a disadvantage, having some people considering it a degraded area, a cul-de-sac with no attraction.

VII.3 the future of the buffer zone

The interviewed split on the issue of the Buffer Zone: a majority of them consider it as a non-perceivable place, and thus not part of the city panorama, while almost the other half sees it as an **integral part of the city**. The sample was of course pushed towards a positive answer by the effect of the temporary residents' answers: the fascination of a divided city and the non-involvement in the personal and familiar issues - different from Cypriots - led them to imagine a optimistic future for the buffer zone.

Most of the sample is still moved towards it, and is kind of curious to see it. The feeling they approach it can vary, from sheer curiosity to sadness for the past to hope for the future. Only a small percentage refuse to go closer and to experience it.
Also in this case, the temporary residents are those most eager to peek through the barrels and the fences to see what is on the "other side". Unsurprisingly, residents and commuters, which most of them are "refugees" since they had to escape to the respective side of the island in 1974, are **more sensitive** and thus avoiding to face the issue.

"My father was from the other side, so he lost his land and his inheritance […] and the family split! Also, another bad point is the feeling of negativity that comes with the Buffer Zone: we have to come together, not to keep dividing things!"
C.S., Greek Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

"It is not pleasant to look at… But I would go and take a look if I had the chance actually… it's still an interesting part of the city and of our life"
Y.G., Turkish Cypriot, resident, 66+

To act on the Buffer Zone it is fundamental to ask the big question: can the sample imagine a united Nicosia? The overwhelming majority tends towards an **affirmative answer**. Of those, the majority thinks the only way is through political talks, but other very similar percentage hope in a bottom-up approach, from the people; another part of the sample indicates that the two cultures are two similar to be separated, and so they will forcibly unite again.

In case of unification, more than half of the sample thinks that the Buffer Zone should be a **"communal space"**, for memory and reconciliation, especially within residents and commuters between the youngest generations. The other part of the sample splits between those thinking that the unification is possible, but the Buffer Zone should be **rebuilt completely** (thus becoming a developing place), and those seeing no possible change in the area; there is no particular distribution of this opinion within a certain population: this idea is actually transversal with the whole sample.

It is important to keep in mind that the topic is delicate and that several interviewed,

especially those from the older generations. The perspective of a reminding place is for most a negative point, because it will remind them of a trauma and of a fight, to say nothing also about the refugees issues and the property reclamation form both sides within the Buffer Zone.

"I don't know how it would work the best in political way [the unification]... but adding the buffer zone to our life again would be perfect, it is a odd situation and a waste of space"
Y.G., Turkish Cypriot, resident, 66+

"I will give you two answers. The first answer is to your question. Can you imagine? Yes, I can imagine it. Second answer is, do you think it's possible? No, it's not possible.
A.T., Turkish Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

The presence of the Buffer Zone is so rooted in the mind of the interviewed that the majority of the sample is favourable to its preservation as **a place for memory**.

The affirmative sample has in mind several options for the Buffer Zone. Instead of a complete preservation, almost "museum", it emerges the need for an active preservation: bicommunal areas, cultural spaces, green and gathering area; the need of green spaces is reflected here in the data.

Nevertheless, there are several interviewed that are against its preservation: if most of them believes it is due to property rights of buildings,

it is clear that the psychological and memory issue about the presence of the Buffer Zone, acknowledgeable underlying some opinions, shaped some minds, especially in the older generations.

As anticipated before, this is the concept of the **"istanza psicologica"** (psychological instance) formulated by Roberto Pane.
He worked mostly in the reconstruction of monuments and buildings in Italy at the end of the Second World War, and his theorization is fundamental tu understand the value of a monumental building in the psychology of the inhabitants of a city.

It is useful in this specific case to understand why some people are against a "reminder" of the division, and they prefer a reconstruction "as it was".

What is the psychological value of a building? To quote the same scholar, R.Pane (1987):

"[...] negli spazi del passato noi ci sentiamo come dilatati ed espansi nelle forme che ci circondano, appunto perché esse sono come "un'estensione del nostro corpo". [La stratificazione storica] profondamente vitale e non estrinseca; essa si rivela come formatrice - insieme remota ed attuale - della nostra struttura psichica e quindi necessaria alla nostra più favorevole evoluzione futura" (pp.)

[inside the space sof the past we feel dilated and enclosed in the forms that surround us, for the

very reason that they are an extension of our body. Historical layering is profoundly vital and not extrinsic: it is the generatrix - at the same time remote and actual - of our psychic structure, and thus necessary to our most favourable future evolution]

The concept expressed here is a thin line between different schools of thoughts about restoration. The idea expressed by Pane is that a monument or a reminder of the past is an extension of the "body", here intended as the mind, and thus shapes the character of someone. It is clear the parallel with the concept of Shultz's genius loci, in shaping the identity. But in this case, talking about restoration, Pane pushes the theory further, expressing the idea that the historical stratification is not only a way to "shape" someone's mind, but it is directly **generator of the psychic structure**, thus being a vital force for the advancement and the evolution of thoughts.

And so, on the other hand, if the historical stratification is not respected, there is a risk of depletion of the psychology, because of the loss of a part of that vital force.
There is clearly a thin line between the psychological instance of preservation and the same concept but seen from the different perspective: if in one case it can help to develop, in the other it brings back to memory and psychology the negatuve aspects of historical stratification, such as war, destruction, drama and abandonment. This clearly affects those who saw the building or the monument before

these new states of decay, and it is visible also in this research and in the interview with the older generations of Nicosians:

"No, no, no! Or it stays like that [the buffer zone] or, if the Turks leave and we find a solution, we rebuild everything and our people go back to live there."
P.T., Greek Cypriot, resident, 66+

"Rehabilitation, keeping examples of design and construction, of course, it's a vital part of the city... I just don't want the Buffer Zone to be permanent and to be remembered"
K.A., Turkish Cypriot, resident, 66+

This tension between refunctionalization or reconstruction is perceivable in the next pages, to sum up the influxes from both opinions and to try and find a common ground for the continuation of the research.

VII.4 cooperation, communality and interactions

Since the opening of the border, the majority of the interviewed started having lots of contact with the **"other side"**; a third of the sample doesn't have any, mostly due to the fact that they don't live in Nicosia (they are commuters or temporary residents) or due to political views. Those having contacts travel across the border mostly to gather and meet, thus showing a build-up sense of communality; another important reason is shopping and cultural visit.

When the interviewed were asked to describe the other part of the city, several of them found lots of similarities, even saying that there was **almost no difference**. This last opinion is more common between Turkish CYpriots, while Greek Cypriots feel the different economical level of the two sides.

In fact, when asked about the differences, most of the sample pointed out **economical and development differences**; some of course stated political difference, while a large part of the sample expressed a difference in **what they thought** about the other side: due to education, family history, and so on, most of them were brought up to consider the "other side" as the enemy, just to be disavowed as soon as they crossed the border:

I was expecting to be scared, because they tell us "Turkish people are bad, be aware, they hurt women"[…] but i'ts nothing like that! It's literally the same
C.S., Greek Cypriot, commuter, 31-45

It is clearly a matter of discrimination: the long years of division, the scars of the conflict are deeply felt by part of the population, and especially by older generations, since they were first witnesses of the division. The reason behind these prejudices are not easy to identify, and even the local cannot say exactly why some of their compatriots feel in this way. For most, it became a taboo topic, or even a frustrating issue in the public opinion:

I just want a time in which these topics will not be a discussion anymore, they will not be a matter anymore! Because people are tired to have that as an issue! […] it's a lot of propaganda
C.S., Greek Cypriot, commuter, 31-45
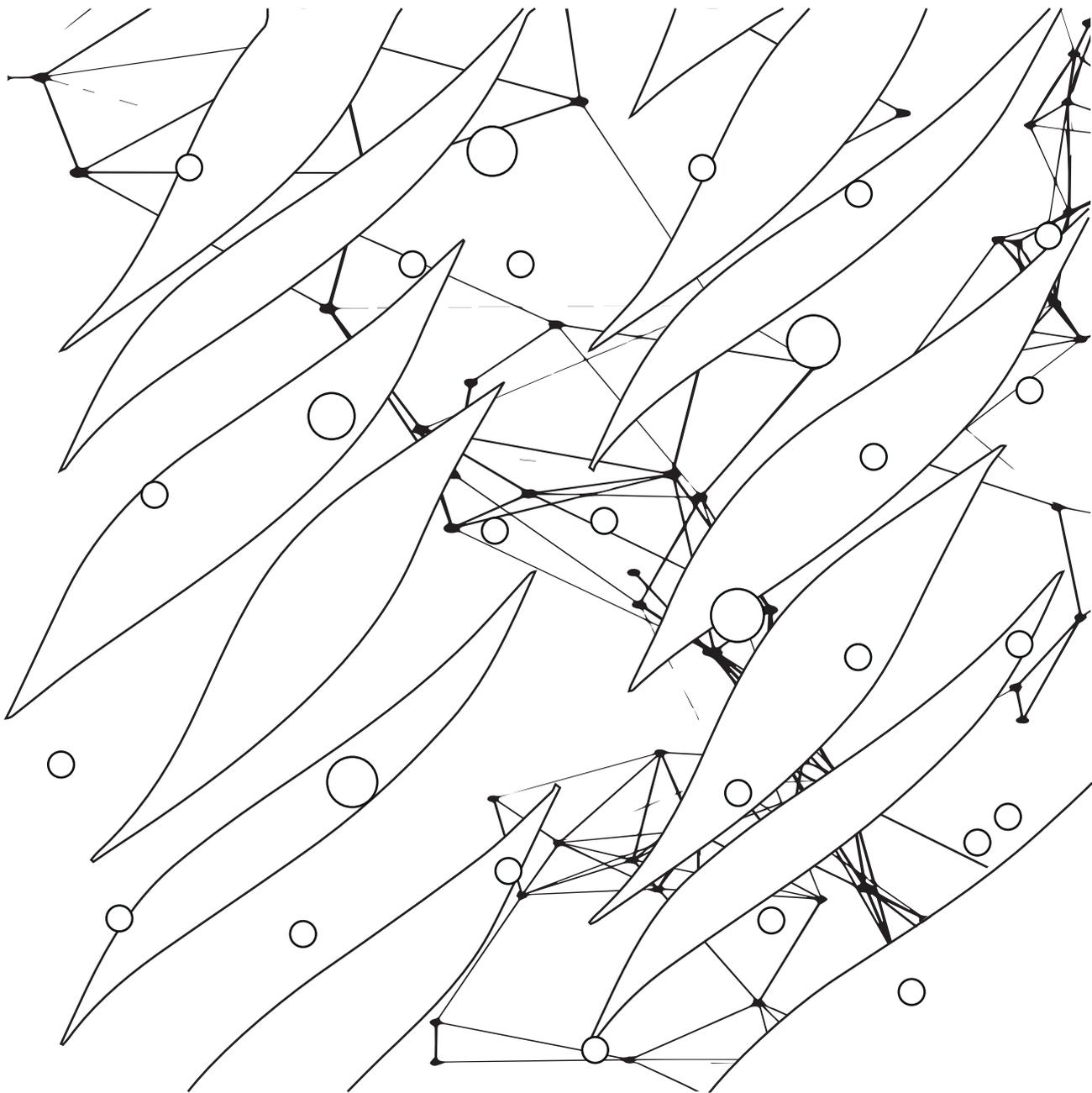
Chapter VIII
The experts' adjustment

After having collected the general impressions of the three identified population insisting on the city of Nicosia (residents, commuters and temporary residents), the analysis is not complete without asking those who really have a say in the city about their opinion.

In this chapter are reported their **professional impressions** about the results of the first campaign of interviews, while the full transcript of their interview can be found in the Appendix. In fact, due to the significance of their opinion, questions and ideas, it is important to make a full transcrip available for further investigation.

As already stated in previous chapters, the stakeholders are divided into three groups. The first is the public bodies representatives,

in this case from **local municipalities** - Nicosia and North Nicosia - and shared institution - the Nicosia Masterplan Team -, going up to international level bodies such as the **United Nation mission** in Cyprus.

Public bodies are crucial to get a f**ramework of movement** within which is possible to act, and the opinion of the United Nation representative gave an additional point to the significance of the investigation. They are clearly the most important stakeholders, and in a power-interest grid they will be those who have either the most power to actually propose a modification in the status quo of the city, and also those who have the most interest in the changing: it can be due to the possibility of having interlocutors at the international level, to the rapprochement

path they are envisioning through their shared institution, or the purpose of their mission and presence on the island, such as the UN.

But of course it is not possible to have a complete analysis without taking into consideration the private sector, responsible for financing, funding and holder of the economic drive. The interviewees represents **building companies and groups** that can have a say in future development in the Old Town. Compared to the public bodies, they are on the other end of the spectrum: they do not have the same power to act and promote a change in such a complicated geopolitical situation, and thus they follow a **passive behaviour**, in which the lack of power reflects on their lack of interest in any possible changes. This can seem as a faux-pas, a representation of the impossibility of action: it is instead a representation of the skepticism derived from the stalemate of the situation, that lead not-directly-involved stakeholders away from the issue, making them prefer to act and **invest in other parts** of the city or the island.

It is indeed a concern, but it can be seen that, in case of a political settlement, those factors can change: citing an example, the opening of the checkpoint crossing in Ledras/Lokmaci street attracted investors back to city centre, making the new avenue a shopping parade in the centre. So, thanks to public and political settlement, the attitude of private companies towards the matter can shift to more favourbale position.

No change is possible if the public opinion is unfazed by them. The task of involving the local population is covered by the third group of stakeholders, the Active Citizens or the Civic society. They are all those organizations, NGOs, associations that gravitates around the city and promote **bicommunality** and intitiatives from both communities, in order to create a common ground of acceptance. Their opinion is very important since they are the most interested in the change, even though their power is limited.

In the following paragraph the interviews will be reported according to macro themes of analysis.

Nicosia
Masterplan
Team, TC

Architectural studio
and building company, TC

turkish cypriot

Historical
Dialogue
Society
Researcher, TC

Home for
Cooperation
Spokeperson

Historical
Dialogue
Society
Researcher, GC

neutral

active citizenship

UN Senior
Political
Officer

private actors

Building
company, GC

greek cypriot

Nicosia
Masterplan
Team, GC
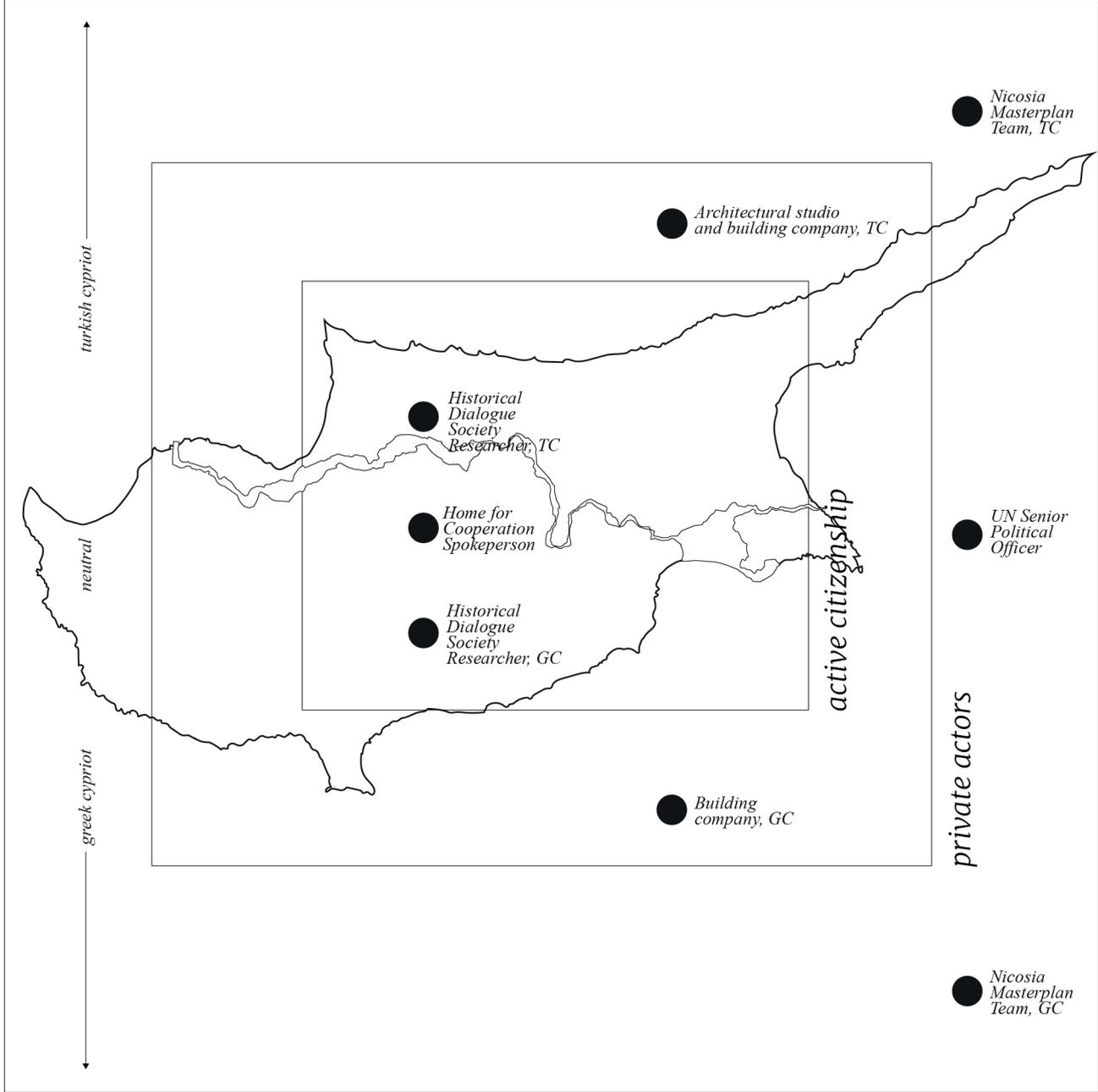
public bodies

VIII.1 perception or overcome of the division?

The first topic discussed with the stakeholders is the perception of the division between the two sides of the city and, in general, of the island. This topic reflects the one proposed to the populations of the first campaign of interview, where it was perceived as a divisive and peculiar problem.

It is a first surprise to notice that all of the stakeholders align themselves on a position: they all have a **positive opinion on the opening** of the checkpoints, and they actually see in it a step for reconciliation or, at least, a political settlement to end the long-lasting mistrust between communities:

"More openings I think would help definitely the perception, although on that level I know that it would be a tricky perception"
A.P., Nicosia Masterplan Team

It is clear that the public bodies involved in the city of Nicosia are supporting any opportunity for a settlement or, at least, an improvement of the condition of division of the city. Especially the synergy between the UN Mission and the Nicosia Masterplan Team, one of the most important bi-communal, shared committee on urban planning, engaged in a continuous talk with the national governments on both side,

pushing for more opening and for an easing of the division conditions.

"Nicosia Masterplan had most to do with some stitching locations like the crossing points [...] we foresaw four crossing points in the walled city. So that was one in Arabahment. One in Ledras/Lokmaci St. which is now open. One, it's the municipal markets that was envisioning the connexion of two municipal markets. Then another one in the housing residential areas like the Agios Kassianos/Kafesli area. There was four of them."
A.G., Nicosia Masterplan Team

These are the crossing point that are envisioned for the city of Nicosia, and they are all already being discussed with the central national governments, either in the South and in the North. The public stakeholders also agree on the **social and political improvement** of the conditions of the two communities after the opening:

"The opening is definitely perceived as a very important starting point to allow the two communities to have contact, to promote dialogue but also economic transaction [...] This agreement was welcomed by the population in both communities, so I think this shows how important this aspect of crossing was for both communities"
A.B., UN Senior Official

If this political improvement is supported mostly by public entities, private bodies still

agree on the positive impact, but they perceive it more on the economical side:

"The checkpoint opening did help the city, both on the economical level and the turistic level [...] the one in Ledras especially created a flux of people from both sides"
T.P., architect and building contractor

"It did help the city, we saw more flux of people, more shops opening along Ledras and Kyrenia streets [...] we also saw an increase in workers from the north side coming to work in the southern part and crossing every day"
A.V., building contractor

The opinions of the private bodies are similar and coherent: they are both looking at the effect the checkpoint had on the **economical level** of the city, and they both realized the positive impact that an opening has on its surrounding areas, for example in Ledras/Lokmaci Street, and they are both in favour of more openings to improve also other areas of the city and the island in general:

I think it is feasible to open more checkpoints and connect the city in other parts"
T.P., architect and building contractor

Talking about the active citizenship sphere, they share the same positive view, even if they concentrate their attention to the space perception and the urban improvement following the opening of checkpoints:

"There is always the need for more checkpoints [...] they are the breaking point within the line [...] which is a change, because previously people were moving away from this area as it was considered the border, the end of "allowed territory"... and now due to this exchange between the two side a new dynamic came into the old areas"
H.R., Home for Cooperation

The focus is here on the fact that the opening alleviated the perception of a hard border, and thus helped feeling the old town of Nicosia as a safe and pleasant place to live and gather. It helped the **attractiveness** of the city by instilling hope that the political stalemate was on the path of a solution.

The 2020 CoVid pandemic did not help the feeling of detachement of the two sides, with the closing of the crossing points and the feeling of **despair and disillusionment** for their late reopening. This feeling is shared by the general public and unanimously expressed by the stakeholders. Public and private bodies, though, focus their concern on more underlying factors, such as the long time division, the political stalemate and unsupport for any change in the situation, and the different development of the two sides. They are especially worried that, if the situaton does not improve, it is going to become harder to overcome the detachment.

"Since the South is in the EU and all EU rules and regulations and the help assistance is available to them, they are not only developing physically, but they are also developing their rules, their

regulations. [...] in the North because there is no willingness to get funding from anybody [...] so what happens is when one side is the most developed and the other is not in such position, then this develop parts needs become different from the other side [...] the South is advancing with the European Union while the north is remaining in the same position."
A.G., Nicosia Masterplan Team

This is particularly and worryingly important, since it shows a public perception of a detachment that cannot be bridged back.
It is not an easy problem to overcome, and most of the interviewed stakeholders cannot really put a pin on why this is happening, and what can be done to overcome it. Each category of stakeholders has its own view on the matter, and how it can be assessed. Active citizenship entities believe it is needed a push in **bi-communal activities**:

"We will need to do our works and initiatives again when their checkpoints open, when the communities can meet [...] lot of things are discontinued, like project and Initiatives at working together."
E.G., Association Dialogue Historical Research

This opinion is shared also with the public bodies and private companies. The first identify in a possible solution for detachment the opening of more checkpoints:

"by just increasing openings it doesn't mean that the problem is solved, but it helps peoples

everyday lives. It helps their day to day contact."
A.P., Nicosia Masterplan Team

To sum up, all of the stakeholders sees positively the opening of the checkpoints in the downtown of Nicosia, and they also envision the opening of more of them. If the private companies believe the checkpoint will help economically some areas of the city, the public bodies have already identified some areas to work on, and they are pushing for the continuation of talks about that areas. There are of course some issues to overcome, such as the feeling of detachment, the different development of the two sides, and the political stalemate: but again, the solution identified by most of the interviewee involves a bottom up approach, with more initiatives for bi-communal cooperation and, again, the opening of more checkpoint in the old town.

VIII.2 *the division, the buffer zone and the future of the city*

One of the question asked both the general populations and the stakeholders deals with the perception of the future of the city of Nicosia, and about its prospect of unification. If the general population divided along a majority of people supporting the process of settlement and a consistent minority opposing the unification, stakeholders one again align themself on the same position: the only future for the city of Nicosia is **a settlement and a unification**, being it under a bicommunal, bizonal federal state or in a unified Cyprus.

This support does not become staunch optimism: all the stakeholders involved, and especially the public bodies, knows the process is going to take several years, if not decades, and that unification is a prospect but still not a visible perspective:

"It is possible, but there needs to be a right moment, we have to wait to make people feel that they need each other. They are living in such close proximity that anything could affect through the other side. Well, for whatever it takes, from the South to the North, there is no other way, so people on both sides need to the need to collaborate. Then people should be clever enough or wise enough to feel that the cultural heritage is shared [...] There should be more influence or the

urge to make collaboration and work together"
A.G., Nicosia Masterplan Team

It is again a sensible and sensitive matter, that has to be assessed on different scales: if the settlement can only be reached via political talks and **willingness for cooperation**, then the acceptance of it must pass through a shift in mentality of some parts of the general public, in order to increase trust and collaboration between communities:

"I think I got so so used to the statute standards of crossing checkpoints, thinking of the city with division that I don't know how possible it is [...] People that are already in contact already interact and they have sort of ties in both communities or both parts of the city, but who decides not to be, it is not interest in getting involved"
K.A., Association Dialogue Historical Research

Having established those common points as the baseground for any possible speculation about the future of the city, the stakeholders feel differently on the matter of the Buffer Zone. For most, **emergency work** is needed, and there is a priority in preserving the existing building within the Zone:

"We shouldn't wait for buildings to collapse [...] It sounds like very challenging to do so, but they should have found a way to actually not let culture heritage collapse that easily, even if they are in the Buffer zone"
K.A., Association Dialogue Historical Research

It is not surprising that members of bicommunal organizations and association are in favour of a requalification, or at least of an action of conservation within the Buffer Zone limits, to avoid a huge part of the city historical landscape to fall into ruin and to regain knowledge of the centrality of the area between the two communities. These aspects are not neglected by other stakeholders, too. They are concerned by the same phenomena either for a symbolic aspect:

"The initial study recognises the Buffer Zone as the most important glueing area to bring back together, reunify the city"
A.P., Nicosia Masterplan Team

and for a practical, or pragmatic, point of view:

"We have tried to find funding to actually go in and restore and not just do emergency support works. We have to preserve these buildings. They have to remain standing."
A.G., Nicosia Masterplan Team

Those who are more pragmatic, but at the same time more skeptical about any possible action are the private stakeholders. Due to the difficult, and almost **non-existent, framework of agreement** for any action within the Buffer Zone, they are also not prone to any activity until a settlement is reached, and they are also interested in the concrete aspects of the abandonment, such as property rights:

"It is impossible now [...] I know there should be
some actions of conservation, especially for those buildings inside that are not in ruin... there are still people with property rights on them and I think they would like to go back to their houses, in case of unification"
A.V., building contractor

What clearly emerges from all the interviews is the difficulty of imagining any possible intervention, due to the lack of legal framework, political agreement, willingness of the communities and, as a result of all of that, **lack of funding**. The UN mission in Cyprus, from its priviledged position of neutrality and overlooking both communities, clearly sees this phenomenon happening:

That is quite a sensitive question because obviously there are parts of the Buffer Zone that need actions, or at least a little bit of maintenance, some parts deteriorated beyond repair, but of course the Buffer Zone is a long stretch in the city and in the island, and it is an issue on whether we have authority to do that, it is an issue of funding, there are a lot of questions to be tought about [...] if time keeps going on, they will need to think about it a little bit more... We knew it as a major issue, mostly of authority and sovereignty, who does what, and all of that, but they will have to agree on what and where to do.
A.B., UN Senior Official

The necessity of action is felt by all interviewees, but the time of action is postponed to a possible agreement and talk. It is importanto then to notice this shift between intention and

opportunity, between potential and willingness. The clear perspective for all of the involved actors is those of rapprochment, if not unification in the long span, and they all support actions along this path.

This gives the possibility to speculate about a possible intervention on the Buffer Zone, to be carefully thought and managed in steps, and to be pushed forward when times are ready, as long as it is inserted into this path of rapprochment already envisaged by the most involved stakeholders:

"It's very hard legally and politically, there is not a clear framework. So of course like you have to do this process like via agreements and agreements and agreements and create a new framework [...] Maybe open a bit this area, having a new checkpoint like very little by little and building by building almost tried to go further"
E.G., Association Dialogue Historical Research

From this difficulty in envisaging a clear path for the rapprochment emerge the different ideas that the stakeholder have for the near future of the Walled Town of Nicosia. A majority thinks that the **requalifications**, mostly pushed forward by the Nicosia Masterplan Team - for example in Arabahmnet and Chrisalionitissa districts - are a sign that the Old Town is becoming again the cultural, historical and touristic centre of the island, again in an **optic of rapprochment**:

"I like to see a unified city. You have a Nicosia masterplan from both sides, and we have to

decide what to do in the buffer zone, which we have great ideas [...] The main things that are seeing now for the Walled City is a gathering point, a base where people meet and they educate."
A.G., Nicosia Masterplan Team

To sum up again, what emerges about the theme of the urban challenges and the future of the city is a difficult and hard to envisage path, but it is a path that, according to all of the interviewees, lead to a unification or at least a rapprochment between the two communities.

The final aim of the actions already taken in the city is along this path, and for most of the stakeholders those very actions should continue, expand and encompass the whole city, being them requalifications, shared initiatives or openings of crossing points.

VIII.3 identification of the character and politics of memory

It was stated in the previous paragraph how it is hard to act on the Buffer Zone. Altough in a speculative way, it is possible to imagine some actions.

When the question of the future of the Buffer Zone in the downtown of Nicosia was asked in the first interview campaign, a majority of the public imagined a preservation of some areas of the Buffer Zone, in order to keep the historical memory of the division. In fact, the division of the city is part of everyday life for all the Nicosians, and especially younger generations always lived in a divided city without memory of the city as a whole. It is then understandable the feeling of preserving some of those aspects while imagining a future rapprochment.

The same question was discussed with the stakeholders, giving interesting results from their professional, and priviledged, point of view. The most interesting opinion was given by the UN representatives:

"I have heard these suggestions and comments sometimes too, I think memory is an important part of every peacebuilding situation, or post conflict situation, but it has to be used for reconciliation… That's what the UN promotes, we always push forwards reconciliation, because you can use memory in very different ways"
A.B., UN Senior Official

This first part of the answer is significant for the **double usage** that historical memory can provide. On one hand, it can be used to identify a common base, a **shared heritage** to be used as a starting point for building trust between communities. On the other hand, historical memory can undergo a **strumentalization** of the matter, in order to identify those aspects of the shared heritage that divided already the two communities, and thus to promote a narrative of separation rather than a narrative of raprochment. Especially in a delicate situation as the Cypriot Dispute, the two communities have very different views on the event that lead to division, and the Buffer Zone in Nicosia is the direct and physical expression of this disagreement of memory. To continue with the same quote:

"[…] both communities have their own views about division, and also about memory, about what and when it happens… So you have to build a common understanding of what memory you want to preserve, because otherwise you preserve memories that goes towards the narrative that separates […] It can be used to build a common understanding, also acknowledgment that my memory may be different from yours, but I will accept yours as long as you accept mine."
A.B., UN Senior Official

The Buffer Zone can then become a hurtful

and **divisive heritage** for the communities, and there is a serious risk of doing more harm than good if the topic of shared memory is not carefully managed. This management can stem from an overturn of the divisive paradigm: instead of focusing only on the shared aspects, it is necessary to assume as a starting point the different views on the matter from both communities. It is in fact impossible to differentiate from those opposite opinion, but they can be used as a common ground from understanding and acknowledgement, and even acceptance:

"It's very tricky, because the memories are not always positive, also not of them are negative, of course, and it's important to have both in order to learn the past, the mistakes and the good things done in the past. [...] there needs to be a way to also respect the originality of this place, but of course not in the way it is now, but to preserve historically"
H.R., Home for Cooperation

And again, in case this preservation is pushed forward, there is the need to keep this **memory alive**, and not convert the area in a museum-like zone, but in an optic of active and alive preservation:

I'm not saying to make it completely inaccessible and just a place that's preserved as it is [...] Combining the two, buying a possible future where, because there is no longer division, it is functional yet preserved at the same time
K.A., Association Dialogue Historical Research

The preservation is fundamental to keep the character of the city alive, which is nowadays also formed by the presence of the Buffer Zone; this character, which is what attracts and fascinate in a historical city like Nicosia, cannot discriminate from the fact that it emerges from the historical vicissitudes insisting on it:

"The old town as a very particular character, I think it derives from the different cultural layers of the city, the Ottoman, the Greeks, the British, and so on... And then the division, which modified again the character"
T.P., architect and building contractor

To conclude, while many actions can be taken in preserving the city character, it is important to note that it is surely a planning and decison-making level concern, but it is also a subjective and peculiar value that each person, living, commuting or visiting Nicosia assigns to it:

"There are hidden places that you don't see because they are not highlighted, but there are churches, mosques, hammams, spots here and there, that can be more highlighted. I also think that's the character if the city, of every city, to find hidden spots that represents your idealized image of it."
A.B., UN Senior Official

VIII.4 the East of Nicosia

To conclude stakeholders interview, it was asked to them their opinion about the Eastern side of Nicosia, the district of **Agios Kassianos/ Kafesli**. The focus was of course not on the districts per se, but on the part of those districts lying within the borders of the Buffer Zone.

For most of the stakeholders, there is a partial difference between the part of the district lying in the southern side and the one in the northern side, either talking about development, conservation, or requalification. This is perceivable by comparing the opinion of a stakeholders from the North side:

"[Agios Kassianos/Kafesli] it is a bit run-down, mainly residential, there is no attraction... maybe it need something, like a restoration campaign, and to have new attraction points."
K.A., Association Dialogue Historical Research

and a stakeholders from the south side:

"It's very nice, only residential and ivery particular in appearance... It was also recently renovated and gained a lot of appeal"
E.G., Association Dialogue Historical Research

The origin of this aspects, encountered also in the first campaign of interviews, can probably be traced back by the annuous problem of the separation: the North side, not benefitting of any international recognition if not the one of Turkey, is constantly lacking **funding and tools** to promote reactivation in the city of Nicosia:

Since the South is in the EU and all EU rules and regulations and the help assistance is available to them, they are not only developing physically, but they are also developing their rules, their regulations. [...] in the North because there is no willingness to get funding from anybody [...] so what happens is when one side is the most developed and the other is not in such position, then the developped part needs become different from the other side [...] the South is advancing with the European Union while the north is remaining in the same position.
A.G., Nicosia Masterplan Team

This lack of framework is affecting also the tools implemented by both sides:

"Few years ago, the South produced an area scheme for the centre of Nicosia [...] they are trying to keep the city together with lots of good project in it, but you need to start implementation [...] They are developing while the North is keeping still."
A.G., Nicosia Masterplan Team

Keeping in mind those difficulties and those differences of development, it is clear that all of the stakeholders think there is need for action in the district, nevertheless. And especially, they all agree on the need for action in the Buffer

Zone, for its historical importance in both communities and for its heritage preservation.

Yet again another difficulty comes up: the area now encompassed in the Buffer Zone is more tricky to act on, since it is **partially claimed** by the Northern Cypriot government as part of their controlled land. It is what is known as **"contested area"**, and it is one of the biggest in Nicosia downtown.

"I think it's a priority. As I said it was one of our proposals to have an opening there […] it is a very, very sensitive place. As you may know, because it's a contested area."
A.P., Nicosia Masterplan Team

Nevertheless, this additional difficulty does not mean a stalemate of action, but it can indeed be exploited to push for an **opening** there, to allow both sides of the island to gain a partial sovereignity on it:

"According to Turkish side is Turkish side but according to the Greek side, is the battle zone. But it is it is evacuated is empty. So we suggested, among the technical team, discussing among the technical teams, for example, to restore the school and open it for use of both communities […] accessible from north and from the South."
A.G., Nicosia Masterplan Team

Apart from the suggested or partially discussed function to insert in the area, what is important is the ture of the area, and that there are several proposals on the table for a future development.

It is again interesting to look at the words of the UN representative, with its priviledge position overlooking the two sides:

"This is the area where we see a lot of potential […] The buidlings within the buffer zone are quite interesting architecturally, even though now they are quite derelict… I see potential, because they were nice building, so I think refurbish them will really increase the beauty, let's put it this way, of the area, and I think it will make it appealing from both sides […] There were talks about a new checkpoints, over the years, it is one of the area that has been identified as a potential new crossing point… So far it has not happened, but it is in mind of both communities, so probably it will have a future […] it will connect the eastern part of the city, that now it has no connection, and also because it has potential for economic and cultural reasons"

It is clear that the only way to possibly act or promote activity on the Buffer Zone is via the **opening of a checkpoint**, a trend which became common in the last years with the opening of more than 7 crossing points all over the island. Some of them also hosts bicommunal talking and meeting point, the most famous one being the Home for Cooperation in Ledra Palace crossing in Nicosia. According to a spokeperson from it, this is their mission:

"Every building inside the buffer zone can have a function of communication, integration and dialogue, similar to what the HfC is trying to do "
H.R., Home for Cooperation

If the bicommunality is asserted without discussion, the punctual function for the area of Agios Kassianos/Kafesli in the Buffer Zone can vary. All of the stakeholders thinks that it should not be a strict and defined function, but mostly a mix of the one suggested by the interviewed population:

"For me there are these multifunction aspects… let's say area where you can play around with all those functions […] It sounds good and I think culture is the key […] make sure these a place where it's easily transformed into something and available to everybody […] a place of interaction between people of different backgrounds, different expertise"
E.G., Association Dialogue Historical Research

In this **mixité** of functionalization in the area, a function that nobody excluded is the park, or, in general, the green areas:

"It's hard to think about it now, it seems almost impossible […] if I have to point a few, it can be nice to have there a green area, maybe on the bastion, as it is on the other side of the city next to Paphos gate. […] That's probably the most feasible and the most useful for the city"
T.P., architect and building contractor

Even when discussing what to do with the single buidling, the discussion was alwasy coming back to the opportunity of using this large, empty space as a new green spot in the centre of the city. For the building itself, on the other hand, many stakeholders where more cautious

about suggesting functions. It is clealry easier to address the issue of open spaces and connecting routes, while the building issue can encounter several blocks and discussion due to property rights and political pressure on their refunctionalization. What is clear is that the action on the area should start with a **physical reconnection** of the two sides, via a checkpoint most probably, and then continuing into a careful and **step-by-step process** of renovation and requalification. Quoting again the UN official:

"The issues are politics and then resources, but the second one is subordinated to the first. It can be a step-by-step approach, that is also an idea, it is difficult to envision. An approach will be the opening of a crossing, as a start, and then, having in mind a foreseeable vision, you can enlarge and do some more."
A.B., UN Senior Official

A gradual but steady reopening, with a clear vision and a clear program, it is probbaly the key for any possible action on the Buffer Zone. And about the possibilities of the area, the main envisioned features are those of bicommunality, gathering and sharing, in a context of openness and greenery, making the initial stage checkpoint area **not only a crossing**, but an area to stay, meet and gather. The new area is clearly devoted to Nicosians and to bi-communal actitìvities to engage the long-divided groups, but it can easily extend to any other population insisting on the city, such as commuters, temporary residents and tourists.

If tourists were missing, in the city and so in the first campaign of interviews, due to the effects of the 2020 CoVid pandemic, the general trend between stakeholders is that a new area within the Buffer Zone but open to access and crossing, can really become an atraction. And the **attraction point** can expand, including not only the Buffer Zone per se, but also the neighbouring district of Agios Kassianos/ Kafesli:

"I think that on both sides there is already some interest of the areas around, because they are very characteristic, it's the core of the old town and they have potential to have this strong touristic points [...] you can connect that to other areas that are close-by, that have already a cultural heritage aspect. There are some places you can connect this area with, and make it an attraction as a larger area working in synergy with other districts surrounding"
A.B., UN Senior Official

Altough tourism is an important part of the economy of a city, and especially of a capital like Nicosia, these fluxes should be carefully managed, to avoid priviledge of tourists over locals and to avoid wil gentrification. It is in a way easier to avoid that thanks to the particular situation the area is: the **lack of political agreement and legal framework** discourage private companies and stakeholders to invest in the area, leaving any possibility of actions only to public bodies, after talks, discussion and agreements between the communities.

It is the only possible path to follow, and it is a gradual, long and difficult path, that involves the construction of a shared historical memory together with the construction of a physical place. It is a series of steps, or scenarios, to implement these strategies and obtain a path of shared memory and a common ground for rapprochment. It is partially the reasons why the functions identified for the area are vague and **potentially modifiable through time**: the evolutive pattern of the scenarios cannot afford a strong and incisive function, while it can accomodate strategically-defined steps of reappropiation in a long and lasting process.

The new checkpoint envisioned for the area by several stakeholders will in fact act either on the morphological side and the socio-political side. The first, by connecting two segregated areas of the city, as identified in the urban and morphological analysis of the Old Town, and making them work as a single district again. The second, by creating a baseground of bicommunality for Nicosians from both sides of the divide. It is then, to sum up, and optic of urban, but also social and bicommunal reunion of two severed parts of the same city.

The relationships between stakeholder are usually hard to describe and to analyze, and it is especially difficult in a context of uncertainty and involvement of external, powerful forces. In the following pages, there will be an analysis of those aspects, in order to bring clarity.

Politics

Dialogue
promotion

Arts
and Culture

Bicommunal
activities

Economy
and Jobs creation

UN Office for Public Affairs

UNFCYP Mission Board

Government of the Republic of Cyprus

Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

United Kingdom Government - Guarantee power

Greece Government - Guarantee Power

Turkey Government - Guarantee Power

European Union

Shakolas Building Group

interviewed bodies

category

UN Political Office

Municipality of Nicosia

Municipality of North Nicosia

Nicosia Masterplan Team - G/C Team

Nicosia Masterplan Team - T/C Team

Home for Cooperation

Association for Historical Dialogue - G/C Team

Association for Historical Dialogue - T/C Team

Architectural studio, building company

Building company

International organization

Locally-involved Public body

Civic society entity

Non-profit organization

Private entity

low   some   high

power/influence

KEEP SATISFIED

UN Senior
Political
Officer

KEEP ONSIDE - ACTIVE MANAGEMENT

high

Nicosia
Masterplan
Team, GC

Nicosia
Masterplan
Team, TC

some

KEEP INFORMED - KEEP ONSIDE

IGNORE

Home for
Cooperation
Spokeperson

low

Architectural studio
and building company, TC

Historical
Dialogue
Society
Researcher, TC

Historical
Dialogue
Society
Researcher, GC

Building
company, GC

interest

part **3**

Design for Uncertainty

***reactivation and reuse
for a changing
social panorama***

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A new checkpoint for the East of Nicosia

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Final considerations

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Chapter IX
Managing
the Buffer Zone

As stated in the analysis of the Buffer Zone, the complexity of this area makes it very difficult to tackle and to propose a solution for its management and redevelopment. It is important to first understand how a Buffer Zone, and in particular the Buffer Zone in Cyprus and Nicosia works.

A **Buffer Zone**, or a no-man's land, is a territorial extension that is left unoccupied or under dispute after a conflict between one or more factions, resulting in an area visible as "empty" in the panorama, serving sometimes also as a division, or buffer, between two rival communities.

It is a term that is usually used in war times, defining the area between foe's trenches, but it is applied to geopolitical dispute and divided cities to identify the part of territory that is encompassed in the division area, which can be either under third-party control or occupation, or under occupation of a single force between those involved in the conflict.

Every divided city has its own case. For example, the city of Berlin, in the long years of its partition, had a buffer zone consisting in the area in which the Wall was built, plus a no-man's land around it with barbed wires, mines and armed soldiers; in this case, the area was solely controlled by East Germany government, being built entirely onto this nation's land.

The case of Nicosia is different and, in a way, more complex. Two main groups insist on

the territory, each one with its own policy and its own claim on the other half of the city and the island. The peculiar part is that the Buffer Zone is a real *terra nullius*, a strip of land not controlled by any of the party involved, but by a transnational institution, the United Nation, through its mission called **UNFICYP**, or United Nation Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (United Nation Security Council, 1974).

This results in a division of the island and the city not in two parts, but in three, with a big, abandoned area **at the very centre** of the island, including parts of the medieval walls, of the Old town, but also several monuments and infrastructure, like Ledra Palace Hotel and the Nicosia International Airport.

The scenarios that will be discussed later will then consider not only of the architectural intervention and the possible reuse of the building but will propose also a management of the area in a **strategic way**, discussing policies and other aspects of the division. It is clear that the choice of the case study must be the Buffer Zone: from the analysis described in the previous chapter, this is the main focal point of any action dealing with the topic of the division in Nicosia. It is the **interface** between one community and the other, and it is part of the cultural, historical, but also personal and subjective heritage of the city and its inhabitants.

➤ **fig. IX.1** Buffer Zone in Nicosia seen from the Greek side; barrels and barbed wire are a common sight in the old town
picture of the author

➤ **fig. IX.2** Buffer Zone in Nicosia seen from the Greek side; a UN military post is overlooked by a Turkish army watchtower
picture of the author

band 1   band 2   band 3   band 4
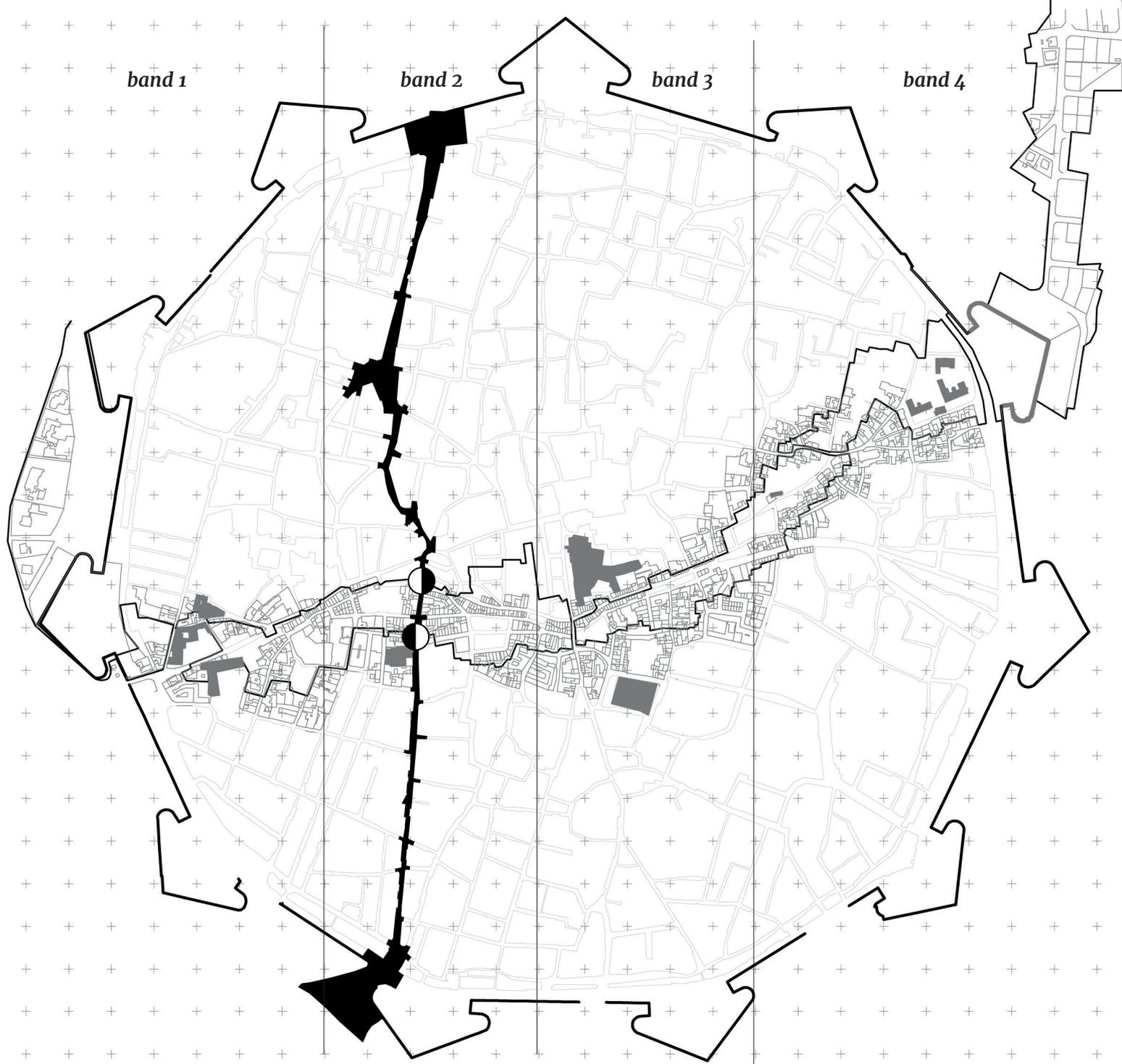
paths and surfaces   *building in the b.z. and liminal areas*   *important building*

band 1

band 2

band 3

band 4

TRNC government building

kyrenia gate

samanbahce

ottoman courthouse

kumarcilar han

ataturk square

buyuk han

kyrenia avenue
commercial avenue

selimyye mosque /agia sofia

arabahmet

arasta sk

agiou kassianou schools

ledras checkpoint

bandabulya market

armenian church

ledras checkpoint

flatro bastion

catholic church

agios yakovos

chrysaliniotissa
taht-el-kale

UCY building

municipal
market

pafos gate

faneromeni church

new municipality

maronite diocesis

faneromeni school

onasagorou street

ledras street
commercial avenue

pancyprian gymnasium

omeriyye mosque

archbishop palace

elefteria square

costanza bastion/oxi market

culture band

tourism band

commercial band

residential band
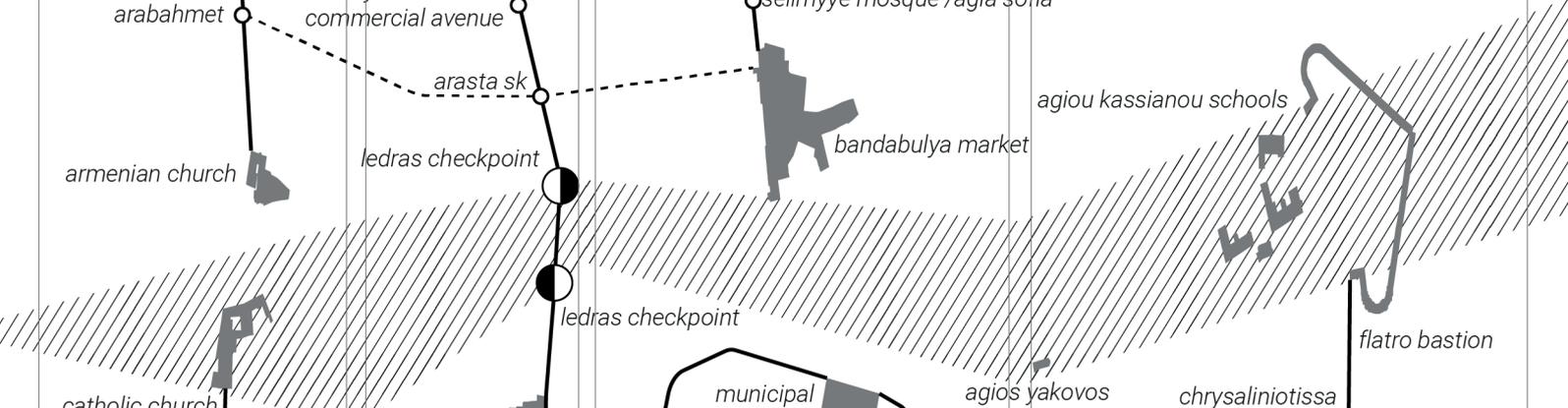
IX.1 three scenarios, or phases, for the usage of the buffer zone

IX.1.1 Scenario A: divided city, inaccessible Buffer Zone

The first scenario to take into consideration is the **actual situation of Nicosia**. A city divided, with few crossing points from one part to the other, but still with a dynamic flux of people and workers crossing every day. This first phase of the development of the division still sees the Buffer Zone as a no-man's land, and the two halves of the cities, Lefkosia and Lefkoşa, work completely differently, with specular institutions and parallel policies.

The first issue of this division is the abandonment and the isolation of the historical city centre: both halves moved their business district away from the walled city. Lefkosia moved it to the south-west area, next to Elefteria Square, while Lefkoşa shifted it in the surroundings of Kyernia/Girne Gate. The old city is nowadays **peripherical** of the settlement, but it is still the **historical and cultural core** of both halves.

Therefore the need for a reactivation, with new historical attention and new projects or impulse for the new life of the walled city. Some example, which can be implemented, are already in place. An example can be the **pedestrianization** around

the area of Faneromeni in the south (Nicosia Municipality, 2017) or next to Selimiyye Mosque in the north. These virtuous examples should be expanded and implemented, to preserve the historical centre of the city and its traditional features and appearance, without denaturing it. Keeping both the tangible heritage features but also the intangible, the traditional and folklorist activities and way of living, helps to better perceive the historical part of the city, avoiding its **gentrification** and an excessive commercialization, such as in Ledras and Onasagorou street in the southern half.

The pedestrianization can be pushed further and in several other districts, to have a complete **pedestrian walkway** along the border, but also in the whole walled city, following the example of what happened in several other historical European city centres. The district in consideration will be: Tophane in the south and its northern neighbour of Karamanzade and Arabahmet; the area around the checkpoint in Ledras; the area of Faneromeni and the Old Municipal Market, with its corresponding area of Selimiyye and the Old Market; finally, the district of Chrysalinitissa and Agios Kassianos.

These new interventions and the reduction of car access will give a push forward in those areas, but it should be accompanied by a refunctionalization and a **restoration** of the abandoned building, especially those functioning as a border in the Buffer Zone. In this way, those artefacts will not be only walls, a static element of 2D border, but they will

become a 3D element, possible to infill with new functions and to reactivate in order to give more space and more economic relevance to areas that are now neglected.

All of those measures are hard to achieve without a clear, common and shared strategy. It is possible to have a **bicommunal institution:** the **Nicosia Master Plan Team** (Constantinides, Ozen, 2008) is already a similar reality, and it is not daring to imagine a common body responsible for reactivation and requalification processes. Also, it is clear that those interventions should take care of the **existing population** and its needs: there should be an upgrade of the local population, in order to involve them in the process and tempt them into keeping on living in the Old Town. On the other hands, public advantages, in the form of easy-access loans or some state incentives should be put in practice, to attract new residents and new economic activities.
As the partition stays, it is still preserved the Buffer Zone and the UN Peacekeeping force on it, but in an optic of rapprochement in which this mission should be looking at a short-term deadline.

The discussed possible solutions and strategy they all take part in probably the greater issue in this current situation, which is the **image of the city**. It is fundamental to perceive the walled city as a whole, or at least as a thriving and central area of the conurbation, in order to bring it back to life. Most of the actions undertaken to promote these changes are large-scale projects: in the south, it is possible to see Elefteria Square, or the new Municipality Building, or even the new Cathedral sponsored by the Archbishopric.

Nevertheless, those huge and monumental projects are responsible for the denaturing of the city image. On the other hand, other more respectful projects can be taken in example: to quote, the **reactivation of Ermou Street** in the south (Geddes, 2018), with the presence of the Municipal Centre of Art and several new spaces for atelier, cafés and traditional retailer; in the north, the restoration of Samanbahce district, with its peculiar architecture and its local shops. Another important remark is the one concerning the above-mentioned 3D border: the image of the city cannot improve if there is the feeling of **"border impact"**. In other words, a hard border shifts the rapprochement process in a harder area, difficult to tackle and to solve. A solution should be a reduction of the military presence in the downtown, with few military posts along the border; also, there should be a normalization of the border crossing, in order to have an easier and swifter way to pass from one side to the other.

Finally, there is probably the need of a **further checkpoint** in the city, to have more crossing points and to make new areas benefit from the new fluxes. Also, the checkpoint should undergo a restyling, in order to appear more appealing to the general public and to give a **welcoming message**, something that it is not exactly conveyed nowadays.

chart of the scenario/A *- split city | applyable scenario*

Needs

accessibility · attractivity · restyling · upgrade

Strategy

new pedestrian alley along the border · restoration and refurbishment of old building · public incentives for new activities · large scale renovation projects · new image for the checkpoints · building renovation for a 3D border, not a 2D façade
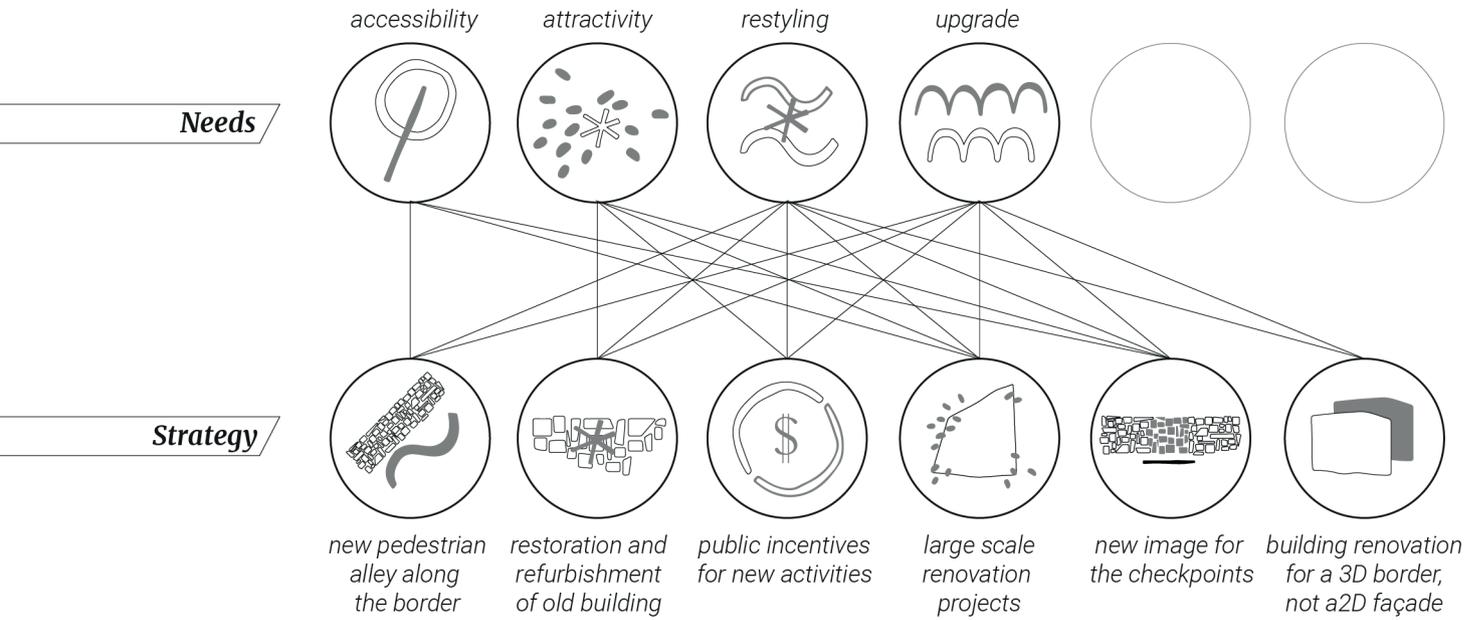
Actions

points
a/Ledras checkpoint
b/Ledra Palace checkpoint

reimagining, restyling, no feeling of "hard border"

lines
main streets of the old town

reduction of car access, continuous pedestrian path

platforms
1/Eleftheria square
2/Nicosia new city hall
3/Faneromeni
4/Omerye Mosque
5/Ermou St - Crysalinitissa - Taht-el-Kale
6/Caraffa Bastion - Athinas

great "entrance" to the old town from South
a new big public building in the core of the city
vibrant leisure district in the city centre
a new square for the historic mosque
a traditional but open district in the east of Nicosia
a new park overlooking Pentedaktylos mountains

volumes
building along the Buffer Zone

restoration and refunctionalisation for new activities
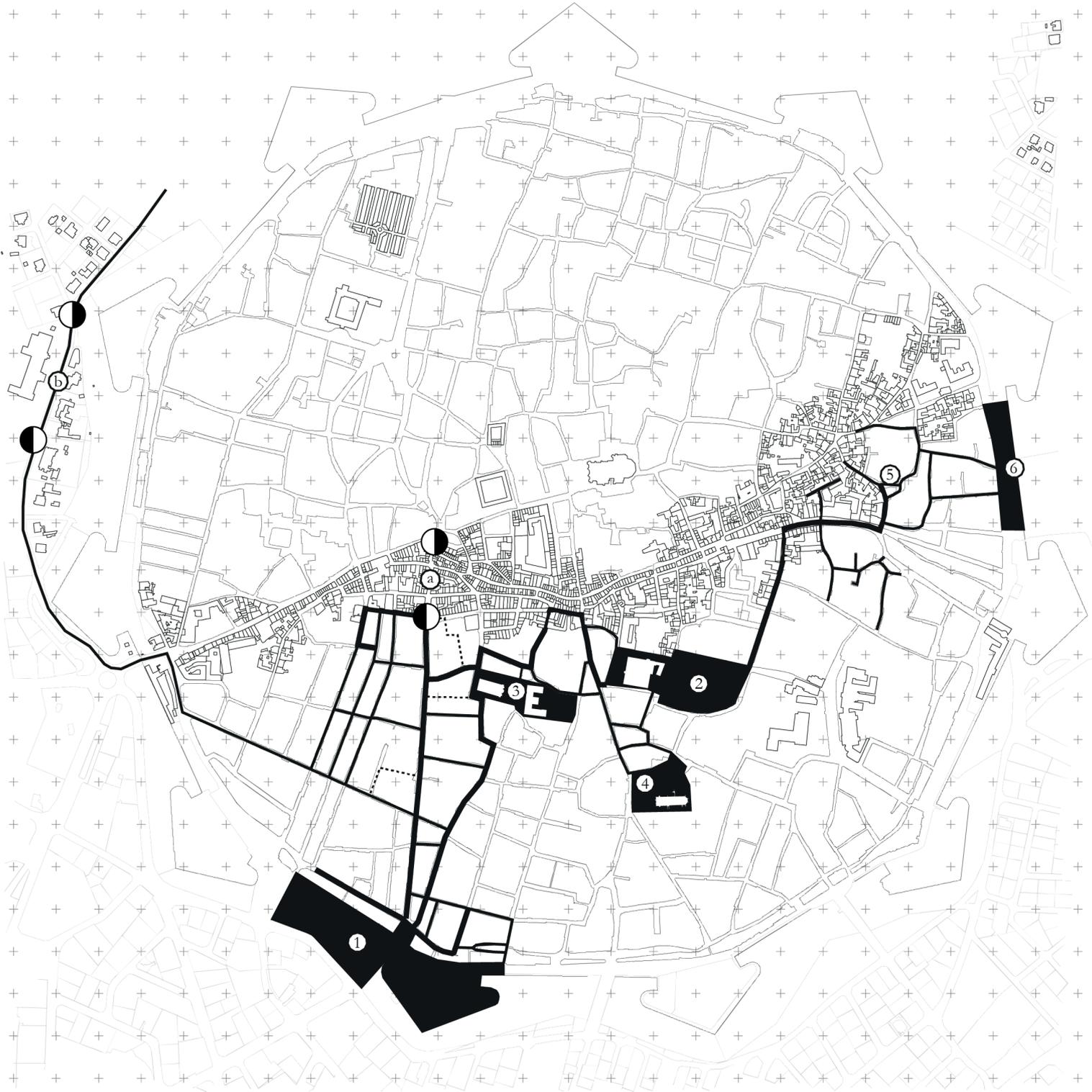
IX.1.2 Scenario B:
divided city,
accessible Buffer Zone

As already mentioned, the scenarios can be visualized both as different options for the future of the city, but also as different phases of the development of the rapprochement path. Needless to say, the two keys to reading are not self-excluding: in case of having different options, of course the suggested intervention presented in the other options are not neglected, but taken into consideration for a syncretism work; in the case of the **phases**, the succession of them means a inclusion of the previous suggestion in the development of the scene. To simplify, scenarios follow an **addition progression**, while phases follow an **expansion progression.**

Keeping that in mind, scenario/phase B includes some characteristic of scenario/phase A as a stoneground. In this case, though, the situation is imagined to be changed, in which tension decrease and the inter-communal body cited in scenario A becomes an inter-communal committee for the whole city of Nicosia.

This scenario B is clearly more far-fetched than scenario A, but it is **not far from reality**, in the eventuality of a definite split of the island in two countries, with the drear "Two-State solution", but also for a federative approach to the solution of the Cyprus Dispute.

In this case, after having a shared institution for the control and management of the Buffer Zone, a third party, the UN, is not more needed, if not only for a supervision role in the first period after reconciliation.

The city of Nicosia will be anyway split between two realities, but the distance between the two will be shortened, having the Buffer Zone as an **inter-communal shared area**, in a general optic of a shared historical and heritage area.

The first step in this path is of course the creation of a **bi-communal strategy**, with the aforementioned shared management.

Only with these pre-sets it is possible to have a new zone for development, but without incurring into wild and uncontrolled commercialization and gentrification. The aim should be the gaining of new importance for the walled city, with **less boundary** and **more dynamic flow** of goods and people from one side to the other, in a model shared with several cross-border realities. This will create also a shift in the poles of the city: there will not be two different, so clearly divided poles for the two sides, but a **merged core** coinciding with the walled town.

The new area will be of course easily accessible, but still under a regime of controlled access: regarding these aspects, it is necessary a clarification. Nowadays, border crossing in Nicosia means showing a passport to Cypriot authorities, walk the few dozens of meters of the Buffer Zone, then showing again the passport to the Northern Cypriots authorities.

This process must be done both in entry and in exit, meaning that a simple walk in the other side of the city means a 4-time display of your passport. For these reasons, it is possible to imagine a different way of controlling access, which will deal with **in-exit control**: the entrance to the area of the Buffer Zone will be free, even though still regulated, but the exit from the area is controlled, to avoid inconveniences and illegal crossing.

This will mean that document display will be reduced, thus easing the job of the authorities and reducing the feeling of a hard border.

Having solved those operational problems, the strategies applicable in the now **"former Buffer Zone"** can be multiple and even very different between each other, even though never self-excluding. There can be a **green lung** in the middle of a very dense urban fabric, in order to assess a better quality of life, in a sort of bicommunal park following the example of the Transboundary Parks or the Peace Parks.

Another proposal can be a historical memory open-air museum, to keep, at least in some areas, the memory of the division and of this long chapter of Cypriot history, in the same way it was done in Berlin with the East Side Gallery. Moreover, the area can become a new **cultural and leisure area**, following the successful project or requalification in Samanbahce and Agios Kassianos/Chrisaliniotissa districts.

Clearly, economic functions can be put into practice, for the new area to be **economically self-reliant**: it can be a new economical district, similar to the extreme example of a "duty free", a port franc in the middle of the city. This solution is of course the least fascinating but probably the easiest to realize if there is not a strong leadership in the bi-communal management committee. It is again necessary to strengthen the accent on the importance of public governance in such a huge project, both for its territorial implications but also for its symbolical meaning for the people of Cyprus. The area should not let be invaded by careless investments and scattered development, but it should follow a precise and controlled policy of reuse.

In saying so, it is necessary to propose a policy and political scenario for this new public body. It can be imagined as a **shared bi-communal committee**, composed by a certain number of members from the Republic of Cyprus and some other by the Northern Turkish Republic. This body will work as a federal entity between the two states, in a way similar to the federal

chart of the scenario/B - *shared city | foreseeable scenario*

Needs

accessibility　*attractivity*　*restyling*　*upgrade*　*refunctioning*

Strategy

new pedestrian alley along the border　*restoration and refurbishment of old building*　*public incentives for new activities*　*new image for the checkpoint*　*new functions and opportunities for the B.Z.*　*opening of more checkpoints*
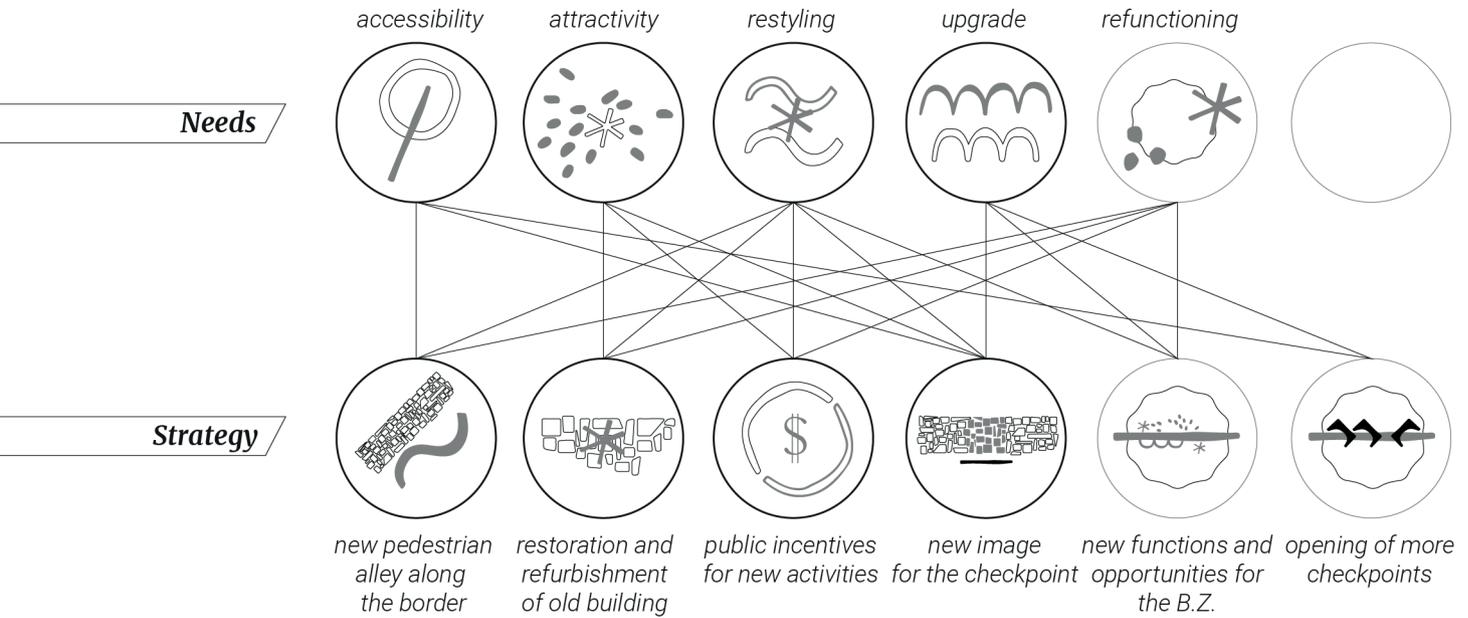
Actions

points　*Elefteria, Ledras, Trikouri, Ermou, Kassianou, Athinas*　*more checkpoint for the accessibility*

lines　*main streets of the old town*　*reduction of car access, continuous paths*

platforms
1/Eleftheria square
2/Nicosia new city hall
3/Faneromeni
4/Omerye Mosque
5/Ermou St - Crysalinitissa - Taht-el-Kale
6/Caraffa Bastion - Athinas
7/Selimye Cami - Ayia Sofia
8/Atatürk Square

great "entrance" to the old town from the South
a new big public building in the core of the city
vibrant leisure district in the city centre
a new square for the historic mosque
a traditional but open district in the east of Nicosia
a new park overlooking Pentedaktylos mountains
the core of North Nicosia, bi-communal heritage
the focal center of North Nicosia

volumes　*building in the Buffer Zone*　*restoration and refunctionalisation for new activities*

Agios Kassianos
*crossing area
requalification*

Trikoupi
*municipal markets
and crossing area
requalification*
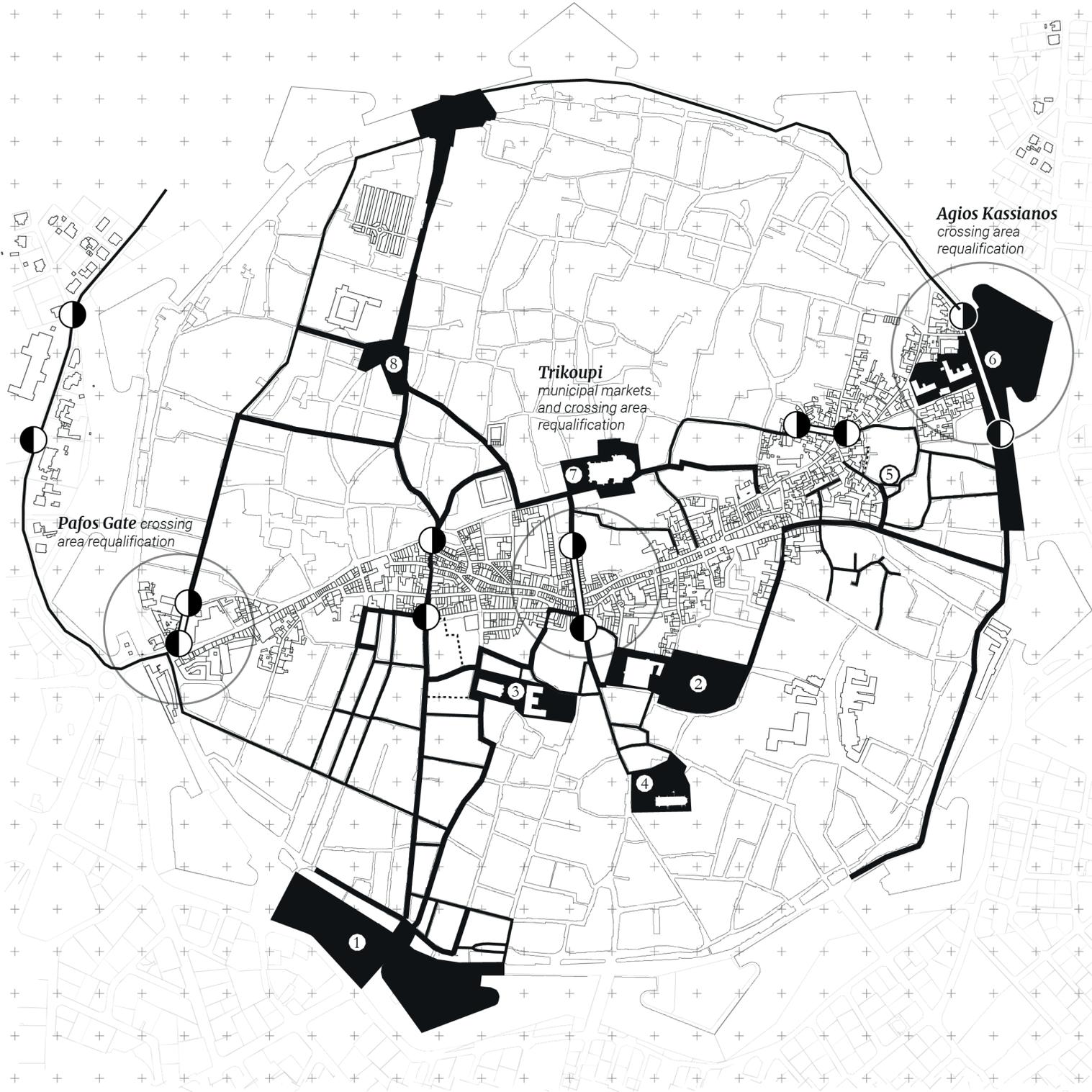
Pafos Gate *crossing
area requalification*

district in the U.S.A, sharing a certain amount of their budget for the management and the functioning of the Buffer Zone Committee. The Committee will represent the two states in the area, dealing with management, real estate, residents right and public infrastructure, in order not to have cross interest in the area by the two communities. Also, real estate and property right will be shared between the two communities in a fixed quota, similar to the division of member of parliament stated in Cyprus constitution of 1961. Residents and activities in the area will refer solely to the committee in order to solve any problem occurring in everyday life in the Buffer Zone District.

Of course, this is simply a **proposal of management**, and it is far from reality in several approaches: there is still the big issue of the currency, different from the two sides and with a very different power; there is the issue of citizenship for residents of the area; there is the issue of the European Union status for Northern Cypriots. It is a proposed solution, and it is only used as a political theatre as a background for the refunctionalization intervention, but it is far from completion and realization, and this research does not aim at finding a formula for the solution of the long-lasting Cypriot dispute.

IX.1.3 Scenario C:
reunified city

This scenario is probably the most farfetched of the three. It involves a proper reunification of the island of Cyprus under a single sovereignty, an evolution of the situation, which is **far from reality** as nowadays, with increasing political tensions and conflicts.

It is nevertheless important to consider it in order to have a complete image of what can happen to the divided Nicosia. It will be the proper **conclusion of the path** of divided city: if those scenarios will be considered as phases this will be the final step. Thus, in this phase the city reunites into a single, multicultural reality. This new entity will have to face several operational problems, such as the absorption of the double institutions into a single one, and the repatching of trades, routes and urban fabric.

About this last matter it is clear that the "former" Buffer Zone now lays in the right centre of the city. The first action that has to take place is the **reconstitution of road links** and connection between the two halves of the city, divided for almost fifty years. Of course this will cause a shifting in urban distribution, and new areas will gain importance. It is thus clear the need for a new strategy for the former Buffer Zone, to transform the urban void into a much better restored, reintegrated and repurposed area.

This phase will follow right after the reconstruction of the road network and the demolitions of walls and barricades. There must be a careful work of **restoration of the buildings**, joined by the institution of financial compensation for property rights,either to give them back to the original owners or to use them for new purposes. The functions and the opportunities are similar to the ones that are already presented in scenario B, but they will be implemented and extended in an island-wide perspective. To make this process work it is of course needed a strong policy of funds and financial aid for the installing of new functions in the no-man's land, but there is also the need for a strong lead in avoiding a wild commercialization of the area, which will cause a clear denaturation of the city identity.

Other solutions may also be found. It is a unique example of a **urban void** right in the middle of the city core, so the opportunity should not be wasted: a redesigning of the area can implement, for example, mobility. An issue raised by several locals, the creation of a new transportation **corridor** can ease the traffic issues and can perfectly serve the downtown in a less invasive and polluting way. An example can be the proposal of the tram lines in the southern half of the city, which can be extended as a whole-scale plan and include a new axis in the Buffer Zone.

Not much else can be said about this scenario: its distance in time and opportunity shows the difficulties in even imagining a united Nicosia. The urban masterplan of the following chapter will try to highlight the different aspects.

chart of the scenario/C - *reunified city | utopic scenario*

Needs

accessibility	attractivity	restyling	upgrade	refunctioning	rejoining

Strategy

new pedestrian alley in the old town	restoration and refurbishment of old building	public incentives for new activities	unification and harmonization of old urban fabric	new functions and opportunities for the ex-B.Z.	new corridor in the city centre

Actions

lines — *main streets of the old town* — *reduction of car access, continuous path*

platforms
1/eleftheria square — *great "entrance" to the old town from the South*
2/Nicosia new city hall — *a new big public building in the core of the city*
3/Faneromeni — *vibrant leisure district in the city centre*
4/Omerye Mosque — *a new square for the historic mosque*
5/Ermou St - Crysalinitissa - Taht-el-Kale — *a traditional but open district in the east of Nicosia*
6/Caraffa Bastion - Athinas — *a new park in Ayios Kassianos Pentedaktylos mountains*
7/Selimye Cami - Ayia Sofia — *the core of North Nicosia, heritage of both communities*
8/Atatürk Square — *the modern center of North Nicosia*

volumes — *building in the Buffer Zone* — *restoration and refunctionalisation for new activities*

cores
Lidras (commercial)
Trikoupi/Ermou (leisure)
Ayios Kassianos (cultural)
pafos gate (multicultural)
new dedicated centres for the controlled reunification of the city

Agios Kassianos
green and cultural core

Trikoupi/Ermou
market and leisure core

Ledras/Lokmaci
touristic and
commercial core
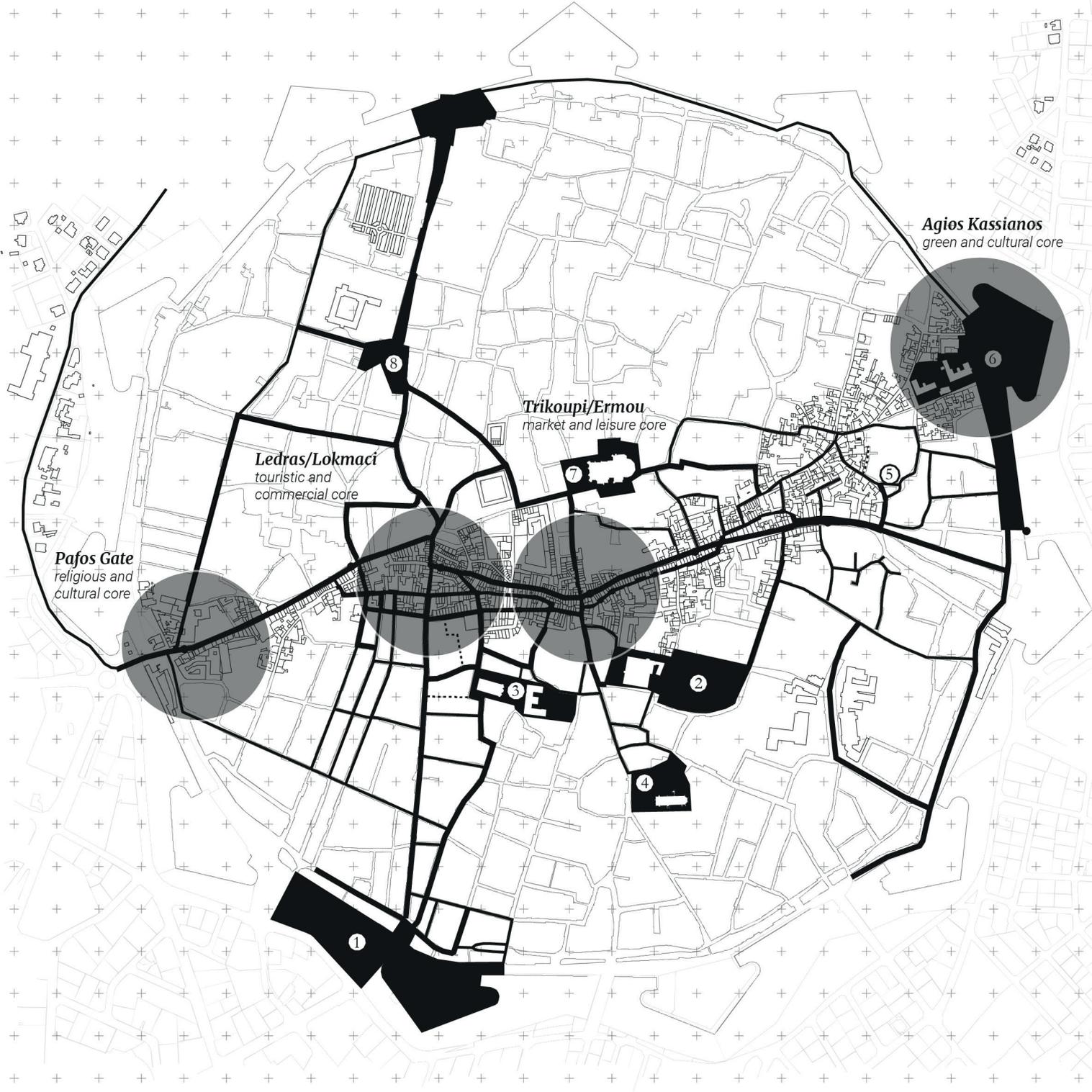
Pafos Gate
religious and
cultural core

IX.2 *An urban masterplan for the Buffer Zone and the liminal areas*

From the analysis of the needs and the necessity for each scenario, a new and different configuration is imagined for the buffer zone.

The first scenario involves the division of the city. The actions are then applied to the liminal areas of the boundary, being the **pre-existence of the Buffer Zone**. The analysis deal with the requalification of the historical centre of Nicosia to make it a historically preserved area in the city. One of the first action is the reduction of car access, and the creation of several pedestrian alleyways, both distributed along the border, but also joining points of interest in the city.

These new promenades along the border will provide an educative and pedagogical function, in order to understand the different atmospheres of the city, but it will also work as a booster for economy, since it can help the reinstalment of atelier, laboratories and artisanal activities in the old town.

The other promenades will work as a link between the important touristic points of the city: in fact, for this analysis, the city has been divided into elements, mainly points, lines and surfaces. This trichotomy reflects into the architectural characteristics: points are, of

course, the interesting points; lines are path connecting those points, and surfaces are extension and dilatation of the path in the proximity of the interesting points, in order to create new urban squares, green areas or, in general, gathering spaces in a dense and compact urban fabric such as the one of Nicosia. The last category mentioned are the volumes, that reconnect to the idea of requalification of existing buildings in order to have a 3D border, and not just a wall-façade border.

Going on with the proposal, it is now time for the scenario B/ phase 2.

This new scenario shows a progression from the first one, but it is a **continuation and an expansion** of the policies and the action undertaken. In this case, the Buffer Zone becomes an area with shared control, an intercommunal zone accessible by both sides but still controlled and guarded.

Clearly the main issue will be the requalification of the buildings of the no-man's land. Being the whole of it or just a part, it is still important to give a functionalization and a destination to those buildings. It may be a repetition, but it is important to remark that these actions should be careful, to avoid this area to become a "Disneyland" for speculation.

The usual distinction of scenario A remains, but there is a new further definition for the volumes: they are now classified according to the desired main function of the area; it is necessary to

remark that anyway all the now former Buffer Zone will have a mixed-use spirit, following the principles of **mixité**, but a main function is anyway described in order to give an identity to that part of the city and a character to the new zones. Thus saying, the area next to the existing crossing in Ledras Street will keep the economical vocation, being the main axis of the whole city.

The part closer to the old Municipal Market and the new Municipality will follow the leisure vocation that is now present through the flourishing of bars, cafés and recreational venues in the area.

Finally, the areas next to the walls - **Paphos Gate and Famagusta Gate** – will be of cultural vocation: both areas have historical manufacts and important institution – Maronite and Catholic Churches, the two city gates, the Archbishop Palace -, but they also keep a strong identity and the traditional features of the district, which must be preserved not as an open-air district museum, but as a living area in the downtown in which is still possible to see the traditional Cypriot way of life.

Another element emerging is the so-called bridge: this means the opening of several other **passages into the Buffer Zone** and in the crossing from one side to the other, in order to have a deeper and more permeable amalgamation of the two communities, and to experience the city in a different way.

The proposed passages are:
- **Pafos Gate**, to have a link in the core of Arabahmnet district and next to the religious centres of the city;
- the already existing checkpoint in **Ledras/ Lokmaci street**;
- **Trikoupi/Kuyumcular Street**, to connect the two main market area of the two halves of the city, the Municipality Agora and the Municipal Market;
- **Agios Kassianos/Haydarpaşa Street**, to link two peripherical areas of the city and bring them new dynamics;
- **Athinas/Mehmet Ali Riza Boulevard**, in order to continue the promenade along the walls.

Scenario C/Phase 3 shows what is the direct and probably unique path in the future of **rapprochement** and depicts the total reunification of the city. In this case, all the actions that took place in the previous scenarios are valuable and useful. The preservation and the pedestrianisation of the areas of the city close to the Buffer Zone now creates a unique central core that can be again the new core of the whole city. Moreover, the previous restoration of buildings will continue and will probably involve all the building in the Buffer Zone, but also the buildings in other parts of the Walled Town, as this will start getting more and more attention and investments.

The opportunity of the new area, the previous urban void, actually allows to undertake some actions in easing the issues of the city, such as the lack of green spaces, gathering areas,

and traffic congestion. A new **corridor** can be imagined, crossing the whole Buffer Zone along the ideal line of Ermou Street, entering the old city in Famagusta Gate and Paphos Gate. This new line can be imagined to be extended to other important and populated districts of the city, such as Agios Dometios in the west and Kaimakli in the east; crossing right in the centre, it will be the perfect media for commuters to enter the city, serving the cores of both sectors.

As it is displayed, the new elements in this scenario are the already mentioned corridor and the new concept of **"cores"**. This will follow the characterisation given to each part of the Buffer Zone in the previous scenarios and it will be expanded to **permeate the liminal areas** and the whole parts of the city, in a more integrated and mixed-use definition.

The next pages show the result of the campaigns of interviews, joining the opinions emerged from the general populations and the observations of the stakeholders. The tool was useful to identify a mapping of the *desiderata*, the desires, the preferences and the inclinations for the city of Nicosia in its historical centre. The still picture of the situation nowadays is implemented with the views for the future, declined per each scenario, to identify either an area in need of action and a common strategy for the Buffer Zone before going into a closer level of investigation.
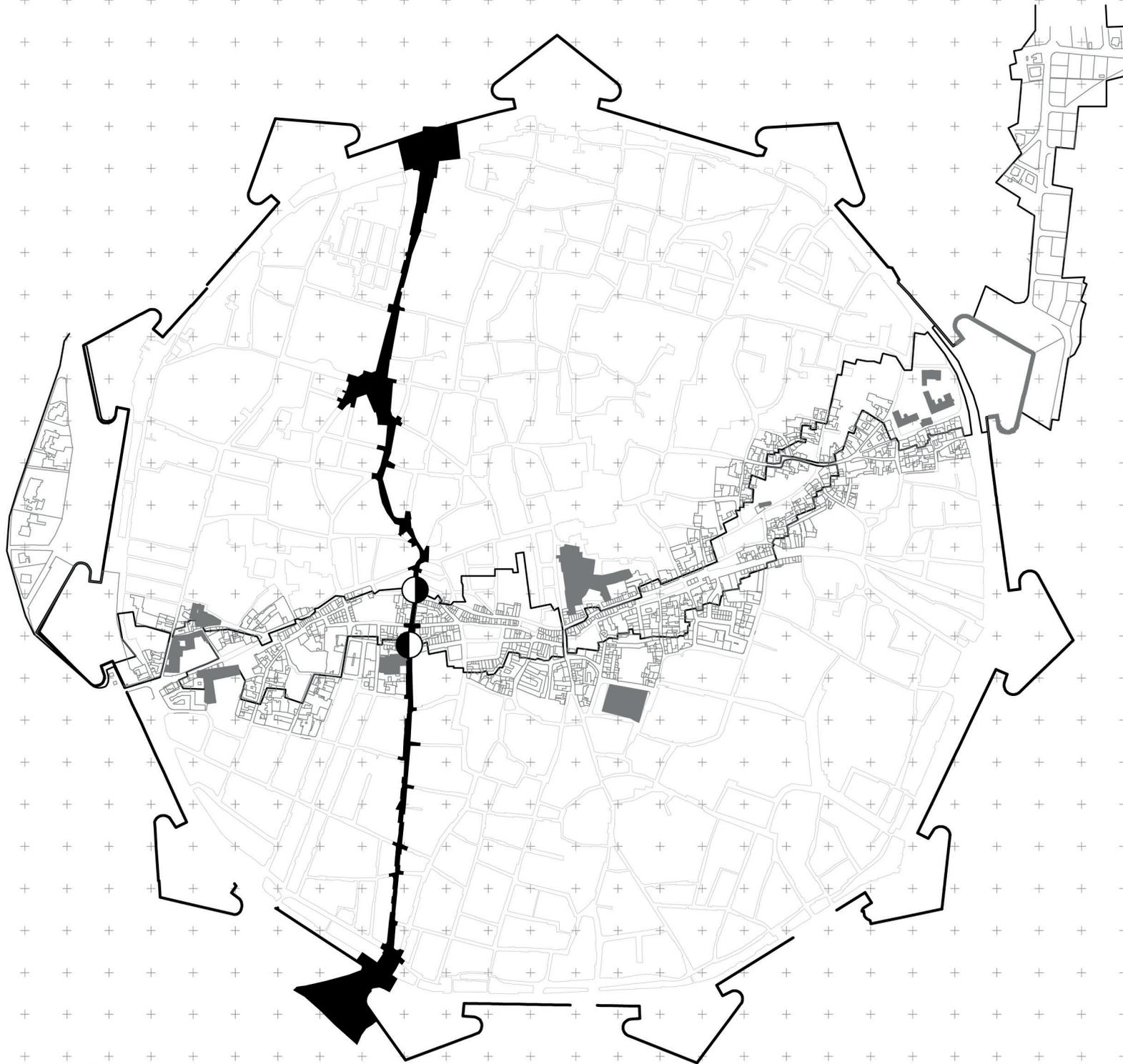
paths and surfaces | *building in the b.z. and liminal areas* | *important building*

band 1 band 2 band 3 band 4
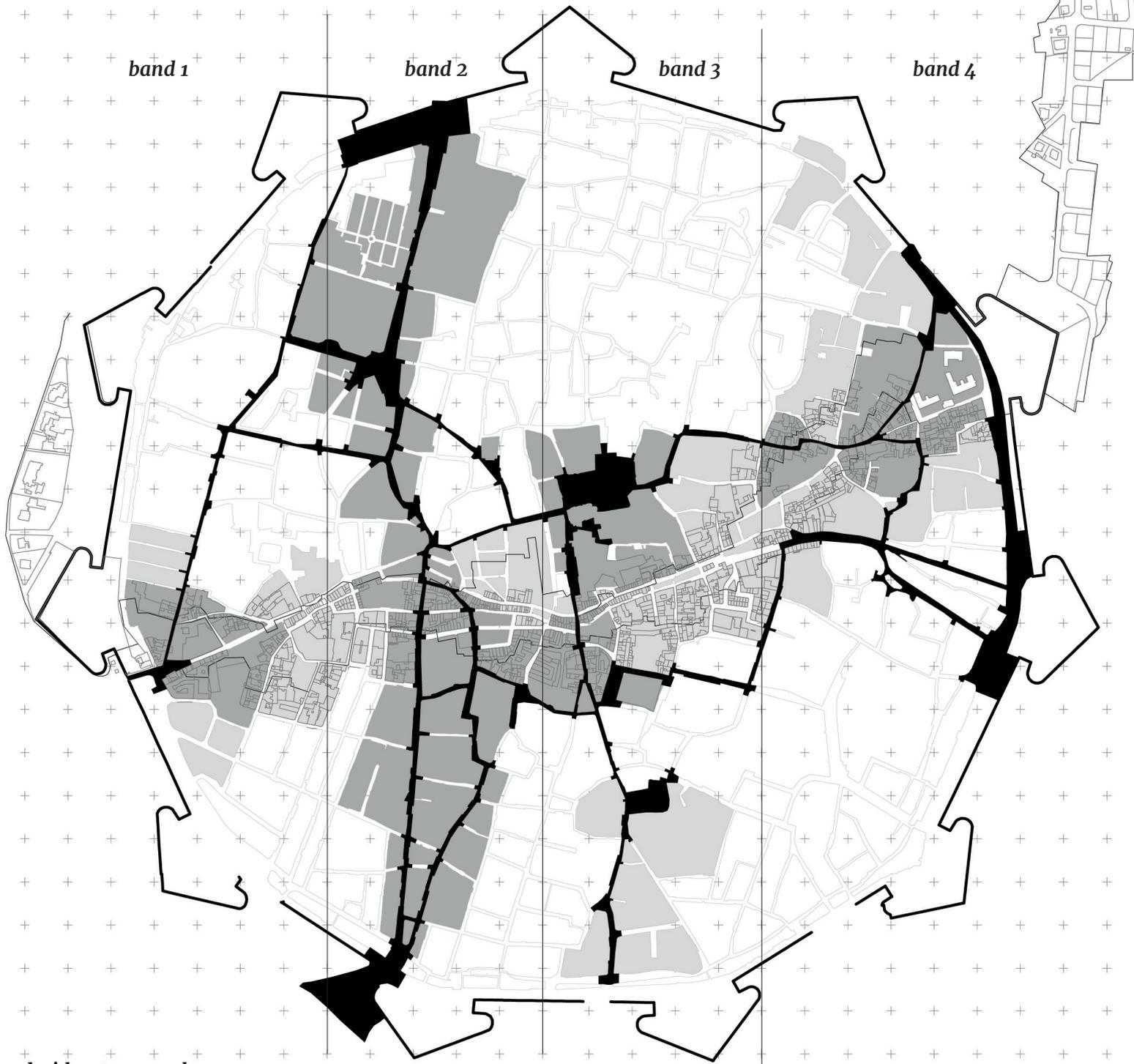
desiderata > overlap

paths and surfaces *immediate requalification impact* *secondary requalification impact*

band 1
description

band 2
description

band 3
description

band 4
description

residential areas

multicultural features

traditional way of life

historical core

commercial avenues

monuments promenade

most integrated

promiximity of attraction

market areas

nightlife, cafes and bars

residential areas

green spaces and parks

big outdoor surfaces

most segregated
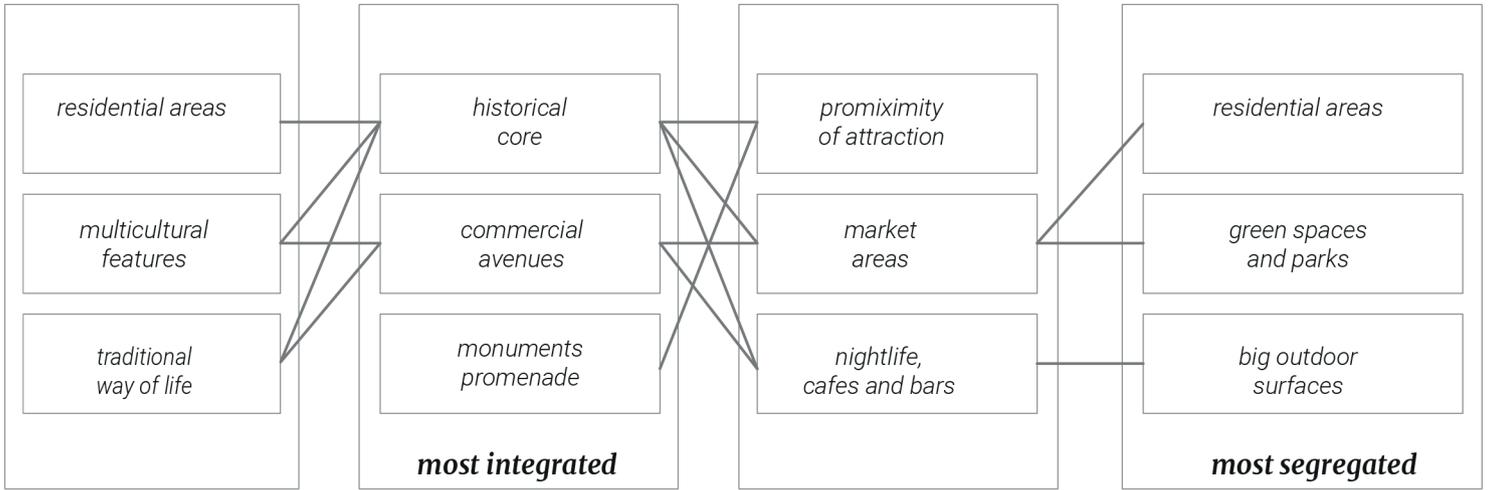
band 1
desiderata

band 2
desiderata

band 3
desiderata

band 4
desiderata

accomodations

accomodations

accomodations

accomodations

religious building

shopping areas

shopping areas and markets

market&events

office space

food&beverages

food&beverages

food&beverages

educational

services

office space

food&beverages

office space

educational

greenery

services

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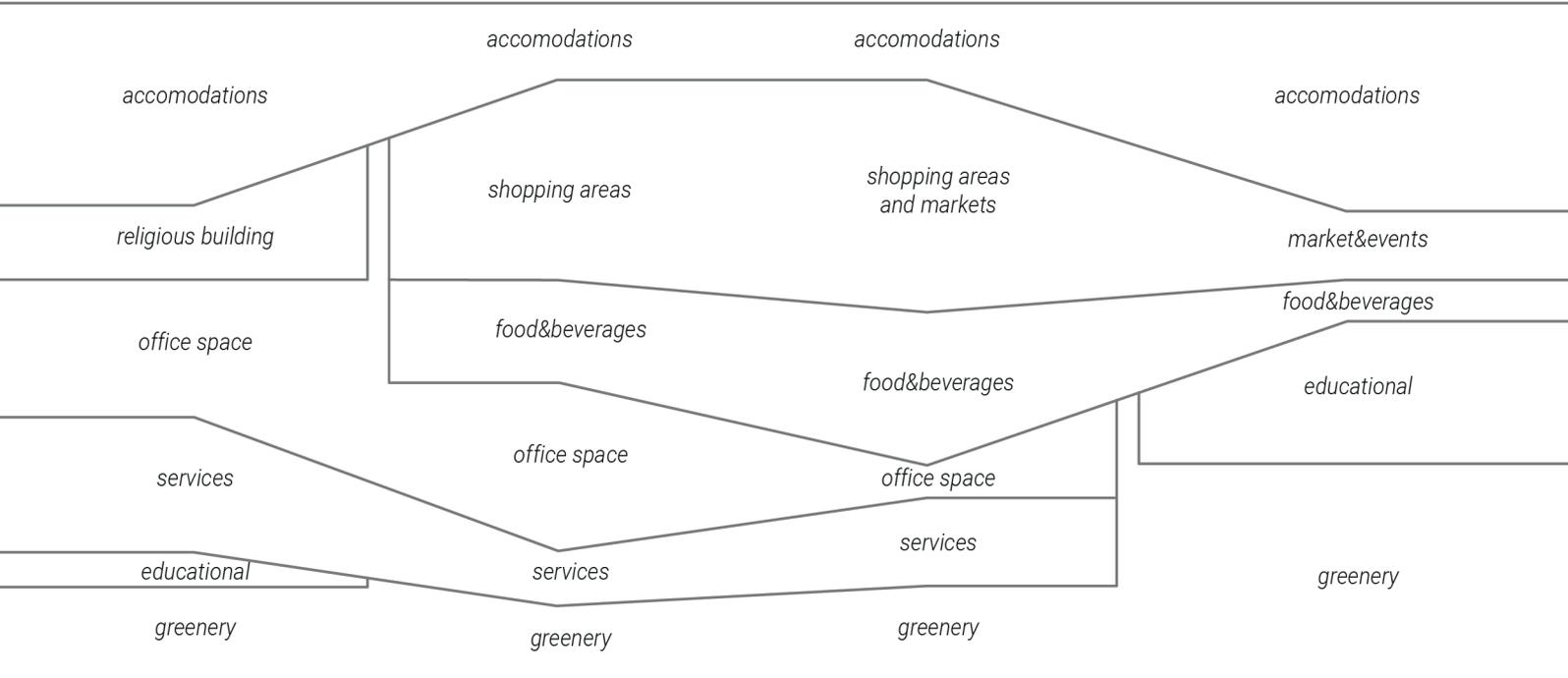
culture band

tourism band

commercial band

residential band

desiderata > reactivable/requalifiable paths
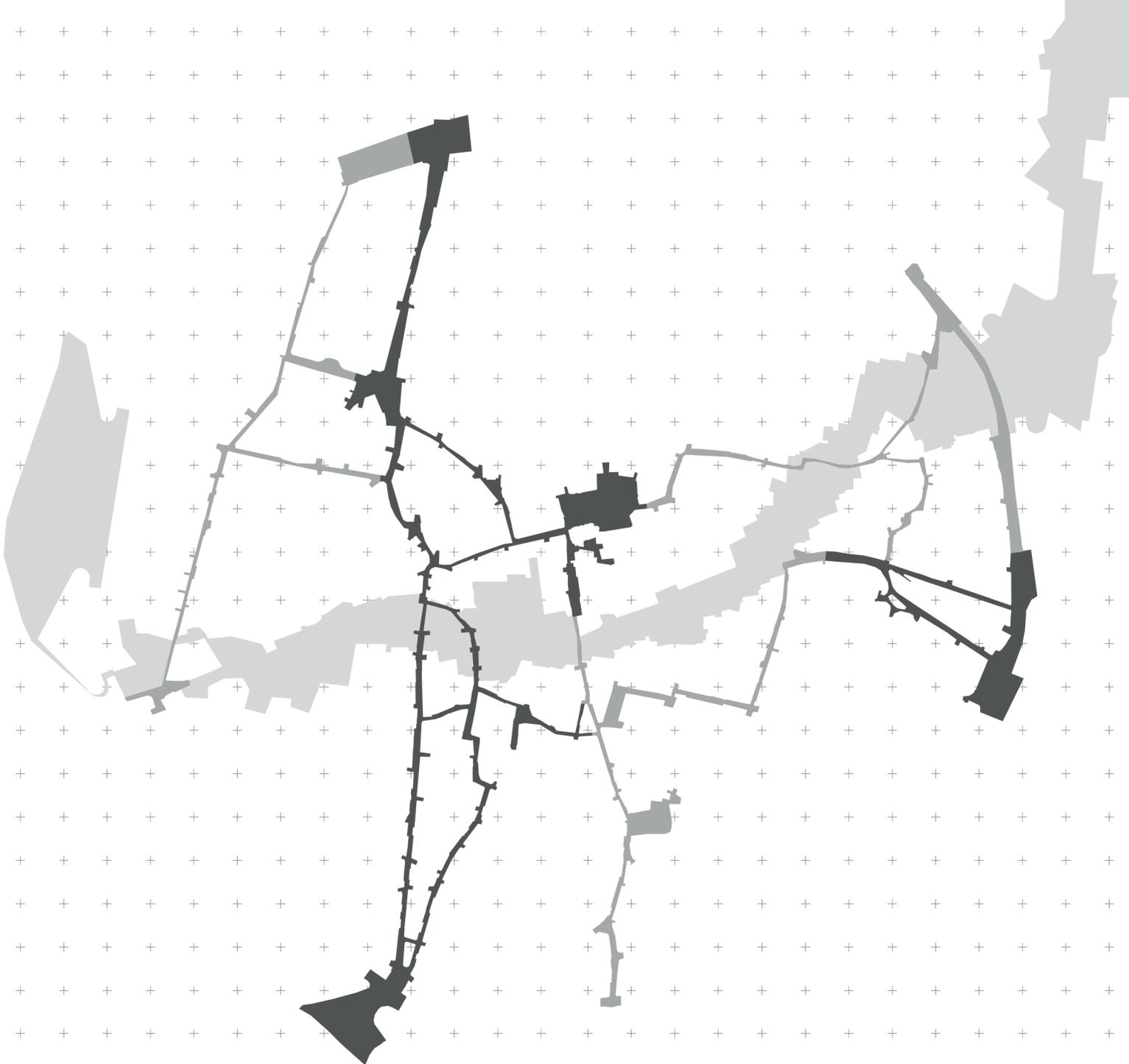
desiderata > reactivable/requalifiable areas

scenario a   *scenario b*   *scenario c*

Chapter X
A new checkpoint
for the East of Nicosia

The three scenarios, or phases, described in the previous chapter were the general presentation for the punctual work to be conducted on a specific area of the city.

As stated in the Space Syntax analysis, the east side of the city is actually in need for a refurbishment and, in general, of a reactivation of fluxes and movement. This first assumption is corroborated by the findings of the **Nicosia Masterplan team**, a shared institution working on the establishment of a common framework of actions for the two sides of the city (Nicosia Municipality, 2017)

In fact, the Team is working for the opening of more **checkpoints**, after the success of the ones in Ledras/Lokmaci street and Ledra Palace, and after the continuation of the dialogues and the normalization of the situation in the Cyprus Dispute.

For the city of Nicosia, the Masterplan proposes four other checkpoints: one in the eastern suburb of Kaimakli, to continue an "outer ring road" with the other checkpoint of Agios Dometios, mainly reserved to cars; the second checkpoint is to be placed in Agios Kassianos area, to have a continuous walking path around the Venetian bastions; the third next to the Municipal markets, in Trikoupi street; the last one in the west side, next to the Catholic and Armenian Archbishopric.

This research project will be then based on this assumption, taking as a basis the masterplan

and introducing a new checkpoint in the East side of Nicosia, a traditional residential area in need for a refurbishment.

But instead of stopping at a checkpoint, the project will propose and **operational system** to enlarge the dedicated area, in a similar way to Ledra Palace checkpoint: this will allow the reuse of some architecturally recognised buildings – the old schools of Agios Kassianos – and the requalification of Flatro Bastion, now lying abandoned in the Buffer Zone, but with the potential of a new green area in the city.

Before entering the real strategic planning, it is necessary though to stop and understand the conservation issues in a city like Nicosia, scarred by a long lasting conflict.

X.1 Conservation issues: palimpsests and politics of memory

It is useful to understand the difficult process of acceptance of any action on historical heritage. The theme of **historical memory** is broad and deeply rooted on a psychological, personal level. When examining different case studies is fundamental to act in a respectful manner and to understand the decision-making process behind each of them.

Another concept to introduce, it the palimpsest. In fact, all of the manufacts in architecture follow a path, or better, they are a **palimpsest,** during their "history" and "life". From the Greek words "palímpsēstos", from παλίν, "again" and ψαω "scrape", it literally represents the act of writing and then cancelling in order to write again on a papyrus, a parchment or a scroll. It is a very evocative figure, that represents the passing of time, layers and materiality (N.Aksamija, C.Maines, P.Wagoner, 2017).

The concept can be applied to architecture: the first **"writing"** is the construction phase, the **"scraping"** is the modifications, destruction or demolition it undergoes during its life, and the **"writing again"** is the reconstruction, rebuilding, refunctionalisation.

This circle, or path, is potentially endless, with continuous and **constant modification**, either in an additional way – superimposition, extension, modification- or in a subtractive way – demolition, removal or dismantling -.

The second way of creating a palimpsests is more interesting for the topic of this research. In fact, this subtraction can either be intentional, in a planned way or in a punctual removal of parts, but it can also be **disruptive and unplanned**. It is the case of disruptive or catastrophic events: calamities, on the natural side, but also man-made disasters, such as wars, bombing, abandonment, neglect.

It is exactly the case the city of Nicosia is dealing with, in its long-abandoned Buffer Zone, but also in its historical monuments. A clear example is the landmark for all Nicosians, the Selimiye Mosque or Agia Sophia Cathedral: once the largest Gothic church in Cyprus, it is used since 1570 as the main mosque for the Turkish community. It is an eerie atmosphere, of a mosque in the so clearly recognisable forms of a Gothic cathedral, but it is a classic example, very common in Cyprus.

The island, a **crossroad** of population, cultures and traffic in the eastern Mediterranean, underwent several conquests and "colonisations", thus assimilating habits and way of life very distant between each other. A Greek origin and culture, mixed with a Venetian heritage, so visible in the urban forms of the historical downtowns encompassed by walls; a Turkish and Ottoman influence in the

architecture, with the classic cul-de-sac, typical of Islamic architecture and traceable also in the **Levante** countries (nowadays Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Palestine). This **superimposition** of layers and this admixture of functions gives a new interpretation for the understanding of Cyprus heritage.

Selimiyye Mosque is a particular case of modification, exemplary for Cyprus but not very fitting the narration intended for the case study area. There are other examples of architecture that are completely transformed after a tragic and dramatic event that abruptly modified their history.

This can be seen as a difference from the traditional palimpsests' definition: in fact, the act of writing and scraping in an endless circle presupposes an intentionality, a decision behind the modification. In case of disruption and temporary-punctual modification of the expected life of a building, it is possible to say that the new modifications that happen after that moment are just a case of historical **"layering"**.

If this is the case for ordinary building, it is not appliable to buildings that carry a particular symbolic, historical or cultural meaning. Moreover, this meaning can be applied to the buildings in consideration also **ex-post**, not only ex-ante the event. In the following example, in fact, it is visible that the symbolic meaning, in its entirety or in a part of it, it is the result of the disruptive event: the disruption creates

a **perturbation** in the "natural" prosecution of the "life" of a building or an area, either in its architectural features or in its functional uses, but the event's modifications assume a memorial value, historical and symbolical, in function of the perturbation.

In other words, a manufact that was before not considered as a monument or a place to remember, can then become a monument, or better, a memorial, of the event that caused its own disruption.

It will be clarified in the following case studies what can happen in this sense. The two first case study taken as example are similar, since they both serve as memorial for the disruption and the catastrophe that was the Second World War for Europe, even if they are in two countries that were in the opposite side of the trenches back at the time.

They are **Coventry cathedral**, in Coventry, United Kingdom, and *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*, or **Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church** in Berlin, Germany.

✦ **fig. X.1** Selimyyie Mosque, former Agia Sophia Cathedral, in North Nicosia, is an example of adaptation of a ruined building into a new function: the cathedral was abandoned after the Lusignan period and then repurposed as a mosque
from A.Savin, View of Selimiye Mosque (former St. Sophia Cathedral) from Shacolas Tower (Ledra Street Observatory) in Nicosia, Cyprus, January 4th, 2017, Wikimedia Commons, own work

➤ **fig. X.2** Coventry's Old Cathedral ruins, repurposed into a vibrant open space in the middle of the city, still carry a historical significance
from A.Walker, Coventry's old Cathedral ruins with rainbow, October 2nd, 2006, Wikimedia commons, own work

The first one is now serving as a memorial for the bombing campaign that vexed the United Kingdom in the first years of WWII, such the London Blitz. Coventry bombing was, if possible, even harder. Started the 11th of August 1940, the Luftwaffe flattened the city, resulting in more than 75% of the building destroyed. The bombing was so hard that it created the term "to coventrate", meaning to destroy and carpet-bombing a settlement.

The Cathedral, core and symbol of the city, was destroyed, and only the spire and the outer walls remained standing. This inspired a process of restoration in the aftermath of the war that created an example of modern restoration process. In fact, the cathedral was not rebuilt "as it was", but the standing ruins were consolidated and left as a **memorial for the disruption** that the city underwent in the war. The choice of building a new cathedral, next to it and in a modern language, meant a separation of symbolic meaning: the modern cathedral represents the new core and accomplishes the function of religious building, while the old cathedral ruins remain as a standing monument of the past and of the disruption itself, of the war and the bombing.

It is important to note that the position of the cathedral, at the core of the city, helped its new function of **"open ruin" and "urban square"**: it is now the heart of the city and a place used for events, concerts and everyday life. It is indeed a **"livable monument"**, not a still image of the memorial, but a vibrant and active place.

The second example is Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin. This church followed a similar path compared to Coventry Cathedral. Built during the Second German Reich as a memorial for the Emperor, it was located at the crossroads of two important axis leading from Berlin to the rest of Germany: Kurfurstendamm and Charlottenburgchaussee.One of the biggest church in Berlin at the time of its inauguration, it was destroyed in 1943 in what is known as the Battle of Berlin. The entire district was flattened by RAF bombing and the church bell tower remained as a **solitary landmark**, called "*die hohle zahn*", or the empty tooth, by the locals.

The end of the war brought new attention to this manufact: several proposals of reconstruction were brought forward, until German architect Egon Eiermann won a competition for the reconstruction. This project was actually modified after the protests of the local population against the complete demolition of the church.

In fact, the final design is composed of two new building, the church hall and the bell tower, built around the ruin of the old bell tower of the original church. This allowed the **permanence**

of the church as a landmark for all the Berliners, but also as a **memory of the destruction** and the horrors of the war in Germany. The remaining of the church are now used as a museum for the church capitol, but it is not a secret that the spot is one of the most visited in Berlin for its impressive historical memory of the destruction.

The final example taken into consideration is a contemporary one, with a different and particular history, a world-wide known manufact.

In fact, the **Ground Zero memorial** in New York is probably one of the most famous examples of a disruption that became a symbol for the city itself. The history of the twin towers started with the speculations of the 1950s in Lower Manhattan. The new paradigm of the city was the creation of a new international business centre around the area, becoming even more the centre of financial affairs for the Western World. The construction of the Twin Towers finished in 1974, and with their 110 stories they were the tallest building in the world, a record that they kept for a significant amount of time. This thriving centre of capitalism started with some difficulties, and it had vacancies for several years, but it started busting in the end of the 1980s as the core of the whole city of New York. The imposing skyline was also the **symbol of the "Big Apple"**, featured in several iconic images of the city (N.Aksamija, C.Maines, P.Wagoner, 2017).

The events of September 11th, 2001 brought an abrupt end to the history of the towers, and brought to an abrupt change of era for the downtown of Manhattan. As stated by Jospeh Siry (N.Aksamija, C.Maines, P.Wagoner, 2017):

"Upon their demise, the towers themselves and the mid-century urban development of which they were part became symbolic of an era sudden past. The violent rupture in this site's history provoked a re-evaluation of what had been lost, both in term of appreciating what had disappear and planning for appropriate rebuilding and commemoration". (pp.87)

As stated by Andreas Huyssen (2003):

"The ruins were still smouldering with underground fires when the architects and developers came forth, emphasizing the need to rebuild fast and big, possibly even bigger than before: no ruins allowed in the American imagination". (pp.13)

In fact, the symbolic attack at the core of the "free world", one of the few attacks on its territory even suffered by the United States of America in its history, brought the need for a reconstruction. But at the same time, the emotional and psychological impact of the attack could not be forgotten, and the area, known as Ground Zero, carried too much **meaningful importance** to be rebuilt (Huyssen, 2003).

The intervention, in fact, composed of two main parts: a skyscraper, the One World Trade Centre, with the same function of the previous

two towers, emphasizing the will of Manhattan and America to raise again as the centre of the financial world; and a green area, a memorial park at the feet of the new high-rise building.

This second intervention is the one that accomplish the function of memorial: not rebuilt, but left as a huge open space, in which the **horizontal dimension** is highlighted. It is a stark contrast with the verticality of Manhattan skyline, almost representing the void created in the city by the attack. At the same time, the two foundations of the towers are kept, and as a strong gesture on the urban form they are transformed into huge basins, or pools, an empty space of water carrying the **symbolic meaning** and the memory of the disruption.

In this example, the palimpsests is completely transformed: two towers, two cores of the city, now becoming a calm and natural element in the city; at the same time, though, the strong gesture bring to surface in everyone's memory the **permanence of the past and of the event.**

As explained at the beginning, this new manufact is the clearest example of a creation of a memorial for an event that gave an extra symbolic meaning to the original manufact. Also, even without the original manufact – in that case completely destroyed – the memory of the place is maintained.

X.2 Not a line, but a space: a new image for a checkpoint

The previous case studies were the basis to understand the possibility of action in a place so full of historical memory and so rooted in memory and psychology for the people of Cyprus. It is possible to convene that, according to the previous case studies and the results of the participative interview process, new actions can be taken to preserve the symbolic meaning, but also to avoid the creation of a hurtful memorial for the long years of division.

At the same time, it is possible to say that the division of the city is so long and established that the *forma urbis* is now completely modified, and that the **division itself** became the **monument** for the city of Nicosia.

It is always a thin line between the instances of historical memory, of the palimpsests and of the layering of events, and the psychological instances bringing bad memory back to the surface instead of allowing to leave past behind. Nevertheless, the Green Line of Nicosia is considered by the stakeholders, and in particular by the Nicosia Masterplan Team, as *"most important "gluing area" for the functional integration of the city"* (Nicosia Municipality, 2017).

This means that there is a careful attention on the actions to be taken in the Buffer Zone, since it represents at the same time **the border** between the two communities, but also the fringe, **the joining piece.**

This is mainly due to the fact that the Buffer Zone is not a proper border as traditionally conceived: it is not a line drawn on a map, a single dimensional trace, but it is a space, an area, and in some case a **3D border** in the core of the city.

The potential of this area is hard to assess, since it is a unicum in the world. It is one of the hardest borders in the world, with military presence on both sides, almost impossible to cross, but at the same time it presents possibilities of passage and crossing, and actual checkpoints, that are part of everyday life for most of Nicosians.

The issue of **permeability of the border** is what create a distinction. In fact, in analysing the 7 checkpoints in Cyprus it is possible to see how the **porosity** of the area is modified.

If the checkpoints farther from city centres are single roads with checking point at each extremity, others show a wider area taken into consideration and used as a broader **"border area".**

The first category includes the mainly-vehicular checkpoints, from west to east:

Limnitis crossing:
(Kato Pyrgos, south - Morphou, north)
it connects the almost-exclave of Kato Pyrgos to Morphou and Nicosia. It is a much-needed connection to allow Kato Pyrgos residents a faster way to the capital, instead of a long and wavy mountain road. It is composed of a single road stretching to the seaside hills, patrolled by UN forces.

Lefka crossing:
(Troodos, south - Lefka, north)
between the city of Lefka in the North and the road connecting it with Troodos mountains, it is one of the most recent, opening in 2018 togethe rwith Strovilia crossing. It helped the isolation of the Tylliria region in the north-west coast of Cyprus, providing a direct connection with the main centres of the island.

Zodia crossing:
(Astromeritis, south - Morphou, north)
between the city of Morphou and the village of Astromeritis, it represents a direct link from the Greek side to the Morphou bay, and a direct continuation of the A9 highway towards west; the road is constellated with abandoned farms and buildings, but the agricultural land around is actually used by farmers from both communities that obtained a special permission, giving the impression of more permeability in this part of the Buffer Zone compared to other areas in the island

Agios Dometios crossing:
(Nicosia, south - North Nicosia, north)
on the outskirt of Nicosia, it is the main vehicle crossing of the capital, situated on the former ring road; it is again a simple road through empty fields, with military posts at both sides. It is one of the busiest checkpoints, due to its central location;

Pergamos crossing:
(Pyla, south/buffer zone - Pergamos, north)
between the villages of Pyla and Pergamos, it is the odd one out, since it is located in one of the few still mixed villages, inhabited by both Greek and Turkish Cypriot; in fact, the village of Pyla is the only one entirely located into the Buffer Zone and as such under UN protection. The crossing consists in a small country road mainly used by locals; in here, the perception of normality is emphasized by the presence of farms, small buildings and agricultural land

Strovilia crossing:
(Deryneia, south - Famagusta, north)
the easternmost crossing, it connects the Greek part of the district of Famagusta – the cities of Agia Napa and Paralimni – to the city of Famagusta in the Turkish side. The crossing is one of the shortest, but it is heavily guarded, due to the tensions around the abandoned city of Varosha, stretching along the sea nearby. Nevertheless, there are dedicated space next to the crossing defined as "communal points" in which members of both communities can freely meet and gather

Kyrenia
Kyrenia
Girne

Nic
Leuko
Lefko

Paphos
Pafos
Baf

Limassol
Lemesos
Limasol
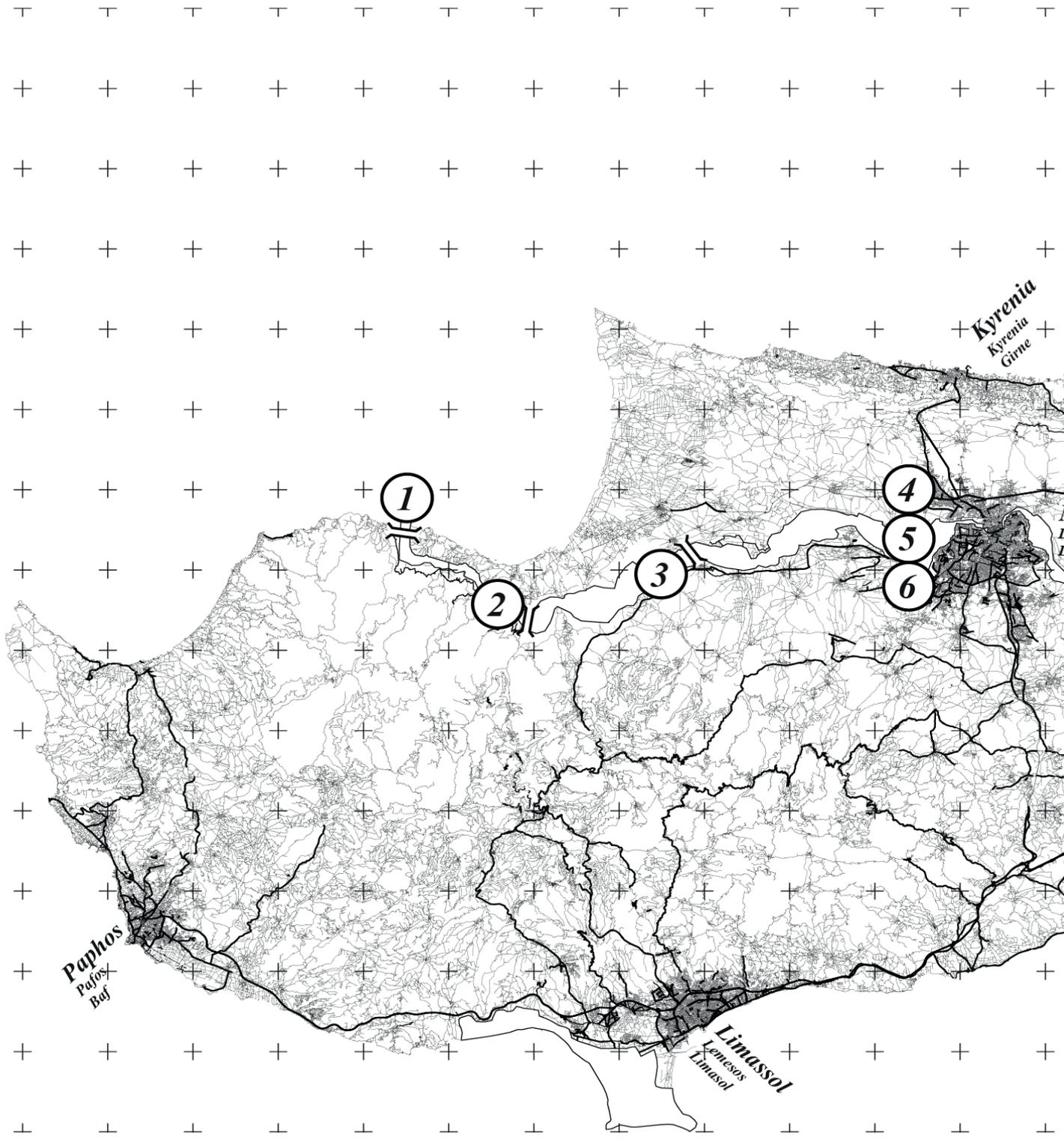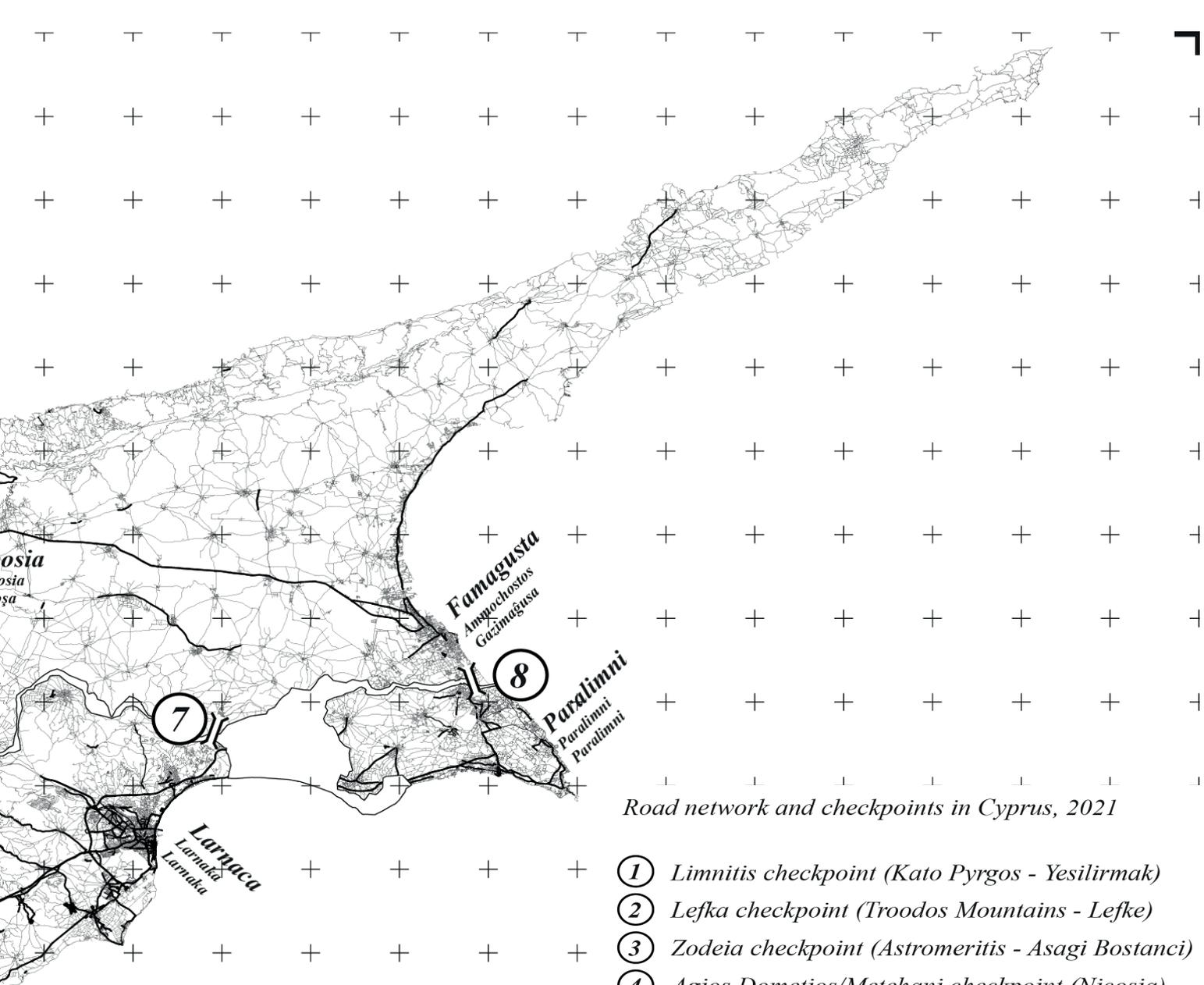
Road network and checkpoints in Cyprus, 2021

(1) *Limnitis checkpoint (Kato Pyrgos - Yesilirmak)*

(2) *Lefka checkpoint (Troodos Mountains - Lefke)*

(3) *Zodeia checkpoint (Astromeritis - Asagi Bostanci)*

(4) *Agios Dometios/Metehani checkpoint (Nicosia)*

(5) *Ledra Palace checkpoint (Nicosia)*

(6) *Ledra/Lokmaci (Nicosia)*

(7) *Pergamos checkpoint (Pyla - Beyarmudu)*

(8) *Strovilia checkpoint (Deryneia - Famagusta)*

limnitis checkpoint

← *to Polis*

Kato Pyrgos ■

Yeşilırmak ■

Selemani (abandoned) □

Günebakan ■

to Morphou →
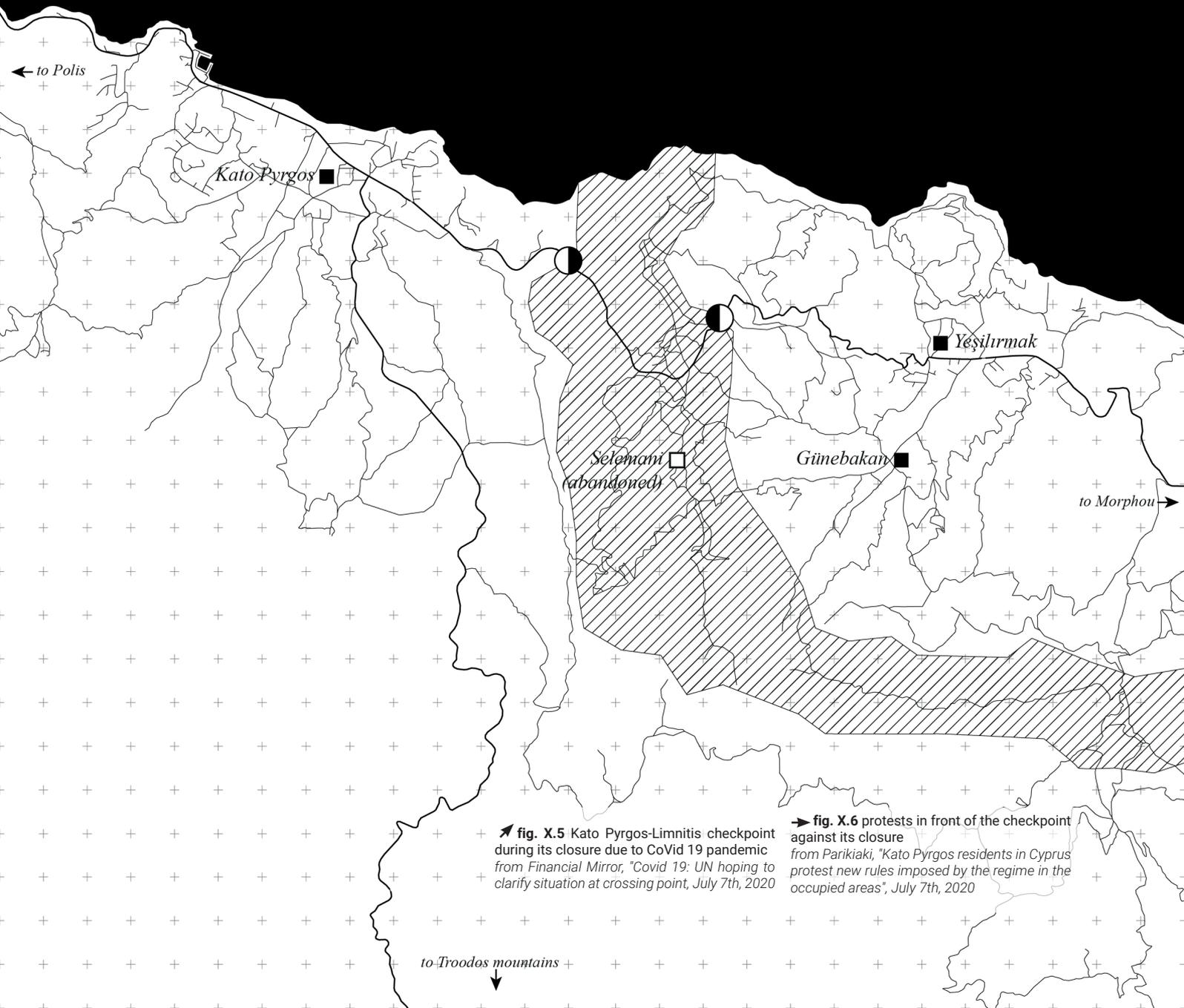
➹ **fig. X.5** Kato Pyrgos-Limnitis checkpoint during its closure due to CoVid 19 pandemic
from Financial Mirror, "Covid 19: UN hoping to clarify situation at crossing point, July 7th, 2020

➟ **fig. X.6** protests in front of the checkpoint against its closure
from Parikiaki, "Kato Pyrgos residents in Cyprus protest new rules imposed by the regime in the occupied areas", July 7th, 2020

to Troodos mountains ↓
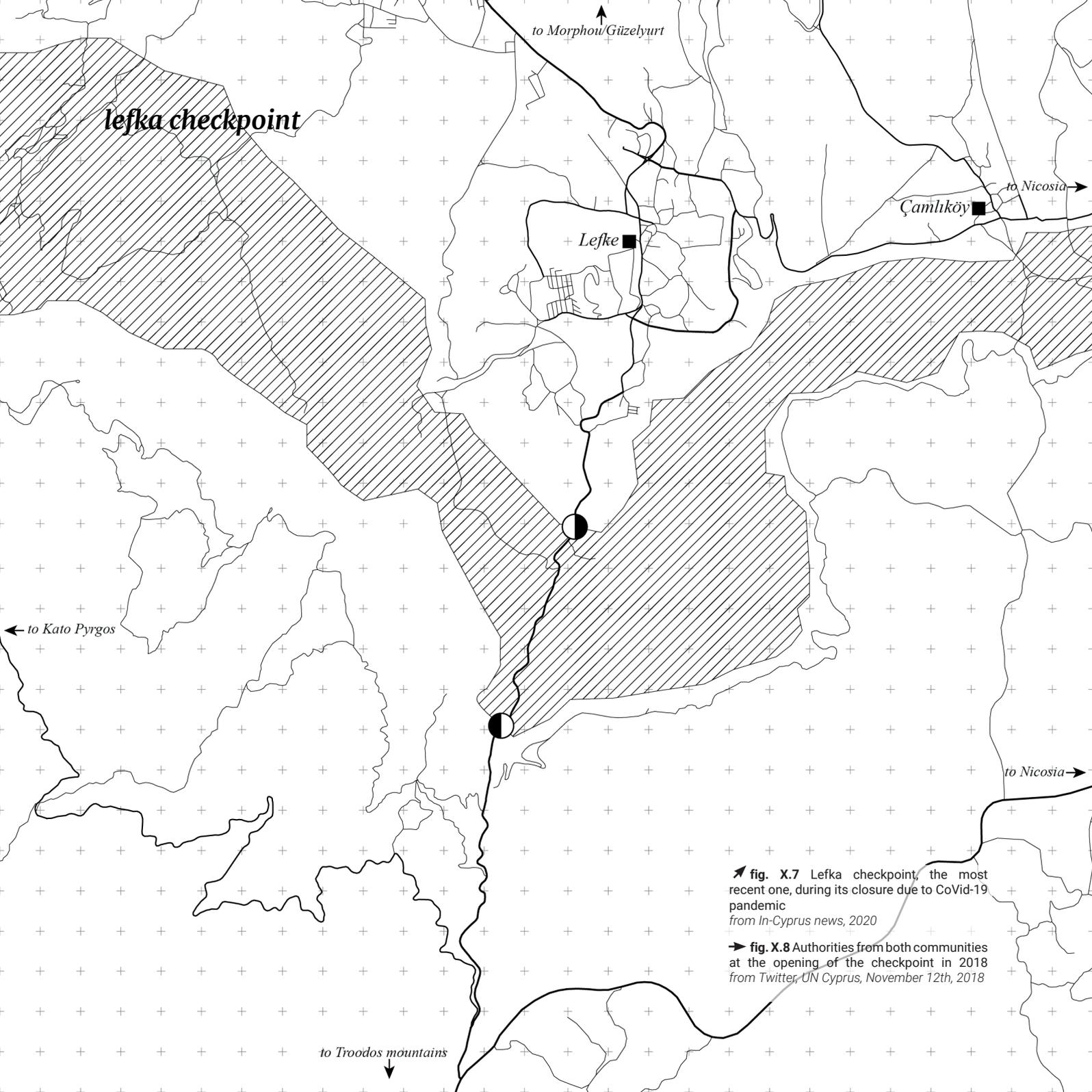
lefka checkpoint

to Morphou/Güzelyurt

to Nicosia

Çamlıköy ■

Lefke ■

to Kato Pyrgos

to Nicosia

↗ **fig. X.7** Lefka checkpoint, the most recent one, during its closure due to CoVid-19 pandemic
from In-Cyprus news, 2020

➔ **fig. X.8** Authorities from both communities at the opening of the checkpoint in 2018
from Twitter, UN Cyprus, November 12th, 2018

to Troodos mountains

ΑΣΤΥΝΟΜΙΑ-ΟΔΗΓΕΙΤΕ ΑΡΓΑ
POLİS-YAVAŞ SÜRÜUNÜZ
POLICE-SLOW DOWN

zodeia checkpoint

to Morphou/Güzelyurt

■ Akçay
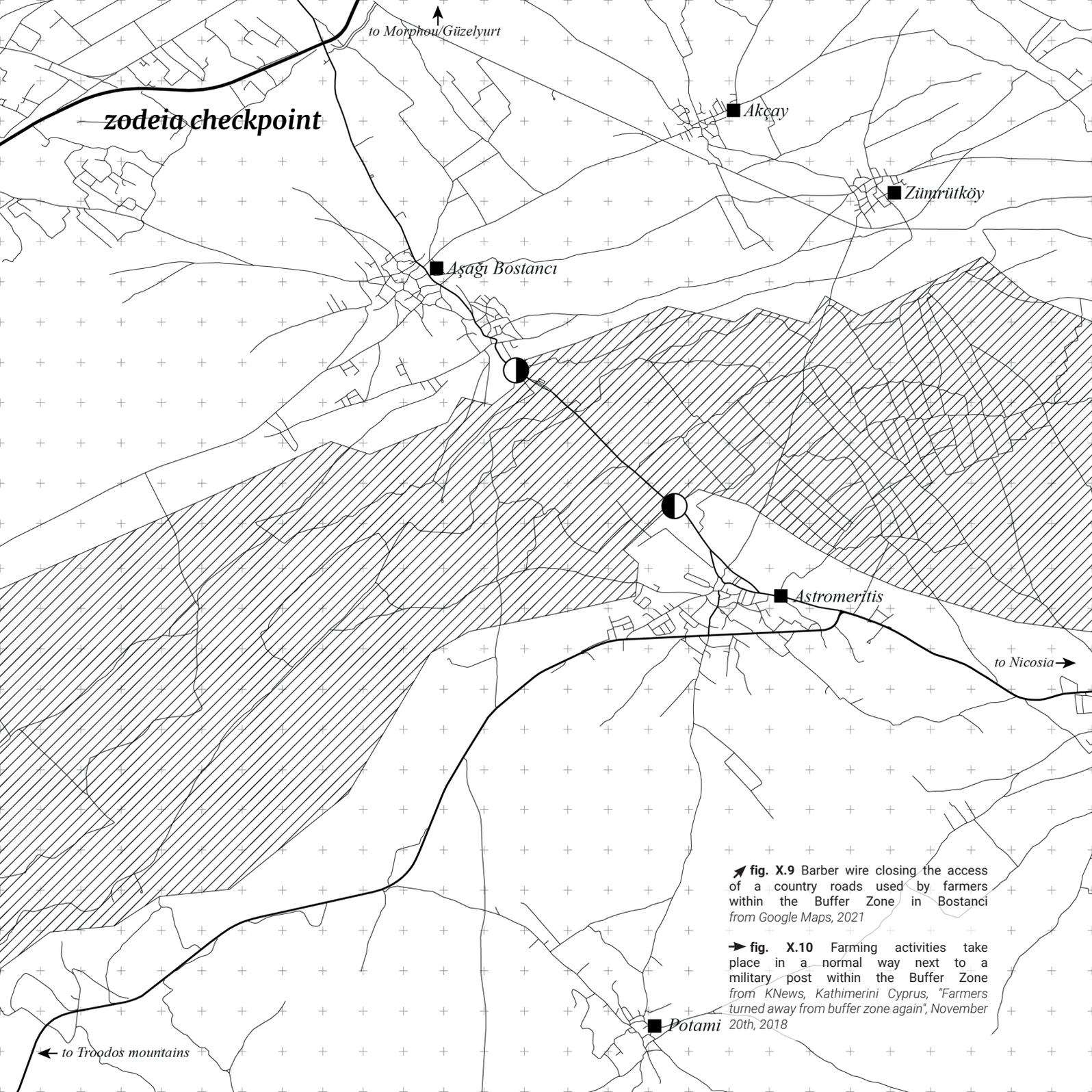
■ Zümrütköy

■ Aşağı Bostancı

■ Astromeritis

to Nicosia →

to Troodos mountains ←

■ Potami

fig. **X.9** Barber wire closing the access of a country roads used by farmers within the Buffer Zone in Bostanci
from Google Maps, 2021

fig. **X.10** Farming activities take place in a normal way next to a military post within the Buffer Zone
from KNews, Kathimerini Cyprus, "Farmers turned away from buffer zone again", November 20th, 2018
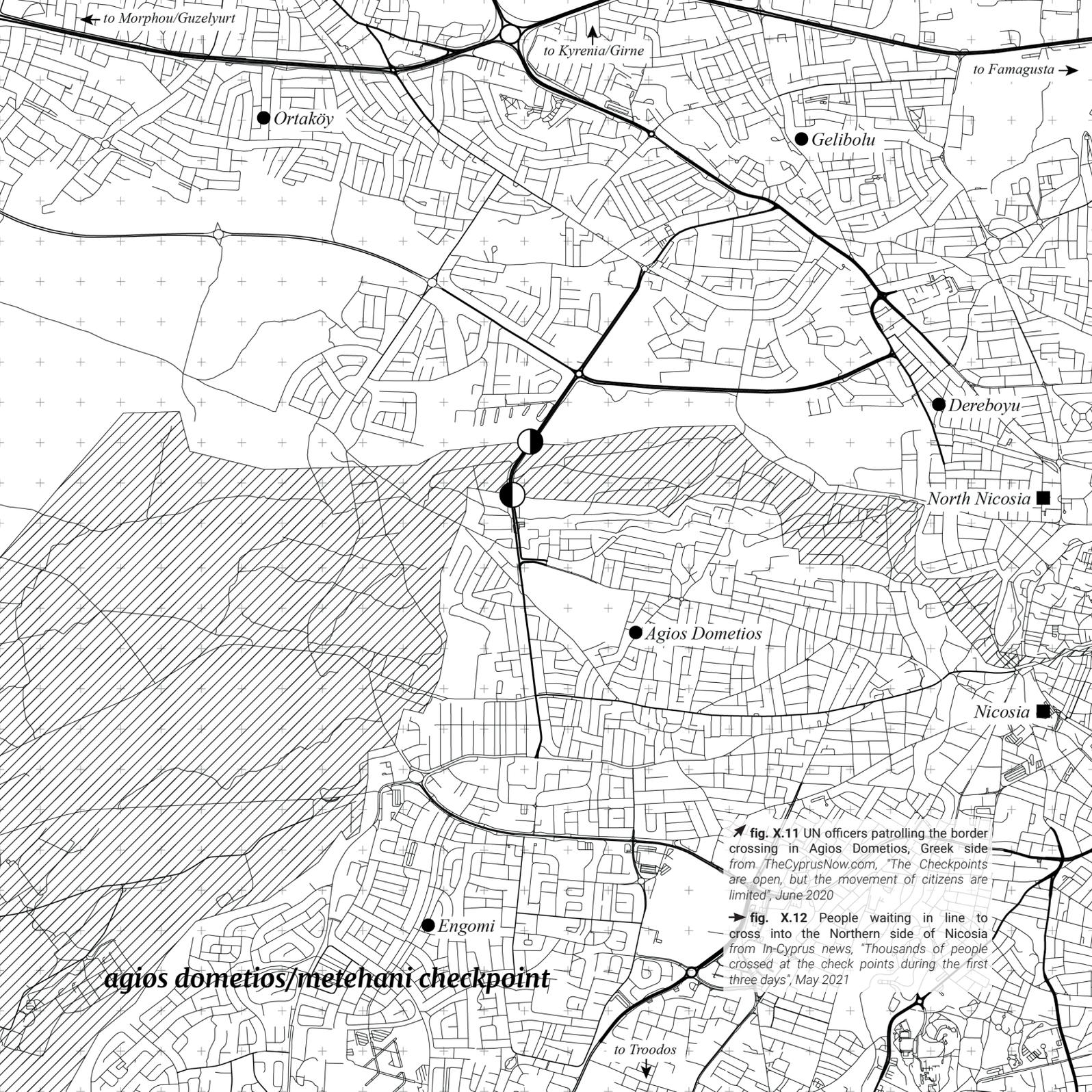
to Morphou/Guzelyurt

to Kyrenia/Girne

to Famagusta

● _Ortaköy_

● _Gelibolu_

● _Dereboyu_

■ _North Nicosia_

● _Agios Dometios_

■ _Nicosia_

fig. X.11 UN officers patrolling the border crossing in Agios Dometios, Greek side _from TheCyprusNow.com, "The Checkpoints are open, but the movement of citizens are limited", June 2020_

fig. X.12 People waiting in line to cross into the Northern side of Nicosia _from In-Cyprus news, "Thousands of people crossed at the check points during the first three days", May 2021_

● _Engomi_

agios dometios/metehani checkpoint

to Troodos
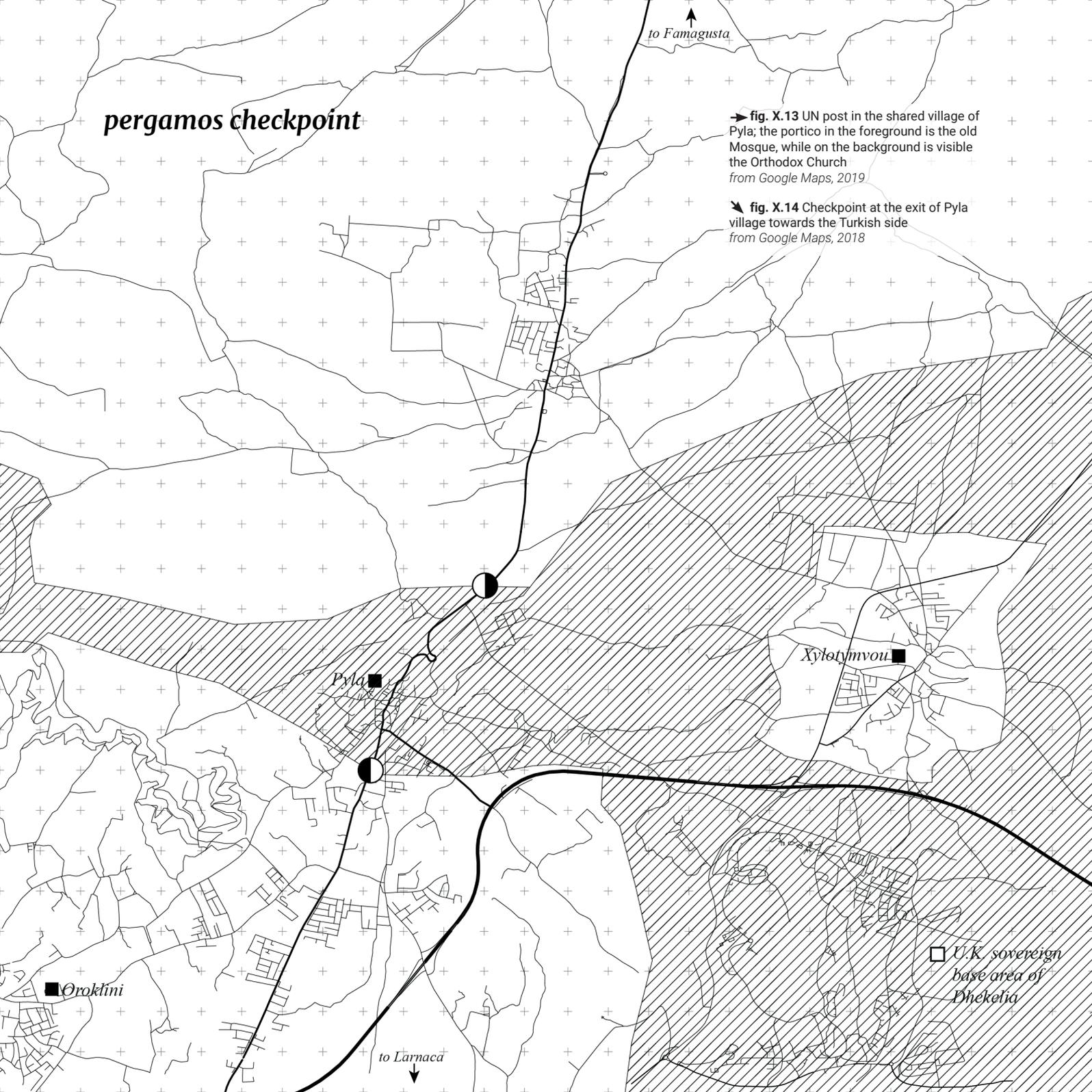
pergamos checkpoint

➤ **fig. X.13** UN post in the shared village of Pyla; the portico in the foreground is the old Mosque, while on the background is visible the Orthodox Church
from Google Maps, 2019

↘ **fig. X.14** Checkpoint at the exit of Pyla village towards the Turkish side
from Google Maps, 2018

Xylotymvou ■

Pyla ■

■ Oroklini

□ *U.K. sovereign base area of Dhekelia*

Famagusta ■

← *to Nicosia*

Varosha
(abandoned,
disputed)

Deryneia ■

Frenaros ■

strovilia checkpoint

Paralimni ■

Sotira ■

to Agia Napa
↓

The second category is more interesting, also since it is in the downtown of Nicosia, and therefore the checkpoints are similar to the project case study. They are mainly pedestrian checkpoints, and they are the most used by tourists:

Ledra/Lokmaci street crossing:
the most famous checkpoint, at the centre of Nicosia, in what was once the busiest commercial street of the united city; it unites now the two main city cores. It is probably the most used by tourists, since it is located at the very centre of the old town. It consists of a stretch of road between the two sides, with checking booth at both extremities and a canopy for shelter. It was part of a big renovation scheme proposed by the Nicosia Masterplan team that restored the facades of the building facing it, to preserve part of the historical and architectural heritage of the site.

Ledra Palace crossing:
one of the first to open, it is located next to the moat of the venetian bastions in the west side of the city, next to Paphos gate; it is an important example because it is the widest of the checkpoints and it also hosts other function than crossing and checking stations. In fact, it takes its name from the Ledra Palace, once the à-la-page hotel in the downtown on Nicosia, and now the headquarter of the UNFICYP Sector 2 Forces; the presence of this institution means that part of the Buffer Zone is actually used by civilians, a trend that has increased since the opening, in front of the Palace, of the Home for

Cooperation, an inter-communal educational centre dedicated to events and activity in support of civic society, located in one of the abandoned building of the area, after a careful restoration.

This last example is indicative of the possibility of action on the Buffer Zone: the Ledra Palace crossing is now an area, a space where both communities gather and meet, and not only a mere crossing space. With the correct approval by civil society, stakeholders, UN forces and public bodies, an action was taken to reuse part of the area.

This also conveys a new image for the checkpoint: not anymore, the fearful and imposing military post, but a sort of "entrance" for a new area of the city, abandoned and unused for decades, and now brought back to life.

In fact, as stated by Evelyn Ritaine in her article "Murs et Checkpoints"(2012):

"Cet acte de blindage fait fonctionner un système de triage des individus et de contrôle des mouvements: c'est un ensemble de points de passage, de checkpoints [...] ce qui importe, dans le Mur, c'est le checkpoint, qui signifie arrêt et contrôle ; en assurant l'interconnexion des différents processus de surveillance, c'est le checkpoint, bien plus que la barrière, qui fait exister le pouvoir de contrôle." (p.18)
[the closing act makes a whole system of individuals and movement control works; it is a

set of passage points and checkpoints […] what it matters, in a wall, is the checkpoint, which means a stop and control: assuring the interconnection between different surveillance process, it is the checkpoint, and not the barrier, that allows the power of control]

In this small passage, the importance of the checkpoint is those of control: it is a permeable and flexible division, and an application of control on many areas. It may sound bleak and unsupportive for further optimism in the Cypriot Dispute, but it is a tool that can be used for control, on one side, but also for openness and integration. In fact, quoting the same author (Ritaine, 2012):

"Le checkpoint représente un point de transformation dans l'espace public ; ce n'est pas un lieu ; c'est une bordure, une frontière, un point de passage, un début et une fin en ce même point de l'espace public." (p.31)
[the checkpoint represents a transformation point in the public space: it is not a place; it is a border, a frontier, a passage, a start and an end in the same point of the public space.]

In the case of Nicosia, the public space does not begin and stop in the same space, as it would have to if it were a normal border, but it is already dilated thanks to the presence of the Green Line. This "space in between", this terra nullius, can be used too.

The potential of a checkpoint is great and varied: it is a closure, but it is also a glimmer of light towards the other side; it is a passage, but it can also be a protected area; it is a public facility for both communities, but it can be extended to gain back the status of public space.
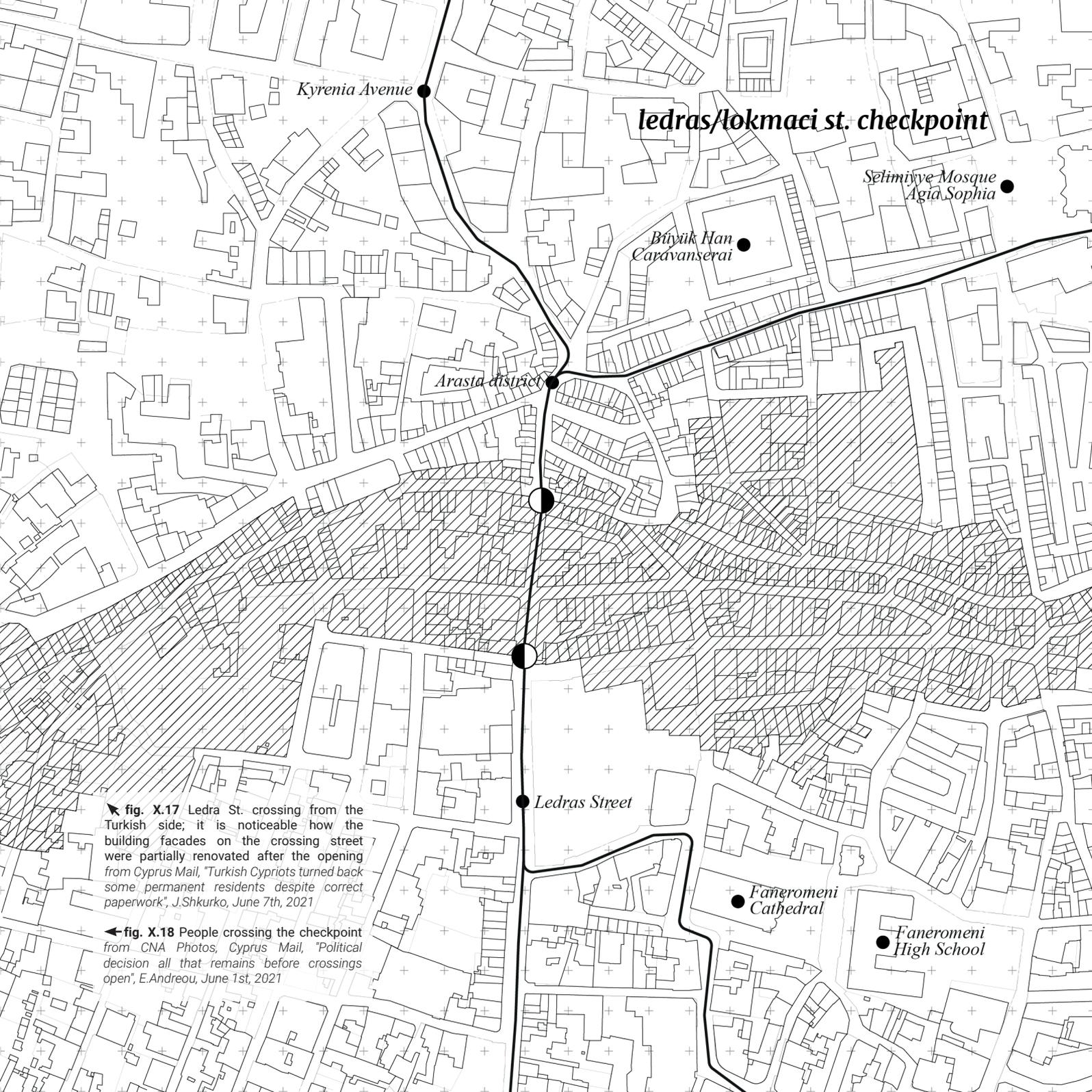
Kyrenia Avenue ●

Selimiyye Mosque
Agia Sophia ●

Büyük Han
Caravanserai ●

Arasta district ●

Fanaromeni
Cathedral ●

Fanaromeni
High School ●

Ledras Street ●

🖎 **fig. X.17** Ledra St. crossing from the Turkish side; it is noticeable how the building facades on the crossing street were partially renovated after the opening *from Cyprus Mail, "Turkish Cypriots turned back some permanent residents despite correct paperwork", J.Shkurko, June 7th, 2021*

← **fig. X.18** People crossing the checkpoint *from CNA Photos, Cyprus Mail, "Political decision all that remains before crossings open", E.Andreou, June 1st, 2021*

UN BUFFER ZONE
NO PHOTOGRAPHY
NO LITTER PLEASE

Η.Ε
ΑΠΑΓΟΡΕΥΕΤΑΙ Η ΦΩΤΟΓΡΑΦΗΣΕΙΣ
ΔΙΑΤΗΡΕΙΤΕ ΤΟΝ ΧΩΡΟ ΚΑΘΑΡΟ

UN
FOTOĞRAF ÇEKMEK YASAKTIR
ÇEVREYİ TEMİZ TUTUNUZ

σπίτι της συνεργασίας • dayanışma evi • home for co-operation
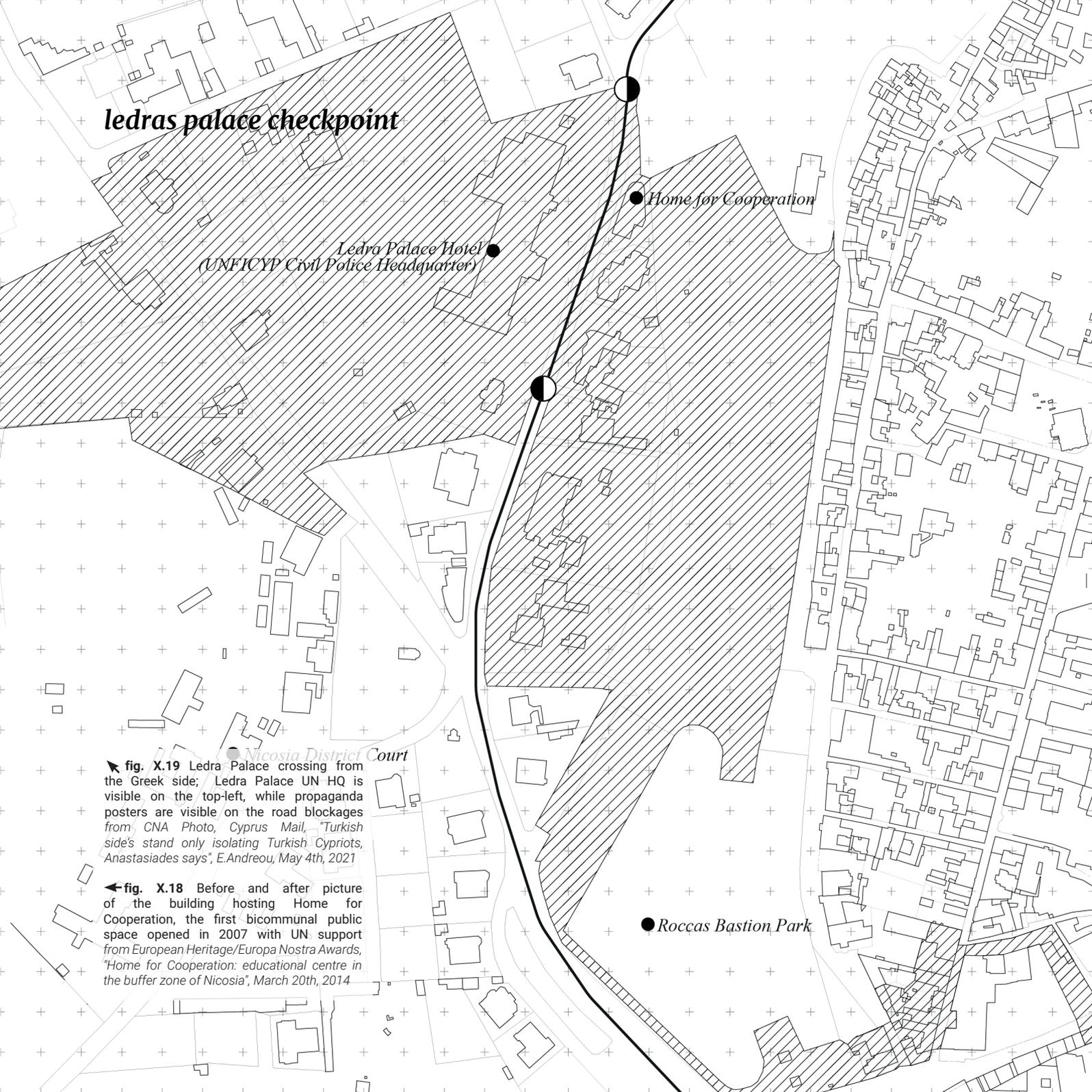
ledras palace checkpoint

● *Home for Cooperation*

Ledra Palace Hotel ●
(UNFICYP Civil Police Headquarter)

● *Nicosia District Court*

● *Roccas Bastion Park*

X.3 Agios Kassianos/Kafesli checkpoint: vision and objectives

The chosen final solution for the east of Nicosia pass through the institution of a **new checkpoint** in the area. This is the first action, and probably the only feasible one, to start dealing with the issue of the Buffer Zone and to begin a process of **reappropiation** of its territories.

It is visible, from the analysis at the previous paragraph, that the opening of a checkpoint has several benefits: of course, on the social side, it provides an extra point of contact for the two communities, and so it helps creating a **shared feeling of trust** between Greek and Turkish Cypriots; then, on the economical side, since it can transform an area from a perpherical, almost forgotten and no-go zone into a funnel, a crossroads for fluxes and path between one side and the other, making it one of the few connections and giving it a value of **urban and economical exchange point**. On the urban level then, the base of the other two levels, it creates again a connection, reactivating paths and fluxes between two parts of a city that once was united: the ringroad along the moat and the Venetian bastions can once again become the artery of movement around the city.

But the crucial point is a clear vision and a fixed objective for the opening of a new checkpoint, which must be pragmatically founded in the actions taken and leading to the opening.

The Buffer Zone is not considered almost by anyone as a definitive and viable solution: it is an area created to avoid and separate tension between different ethnicities, that consolidated itself with the passing of time becoming now almost a part of the panorama for Nicosians. It is then an area that, at least on the best intentions, should not be left abandoned, but it should be the main **contact point** between the two sides of the island, to be immediately requalified in the event of a settlement. Even more, also for those not supporting a unification or a federal solution, in both sides of the island, the Buffer Zone should be **taken back and reoccupied** by their respective side.

So the final aim of any action in the Buffer Zone, the vision for its future, as far and farfetched as it seems, should be the one of **reactivation**, reappropiation and reuse of its land and the buildings insisting on it.

The process cannot be sudden, but it should consist of a series of gradual steps of dialogue and subsequent openings, in order to have a shared and supported action on the area. The two communities in the island should be in fact involved in the opening and reactivation, as the public support for any action in the Buffer Zone is majority within the population. The **graduality** and the carefulness in the actions also deals with the creation of a shared historical memory, to avoid charging the new

area and the building within it with divisive and unpleasant ideas, an attention that should be even more poignant in this area, being de facto part of the Buffer Zone but, *de jure*, a contested area between the two sides. So, if at first the opening should concern only the stretch of street between Athinas Boulevard and Mehmet Ali Riza Street, along the bastions, recreating the path along the Venetian Walls with the configuration of a classic checkpoint in Cyprus, then it can be followed by other and different openings. The area around the stretch of street can be included in the checkpoint, becoming a **checkpoint "area"**, not only a street, going up to include the green area in Flatro Bastion and the building of Agios Kassianos Old Schools.

From this stems the idea of a **light intervention**, with no specific or definitive functionalization of the places and the building into it. The Old Schools will be requalified on a structural point of view, to avoid collapse, but the other intervention of restoration will be very light and concerning only the statical aspects of the building, to allow access and visit, and even the use of them for events.

The whole area is prefigured as a park, a green area, but also as an unusual **"archeological park"** within the city: this park will not be a statical and still photograph of the division, thus conveying unpleasant and divisive memories to the citizens of both side of the city, but it will be a livable and alive piece of the city, secluded for almost 50 years and now accessible again by both communities, in an optic of reappropriation

of an area by the citizens of the neighboring areas themselves, to be able to mix, gather and share. It is then an intervention that is included within the path of reuse and within the vision of making the Buffer Zone the contact point, the first "glueing area" between communities.

It is also an intervention that leaves space for future development of the same path and vision: the light functionalization can accomodate different functions, if the need of the area and the city will **change in the future**, and in case of unification it can represent a green area for the new united city, but also a memory park, a shared space to rememeber the division as a memento for the future conflicts.

fig. X.19 (next pages) Bird-eye view of the Buffer Zone in the area of Agios Kassianos/Kafesli; on the top left corner, the Turkish side, on the bottom right corner, the Greek side. *picture of E.Foutsisoglou, September 13th, 2009, own work, reelaboration from the author*

187

mehmet ali riza st.

agios kassianos
nursery

agios kassianos
girl's school

tuncay salih st.

athinas blvd.

agios georgios

aftokratiras theodoras st.

agios kassianos
boy's school

agios kassianos st.

axiotheas st.

The actual plot identified for the intervention is visible in the previous pages through a bird eye view, courtesy of Elina Foutsisoglou, an architectural graduate who worked on the similar area.

It is, as already mentioned, one of the biggest part of the Buffer Zone in downtown Nicosia, enclosing also one of the Venetian bastions of the city. It does in fact intersect with the wallfront path, blocking the continuity between Athinas Boulevard, in the south, and Mehmet Ali Riza Street, in the North. The Eastern boundary of the plot are identified with the Venetian walls and moats creating Flatro Bastion. The other limits of the plot are identified with the limits of the Buffer Zone: in the south, they run along Agios Georgios Street, now abandoned, while in the north they border Tuncay M.Salih Street and Ertugrul Ahmet Street, which are still in use. On the eastern side, the site stops at what was once the street called Aftokratiras Theodoras, now reduced to a small dead-end road stopping at a barbed wire wall. A similar street finishes the border of the area, Axiotheas Street, which abruptly stops at an abandoned military post and another fence of barbed wire.

The area is not covered by many building, being it always dedicated as the schools' property: the few constructions insisting on the plot are the three schools of Agios Kassianos and the old church of Agios Georgios. The fact that no private or formerly residential buildings, or ruins of the same buildings, insist on the area is a favourable point: the problem of **property rights** of Greek or Turkish Cypriots refugees, and their compensation, does not interfere greatly in this zone, being it always destined to public functions if not for a small part in the northern side of the plot, next to Mehmet Ali Riza St. road blockage, and the houses facing the abandoned part of Axiotheas St.

The actual buildings taken into consideration will be analyzed in a schematical **record card** in the following pages, in order to analyze the actual situation and their conditions for any possible future intervention. The description of the conservational status are taken from the booklet, produced during European Heritage Days in 2008 and titled *Nicosia: the Unknown Heritage along the Buffer Zone* (Nicosia Municipality, 2008), and are then redeveloped into schematic cards with the addition of a short architectural description.

report card 1/
agios georgios church

name	Agios Georgios Church
street address	Agios Georgios Street
intended use	church
building period	Late Venetian domination, 17th century

architectural observation	local district church erected probably at the beginning of 17th century, at the end of the Venetian rule and at the beginnin of the Ottoman domination; the latter is visible in the modesty of the construction and the absence of a bell tower, whose construction was forbidden until 1856 (Salvator, 1881). Quoting L.Salvator, he described the church in 1873 as *"small, with two pointed arches on the right, a wooden ceiling on the left; it has only one altar and it is joined by a large garden"* (pp. 34)

materials	ashlar and rubble stone walls, barrel vault tiles roof
n° of storeys	1

general conditions

	structure	façades	roof	interior	decoration	mass
very good						
good		X				
fair	X			X	X	X
ruins			X			
restored						

other observation	The part of the roof that was described as wooden has probably collpased due to the lack of maintenance and abandonment; the barrel vault is still standing. The structure of the building is probably a load bearing structure of ashlar stone

name	Agios Kassianos Boy's school *(Αρρένων)*
street address	Agios Georgios Street, corner with Axiotheas Street
intended use	school
building period	British colony period, beginning of 20th century

| *architectural observation* | one of the building that composed the complex of municipal schools erected in Nicosia during the British Rule; the schools were modeled on the same prototype of Neoclassical buildings, with a central main entrance and two symmetrical wings hosting the classrooms and the other school spaces. Agios Kassianos Boy's school western wing is shortened and thus not symmetrical. It is located at the left side of Agios Georgios Church, in what was once the garden of the church. |

| *materials* | ashlar and masonry stone wall, wooden roof with tiles |
| *n° of storeys* | 1 |

general conditions

	structure	façades	roof	interior	decoration	mass
very good						
good						
fair	X	X			X	X
ruins			X	X		
restored						

| *other observation* | The wooden roof is completely destroyed as effect of the conflicts and the abandonment of the building. The façades still carry the signs of the confrontation with bullet holes and military barricades. All of the fixtures and part of the neoclassical decoration disappeared. |

name	Agios Kassianos Girl's school *(Θηλέων)*
street address	Agios Georgios Street, corner with Athinas Boulevard
intended use	school
building period	British colony period, beginning of 20th century

architectural observation	one of the building that composed the complex of municipal schools erected in Nicosia during the British Rule; the schools were modeled on the same prototype of Neoclassical buildings, with a central main entrance and two symmetrical wings hosting the classrooms and the other school spaces. Agios Kassianos Girls's school presents an extension of the western wing, probably added in the years following the independence of the island, made in concrete and serving probably as gym.

materials	ashlar and masonry stone wall, wooden roof with tiles
n° of storeys	1

general conditions

	structure	façades	roof	interior	decoration	mass
very good						
good						
fair	X	X			X	X
ruins			X	X		
restored						

other observation	The wooden roof is completely destroyed as effect of the conflicts and the abandonment of the building. The façades still carry the signs of the confrontation with bullet holes and military barricades. All of the fixtures and part of the neoclassical decoration disappeared. The concrete extension is in good condition.

name	Agios Kassianos nursery *(Νηπιαγωγείων)*
street address	Tuncay M.Salih Street, corner with Mehmet Ali Riza Street
intended use	school/nursery
building period	Late British colony period, first half of 20th century

architectural observation	one of the building that composed the complex of municipal schools erected in Nicosia during the British Rule; the schools were modeled on the same prototype of Neoclassical buildings, with a central main entrance and two symmetrical wings hosting the classrooms and the other school spaces. The nursery was probably added in the Interbellum period, and carries less neoclassical decorations. It presents and extension in the back, made in concrete proably after the independence of the island
materials	ashlar and masonry stone wall, wooden roof with tiles
n° of storeys	1

general conditions

	structure	façades	roof	interior	decoration	mass
very good						
good						
fair	X	X			X	X
ruins			X	X		
restored						

other observation	The wooden roof is completely destroyed as effect of the conflicts and the abandonment of the building. The façades still carry the signs of the confrontation with bullet holes and military barricades. All of the fixtures and part of the neoclassical decoration disappeared. The concrete extension is in good condition.

30m

○ ● *nodes*　━━ *axis*　── *border*

possible connections

30m

○ ● *nodes* ▬ *axis* — *border* ◑ *new checkpoints*

① access points
Athinas Boulevard checkpoints (south)
Mehmet Ali Riza St. checkpoint (north)

② Flatro park
a new park on the bastion, creating
an overlook on east Nicosia and
Pentadaktylos mountains, similar to
the park in Paphos gate

③ Agios Kassianos complex
Consolidation of an existing architecturally
valuable building, to create a livable
monument and a base ground for future
development or reconstruction

④ Bastion path
Reconstitution of the path along the
wall to bring back integrity to one
of the most famous features of Nicosia
and create a new alleyway in the middle
of the new checkpoint area

⑤ New axis
A prolongation of Agios Kassianos street,
it cuts right through the building complex
amd the new park, creating the backbone
for the newly opened area

Final considerations

Conflicts and clashes are some of the ways to shape the world. Fights for territories, for recognition, for conquest manifest themselves in the physical reality under the name of "borders", or "wall". But while shaping the territory, they shape also urban settlements, and they modify the way a city performs and the way it is perceived. A city is usually the final aim of a conquest, the symbolic goal of a conflict. In some cases, though, a conflict freeze in time, and stops into a city, making it a battlefield, marked by formal or informal borders. This is one of the origins of divided cities, the real physical manifestation of a conflict between its souls. The fascination of working in conflict areas, where uncertainty is the regular confronting issue, translated into working on a divided city. This fascination is

what inspired the actions and the analysis, to deepen the understanding of the perception of the division in such cities, and the resulting behavioural modifications that their citizens have to face every day.

Between all the divided cities all over the world, probably the most exemplary one is Nicosia, were 50 years of division and constant tension cemented a partition. The work on the field, made possible by a semester of study abroad in a local university in Nicosia, the Cypriot capital, helped understand how the division feels sometimes as a blockage, almost as mental Pillars of Hercules: the feeling that everything known, and accessible, and also "safe", ends with the Buffer Zone, or even some tens of meters from it, announced by abandoned and

crumbling buildings and by barbed wires and barrels. But at the same time, the division, and the physical space occupied by it, represents a push forward something unknown, a place and another "side" which cannot be easily accessible, and that was impossible to reach during the 2020 CoVid pandemic; it is a boundary that draws the attention towards itself, and towards the other side, even in the activities of everyday life. The physical distance in Nicosia is so small that, while sitting at a café in the Greek side, is possible to hear music and voices from another cafè in the Turkish side, specularly located.

The conclamated dichotomy between fear and curiosity, repulsion and attraction, is what makes interesting any activity on the area, because it is an issue spanning from the geopolitical and global level, in the political stalemate between the Greek and the Turkish communities, to the micro-scale of the personal level of every citizens in Nicosia. The two campaigns of interviews tried to grasp this span: from the initial analysis of the local population, to obsevre and understand their feelings, perceptions and behaviour, to the second campaign of interviews with stakeholders, to understand the distribution of power and the actual interest in any work within the Buffer Zone. This double level was fundamental to understand tendencies and initiatives within the city population, and its public and private intelligentsia.

The results of those interviews were used not only to portrait a cross section of the

city, crossing the divide and representing the city as a whole, but they became more and more important as a planning tool, a way to understand and carefully program an action of requalification, or reappropriation, of a public space, in a context of division and absence of legal framework, in which the usual tendencies and forces insisting in a city are performing in a particular way. The action on the Buffer Zone, the opening of the new checkpoint in the East of Nicosia, represent an important and careful step in the future development of the city, in a path of rapprochment envisioned by several, if not most, of the interviewees. But at the same time, it may cause friction and tensions because of the historical significance the place carries within itself, and within the ruins of the building insisting on it.

Via this new tool, a sociological approach for a conservation and reuse purpose, it was possible to find a solution, a strategic planning through the initial analysis of the desiderata of the population, mediated and addressed by the stakeholders.

The final masterplan proposal inserts itself in a path already envisioned for the city, but pushing its boundaries in opening a new shared area in the Buffer Zone, even if always within the limit of actions set by the stakeholders, and the psychological acceptance threshold stated by the population. The new "extended" checkpoint, in the form of a urban bi-communal park, is a feasible solution, conceived in a continuos dialogue between the preservation and the acceptance of a shared historical memory.

To conclude, the path envisioned in this dissertation starts from a radicated and deep understanding of the tendencies of the city, at a sociological level, a tool often disregarded but very valuable in any planning scenario, and especially in a process so particular as the one in Nicosia: the creation, or better, the rediscovery of this shared historical memory pass through the requalification and the conservation and reuse of the tangible heritage, to create a physical manifestation of the commonality, but goes hand in hand with the investigation of the perception within the citizens, the stakeholders and the super-partes entities involved. The two aspects are not dissociable, forming a strong bond, useful for any other future action.

Appendix A

*first interview campaign script:
residents, commuters and
temporary residents*

INITIAL INFORMATIONS

Name
Age group   18-30 ☐   31-45 ☐   46-65 ☐   65+ ☐
Occupation
Nationality
Date and Modality

THE CITY OF NICOSIA

I	Can you tell me how the city changed since the division?	*macro-theme:*
I.1	*Can you tell me how the city changed from 10 years ago?*	*the division and its perception*
II	Can you tell me how you think the city will change in 20 years from now?	

III   What will you change in the city of Nicosia?
(for example: traffic issues, mobility and trasport, gathering spaces, green areas,...)

IV   What do you think the city is lacking?
(for example: traffic issues, mobility and trasport, gathering spaces, green areas,...)
IV.1   Why?

V   Which changes do you hope for the future in Nicosia?

macro theme:
general urban issues and challenges for the city of Nicosia

THE DIVIDED CITY

VI   When you think about Nicosia, do you think about the Greek/Turkish side or about the wholecity?

VII   What are the pros and cons of divided Nicosia?
VII.1   Why?

macro-theme:
the division and its perception

VIII	Do you have interaction with the other side?	*macro-theme:* *communality,* *interactions and* *shared historical* *memory*
VIII.1	*If yes, how? What do you do? If not, would you like to have?*	

IX   Can you tell me something about the other half of the city?
IX.1   *If you visited it, was it different than what you expected?*
IX.2   *Why?*

X   In your opinion, are there some places/monuments that are important for the city identity?
X.1   *and for the Greek/Turkish Cypriot identity?*

THE BUFFER ZONE

XI   When you think about the Buffer Zone, do you see this area in the centre of Nicosia as part of the city panorama or not?

macro theme:
the Buffer Zone
and its perception

XII   Does the division of the city affect you in some ways?
XII.1 *How?*
XII.2 *Why?*

XIII In your opinion, how do you consider the visibility of the Buffer Zone? In other words, do you try and take a look inside, or it is an area you tend to stay away from?
XIII.1 *Would you like it to be different or not?*

XIV   Can you imagine a united Nicosia?
XIV.1 *if yes, how?*
XIV.2 *if not, what are the possibility for the city?*
XIV.3 *both answers, what do you think the Buffer Zone will become?*

macro-theme:
communality,
interactions and
shared historical
memory

XV   Do you see the Buffer Zone as a place to preserve in order to remember Cypriot history or not?
XV.1   *if yes, how will you do that?*
XV.2   *if not, what do you see it as? What will you do with it?*
XV.3   *Would you like to have in the Buffer Zone some new services, places or areas that are lacking in the city?*

XVI   Can you suggest me, if you know, some places, monuments or
       building in the buffer zone you think are important for Cypriot
       history?
XVI.1   if yes, why?

AYIOS KASSIANOS/KAFESLI

XVII   Do you know the area of Ayios Kassianos and the old school of Ayios   ***macro–theme:***
       Kassianos?   *the East of Nicosia*
       If not, short description and some pictures of it (if displayable)

XVIII Do you think it is an important area of the city?

XIX   Would you like to reuse the area?
XIX.1   if yes, what will you do with that area?
XIX.2   if not, why?

XX   Can you suggest me some functions you would like to see in the
       area?

CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL QUESTIONS

XXI   Are there some arguments we did not tackle in this conversation
       that interest you?
XXI.1   if yes, can you tell me about them?

XXII   Are there other people you think it will be interesting to interview?
XXII.1   if yes, can you give me their contact?

Appendix B

*second interview campaign:
transcription of the
stakeholders interviews*

Public bodies

United Nation mission in Cyprus

name	A.B.
position and qualification	Senior Political Affairs Officer, Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, UNFICYP
Institution	United Nation
Date, time and media	15/06/2021, 15h30 GMT+2 Zoom meeting

Theme 1: The perception of the division

I. According to the first campaign of interviews, a great majority of the population perceived an improvement in the city after the opening of the checkpoints. What is your opinion about it? Are the existing checkpoints enough or you think it is necessary to open more?"

Definitely I think the opening of the crossing, the first one opened in 2003 before the Annan Plan referendum, and other opened throughout the years, I think the opening is definitely perceived as a very important starting point to allow the two communities to have contact, to promote dialogue but also economic transaction, you know, even if there is more now, there is definitely a link with the opening of the crossing. And we see especially now with covid, during the pandemic, the crossing were not actually always closed but it was hard to cross because there were a lot of requirement related to covid, and those requirements were not harmonized… so for one year and a half people did not cross, and this did had implication on several level, of course trust between communities is based on contacts, and also the economic transaction were low… just until recently the two sides agreed on certain requirements that made crossing actually easier, so they have reopened, we can say… This agreement was welcomed by the population

in both communities, so I think this shows how important this aspect of crossing was for both communities, but also I think the city per se, to link it with your topic, the city and the island, wherever the crossing opens, in that area the urban environment changes, it impacts, whether is a village, a city or a region, the fact that the two communities are in touch there, this has an impact on the surrounding area. I think this is very visible in Ledra street, because the whole area was refurbished and renovated especially around the crossing, compared to other areas in the city were you can perceive a difference… One of the last crossing to open was in Deryneia, towards Famagusta, and there were couple of initiatives, what we called "space for contacts" for the two sides, which is right next to the crossing, a space for both communities to meet… a bit similar to Home For Cooperation, if you know it, here in Nicosia… So those areas are not only for crossing but for contact, and they are real places, they facilitate the development around them from a different point of view… There is still a long way to go, but I think crossing are an important tool to be on the right path of development. You know, crossings have been opened where there was almost no infrastructure, so they had to prepare the road, connect them, so maybe that's not really "architectural" but it is important on the infrastructure side, it is also important, it creates a connection

II.   The public perceive an ongoing "detachment" between the two sides of the city; do you think this phenomenon is happening or not?

I don't think it is such black and white the situation, there are groups in both communities which meet regularly [with each other, ndr], have interactions, whether it's civic societies or some business representatives, representatives of trade union, and so on… There is a lot of contacts, but when it comes to the general public it's where the contact is less frequent or regular, and it also changes a lot according to age groups, there are a lot of studies about this… so take care, the situation is not that uniform, it is also not easy to find the reason why they have the "detachment", it depends which group you are talking to, what are their motivation to be in contact or to not be in contact… It is quite nuanced… In general of course the passing of time has created a situation in which those who do not want to know each other, or not interest to know the other side, they don't, but

those who are interested they have opportunities… So it is connected to the previous question, the crossing helped a regular contact… and there are many instances to research why contacts have increased in some groups, or why it is more regular in some areas… for example it is more regular on the topic of environment, there are regular meetings and discussion, with the civic society… there are some issues that can bring the two communities closer together… In other aspects, the contacts are maybe not that in depth, you generally have people that cross either side for shopping or something like that, but they really don't have contacts with the other communities and the other population group, they just cross and go back…

III.   If yes, do you think it is possible to reverse it, and with what challenges/ actions?

What we as UN have been promoting is engagement which is more regular, or networks of activities and opportunities for this contact to happen, it is encouraged with several activities to promote meetings and dialogue… that's part of the mission we have as UN… I think there is an issue, the perception is what people see, but then when you go deeper into it, or you talk to interlocutors or group leaders, you realized the perception of the people is actually superficial, underneath there is a lot going on.

Theme 2: Urban challenges and the image of the city

IV.   According to the first campaign of interview, the public sees any change to the current situation in the city with scepticism; what do you think is the cause of this?

-

V.   What do you foresee for the future of the Walled Town of Nicosia?

Well, the old town includes parts that are on either side, and then there is the buffer zone… I think the different parts and the different areas are different one from the other, in either sides they are more or less developed, more or less maintained or refurbished, there are more or less

revitalization processes… So I think obviously in the event of a settlement or a solution, the area of the buffer zone will become open, most likely, and so there is a potential for revitalization and refurbishing, reappropriation of the area… How it will happen, when it will happen, that's of course impossible to say, and linked to the political process… That's about that specific area… I know that there are also other initiatives by the Nicosia Masterplan Team, between the two municipalities, that have taken some areas, they worked together, they have plan, they are cooperating, and that's an indication that there is room for the old town to develop, but again, because of the political situation, it is difficult to conceive how it will be developed and when… but definitely there is an interest between the two communities, because, as I said, the Nicosia Masterplan, it's something that the two communities have worked together, it is supported by the UN and many others… So there is potential.

VI.	*Do you know any actions of requalification in the central areas of the city, within the walls?*

In the south there is more of course, if you look at the area next to Famagusta gate, there was a great requalification there, and now it is quite pleasant and lively, while I heard from Cypriots that it was not the case until few years ago… and then we have the area within the buffer zone, which obviously it has not been touched for many many years…

VII.	*The public indicated some aspects in which the city is lacking: According to your opinion which one of those aspects can be taken into consideration?*

I would answer this question more as a person that lived this city than a person involved with the UN peacekeeping, as a representative. All of them are quite important, quite relevant, especially when I first moved to Nicosia, green areas is something that is a bit missing, there could be more, and also green areas there are accessible… the problem is that the climate does not help, you need to have green areas that adapt to the climate, as opposed to the one nowadays… for example, there is a fantastic green area along the Pedieos river, and it is very nice, but it is very small and peripheric, I don't know if it is possible to enable green areas within the old town, it

might be difficult… but that's the kind of vegetation and greenery that works, because it is adapted to the climate, so I think more green areas should take that into consideration, they should be thought according to the climate… I don't know if this is happening actually… making common spaces for citizens… the other aspects is public transportation, because it is related to traffic, and we as Italians we know it, public transportation often does not work and traffic is crazy, and a similar phenomenon happens here… It is also related to green areas because people don't walk a lot, because there are not a lot of walking or gathering spaces, you know? Dedicated area to walk, in general… so there is a bit, but not much… so I think those aspects are very connected and related… I don't know what they mean by "gathering" by itself, I think here people gather at cafes and things like that, not squares and public spaces, but again, it is my perspective, so I would prioritise green areas, public transport and pedestrianization, which actually also affect traffic.

VIII.   The majority of people sees the character of the city as the most important aspect of the city; with those interventions, how is the character of the city preserved?

I think it depends, it changed, they're making a lot of effort, there has been a lot of renovations in certain areas, like Eleftheria square, it is the main point, it is a beautiful space even though it took a lot to be completed, the effort is there nevertheless, to make it nice… There are buildings that are illuminated at night, like Agia Sophia,ì or the venetian walls… Night illumination is becoming a thing now, which is good… and then this renovated streets, in the centre… But again, I am talking about the south, because the north is another story… It would require different solutions and attention, in general… In Nicosia South they have renovated areas around Makarios Avenue and Stasikratous Avenue, with shops and etcetera, so there is enough work… I think the old part of the town is still now exploited, and not used in the good way, it is not used with its right potential, but there is, again, some more to do, but there are still enough actions taken in doing it… I am talking about the south, again. You can see that in Famagusta gate area, there is a different attention, some green, typical architecture, typical colours and atmosphere, tourism… You know, you associate the place with

the images, colours or flavours of Nicosia, and Cyprus in general. It is also a question of resources, and that brings me to the modern part of the city, because resources are an important issue. There is a lot of potential in the area around the Market and Agia Sophia Mosque, this area has potential… They made a new pavimentation and renovation around the centre, it looks coherent… So I think in those sites they are trying to make it more attractive, but obviously, the city has potential, it has a lot history, therea re hidden places that you don't see because they are not highlighted, but there are churches, mosques, hammams, spots here and there that can be more highlighted. I also think that's the character if the city, of every city, to find hidden spots that represents your image of it.

Theme 3: The future of the Buffer Zone

IX. A majority of the interviewed public, in both communities, imagines a united Nicosia in the future; do you think this will be possible? In case of unification, which will be the biggest changes in the city?

I think that the UN is here to support the effort to find a settlement, so of course we believe it can be achieved… They are not easy times nowadays, but in the event of the settlement it will depend on which kind of agreement it is reached, and then how the Buffer Zone is managed and what they agree about it and the territory in general… but again, there is potential for different point of views… There can be different vies on the Buffer zone along the island and the city. In the city in particular, this links to what I was saying earlier about the old town, but even where we are located, the UN headquarters in the Buffer Zone at the Old Airport, of course it's a wide space here, mostly untouched, so there is potential to do many things here according to what they decide, but there are some that argue that it should be left undeveloped, or not developed, to keep them green or to built with green, ecologically and eco-friendly way, but you know, it is a things of the recent years, and so now you can do things differently.., and there is obviously space to do it… now there is agriculture, there is a lot of things that would have to be considered about the BZ and what to do with it. I think a settlement will bring a lot of benefit to both communities, also from this point of view, the one of development, either if it urban or rural area in the

Buffer Zone, so, that's why we are trying to reach a settlement.

X. Do you consider the Buffer Zone a place in the city on which is necessary to act, either with requalification or similar actions in the present? How?

That is quite a sensitive question because obviously there are parts of the buffer zone that need actions, or at least a little bit of maintenance, some parts deteriorated beyond repair, but of course the BZ is a long stretch in the city and in the island, and it is an issue on whether we have authority to do that, it is an issue of funding, there are a lot of questions to be tought about… Of course, because the time is passing, it is a fact that the preservation of buildings and infrastructure… So it is something that the two parts can talk about a bit more, it is something they don't do often, except some cases like the Nicosia Masterplan Team, but if time keeps going on, they will need to think about it a little bit more… We knew it as a major issue, mostòy authority and sovereignty, who does what, and all of that, but they will have to agree on what and where to do.

XI. The interviewed public sees the Buffer Zone as a place to preserve for historical memory, according to the character of the city; do you agree with this or not? What do you think is the best way to maintain such an historical memory?

I have heard these suggestions and comments sometimes too, I think memory is an important part of every peacebuilding situation, or post conflict situation, but it has to be used for reconciliation… That's what the UN promotes, we always push forwards reconciliation, because you can use memory in very different ways, we promote the purpose of reconciliation, this approach… It can be useful, but it is quite clearly quite divisive, so it has to be managed very very carefully, because both communities have their own views about division, and also about memory, about what and when it happens… So you have to build a common understanding of what memory you want to preserve, because otherwise you preserve memories that goes towards the narrative that separates, while what you want to do is to build a narrative that unites, or at least reconciliates… That's for me the most important thing to work on. If they are able to do that, then of course some

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spaces could be thought for it, but I would be sort of mindful of that aspect, otherwise it can have the opposite effect. It can be used to build a common understanding, also acknowledgment that my memory may be different from yours, but I will accept yours as long as you accept mine… That is part of reconciliation, part of peacebuilding, and that's the context where I would see something like that happens, otherwise it could be complicated and not necessarily helpful.

XII.   When asked about the specific case study area of the Buffer Zone in Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, the public agrees it needs a requalification and a reuse; what do you think about?

I know exactly where the area is, I think that on both sides the areas next to it have goe through some changes, particularly on the southern side. This is the area where we see a lot of potential, the streets are narrow and nice, so definitely I thunk the continuation of the requalification next to this space in the BZ will be a good action, because it can increase the appeal of the city and the potential, also economically, because it can put different business and activities together, which is something that it is already happening in the southern side, and not in the north… The buidligns within the buffer zone are quite interesting architecturally, even though now they are quite derelict… I see potential, because they were nice building, so I think refurbish them will really increase the beauty, let's put it this way, of the area, and I think it will make it appealing from both sides… Then what you used the building for it is another issue… I personally think they should not be residential, because you can do many thing with those, but definitely it is very interesting area… and there has been some discussion on how to use those spaces or opening them up, to promote contact between the two sides, or to use it even in the current situation… There were talks about a new checkpoints, over the years, it is one of the area that has been identified as a potential new crossing point… So far it has not happened, but it is in mind of both communities, so probably it will have a future… I think it is important because it will connect the eastern part of the city, that now it has no connection, and also because it has potential for economic and cultural reasons… It is also a very cozy and intimate space for both communities.

*XIII.	When asked about which functions they foresee, the public indicated several. Which one do you think is the most feasible, pragmatically, and which one will you say is the best for this place of the city, ideally?*

This is not easy to ask... Ideally I will mix some of those function, the area has a lot of potential to be a green park, with potential for cultural, gathering, educational activities inside... It can be strictly, bring back the schools to the buildings, but there can be also other functions, other aspects, it will be a pity to not use the fact that there is some open space around, for green for example, or for gathering areas, so I personally cannot choose one over the other, I will say more like a mix of them... Whether is feasible, it's another story. Pragmatically, it will depend on agreement with the two sides. I see the political problem as the issue to address pragmatically, probably for the work I do, because once you unlock the politics and you have an agreement or a decision, you can probably easily find resources to do what you would like. So on a pragmatic point of view, the issues are politics and then resources, but the second one is subordinated to the first. It can be a step-by-step approach, that is also an idea, it is difficult to envision. An approach will be the opening of a crossing, as a start, and then, having in mind a foreseeable vision, you can enlarge and do some more. For example, in Ledras, we opened a checkpoint, and we knew that they did it also to promote the commercial axis of the city, so the final goal was to have on both side a central shopping avenue, and it worked. This is especially important, you should have in mind what you want to dedicate the space for, it can be commercial, or cultural, or all of the aspects, just decide it first and take steps into that direction.

*XIV.	According to the results of the first interview, what do you foresee as a possible function in the abandoned buildings of the A.K. area?*

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*XV.	According to the suggestions given by the 4 different populations and the possible future tourists, which functions can accommodate and equilibrate all the opinions?*

I think that on both sides there is already some interest of the areas around, because they are very characteristic, it's the core of the old town and they have potential to have this strong touristic points, like art galleries and cafes, which sell themselves on the traditionality of the surroundings where they are located. So I see the potential for tourists, or also for the point of view of cultural heritage… and you can connect that to other areas that are close-by, that have already a cultural heritage aspect. There are some places you can connect this area with, and make it an attraction as a larger area working in synergy with other districts surrounding. I think especially that the opening of a crossing there will also encourage people to visit, from both sides, so you could really boost the area and reactivate this side of the city.

Public bodies

Nicosia Masterplan Team, Turkish Cypriot board

name	A.G.
position and qualification	Team Leader at Nicosia Master Plan, Head of Turkish Cypriot Team
Institution	North Nicosia Municipality
Date, time and media	27/05/2021, 18h30 GMT+2 Skype call

Theme 1: The perception of the division

I.   According to the first campaign of interviews, a great majority of the population perceived an improvement in the city after the opening of the checkpoints. What is your opinion about it? Are the existing checkpoints enough or you think it is necessary to open more?"

Actually, the city has been divided since 1958. Even before that, in normal conditions this was not intentional, but generally the Turkish Cypriot lived in northern parts of the Walled City and Greek Cypriots live in the south part. But when the first troubles began in 1958 against the British, this became more apparent. The two communities started to separate from these days then. After the Republic of Cyprus was established in previous time in 1963, the actual troubles started between the two communities and the buffer zone was formalised since the end of 1963. So now in 1974, of course the division has been further, and it further wrote down the division, there's been on the ground ever since, of course. After 1974 in five years time in 1979 the two mayors of this city thought that they needed to collaborate and they started because there was necessity. Actually for collaboration cause the sewage system. Overall it was not complete, it was almost complete, but because of the geography it gets to flow from the South to North. So for that and the location of the treatment plant was also determined, that has

pushed to pressurise them to make the agreement. So they started to talk in 1979 and they soon realised that finding solution to the sewage is not enough, they have to make projections towards the future, how this city is going to expand and plan we planned. So then the Nicosia Masterplan came about by coming out together with international consultants. Sometimes local architects, engineers, planners, they teamed up to form the Nicosia masterplan, they began to plan the city. Of course, the Walled City was the special part of the masterplan, and it was envisaged with two solutions, or paths, to solve this problem. It was envisaged one with a buffer zone and the other without buffer zone. So if there was a solution then the one with the without the buffer zone would apply, and if there wasn't the solution, the one with the division. So since there was no solution, the one with the buffer zone applied and he still in application now.

But Nicosia Masterplan had most to do with some stitching locations like the crossing points. We did research of the buildings in the buffer zone. Again, if there is a solution or if there is a way to have these architecturally valuable building taken by investors and prepare them for restauration. Then in addition to that, we saw that we needed to upgrade the plan with the time because it must have lots of reform, the new vision for the future. They all did in Nicosia city but again the Walled city was the main part of the plan in that. In that we foresaw four crossing points in the walled city. So that was one in Arabahment. One in Ledras/Lokmaci St. which is now open. One, it's the municipal markets that was envisioning the connexion of two municipal markets. Then another one in the housing residential areas like the Agios Kassianos/Kafesli area. There was four of them.

So we started working towards finding a way to open these checkpoints, of course, it was very difficult since it was in the buffer zone and there was the military zone. Convince the military people to go away from the crossing point so that it becomes a civilian area, it was managed in the Ledras/Lokmaci, and we opened the gate checkpoints here in 2008.

We continued actually to pressure for more openings, especially the one in Arabahment. There was need actually from a religious people, who were trying to link places like the Armenian monastery in the North and there was a small Mosque in the South. So it was kind of an opening where this would allow people to visit their religious place. It got lot of support actually, from the mayors, they submitted a letter to the leaders, the two presidents

of the country, but unfortunately there was no result: I don't know where it got stuck, the presidents could not facilitate the opening. The masterplan was even ready to upgrade, restore or repair the buildings, which is on the crossing for making a state passage, but it didn't happen.

The other one, which is the two markets, it is also a pressing checkpoint out Bandabuliya Historical Market. But the again, there is not enough pressure from communities to make the politicians feel it necessary to do the final step. We are now developing an entrepreneur centre in the Municipal market, now closed. So if there was an opening in the facility, then this people could work together or collaborate together much easier with the opening of this checkpoint… And also, since this is the right centre, the mathematical centre of the Walled City, it will have a lot of historical sites nearby. It would encourage commercial activities, a lot of tourists would be visiting it said, which will help the economy of the area.

Finally, the eastern part, in Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, where residential areas are, but actions actually, and unfortunately, never became a priority to talk. I think it's a pilot in the buffer zone: it's wider, there is more space, it is in the downtown, and so I think it's more interesting. You can do more stuff in the perspective of an opening of a checkpoint.

That is the list taken into account for the opening. And of course, there was another suggestion just outside the walled city on the east for making another crossing point for vehicles, but it has been having second thoughts for opening that because there is the danger of increasing the traffic on that area. So we thought of a North Eastern area away from the walled city. More like Kaimakli: we call Ataturk Avenue or Ilarionos St.

II.   The public perceive an ongoing "detachment" between the two sides of the city; do you think this phenomenon is happening or not?

You have touched my sensitive nerve. Look, since 2004, the Greek side is part of the EU. This part is also part of the EU, but the aquis communautaire in the North is suspended so we don't have a direct contact with the EU. Since the South is in the EU and all EU rules and regulations and the help assistance is available to them, they are not only developing physically, but they are also developing their rules, their regulations. They are planning according to the EU standard, because if they didn't then they

couldn't get any finance. So that pushes them to be more organised and more planned, while in the North there is no such need because you don't get any funding from anybody which is given to you.

So for example, if you are going to restore a building, then the for example of the Funding Agency could tell you: "Okay, you will restore this building, but I will provide you the money, but you will use it for public purposes for five years or 10 years" So what happened in the public interest? The money was provided. The building would have been saved, which is most likely to be an architecture of value. The valuable building which will be helping towards saving of the heritage, and at the same time it will do a public works job and also regional rejuvenation area. Since it will be going to the public use then more people will visit area then that would in that would help activity. Finally, in the area, it will make people invest in their property, so the economic activity will also be pushed.

So this is not the case in the North because there is no willingness to get funding from anybody, so what happens is when one side is the most developed and the other is not in such position, then this develop parts needs become different from the other side because one needs to employ very contemporary solutions to the thing, while the other side is managing its rudimentary needs. So it becomes that one side wants something, but it doesn't match with what the other side want. So, there is no more willingness there to sit down and to find the solution to a common problem because the problem is not going to be the same, not common anymore. This is what is happening now: the South is advancing with the European Union while the north is remaining in the same position.

III.   *If yes, do you think it is possible to reverse it, and with what challenges/actions?*

So that's what needs to be done is a big support for the municipality. For example, in the north, here too had to implement more ideas, more activity, where it will generate a commercial activity or the returning of the original owner. They don't have any eagerness to come back because the houses are in bad condition and there is no need and the seasonal workers are living in those houses and nobody wants to live in an area where it is a run down part of the city. So what needs to be done is to give the priority.

You should make people feel that if they go and invest, it will not be a easy way. There is not a lot of help from EU. Because if people feel that European Union is on their side, they would be more willing to find a solution to Cyprus problem because there's a future or better living condition with EU regulation, because the social welfare is much better.

For example, recently, few years ago, the South produced an area scheme for the centre of Nicosia. Last year we also managed to prepare one, but with another impact. Again, they are trying to keep the city together with lots of good project in it, but you need to start implementation. On the other hand, the one in the South, it is successfully completed, it is now in action, and there are projects which are still being there undertaken right now. They are developing while the north is keeping still. This is a big problem.

Also the one in the North it has there the chance. In every action is promoted by communality, it promotes the two communities working together. And I cannot say the same thing for the one that is in the South. There are elements of this proposed by community, but not as much as this one. This is almost full for the collaboration between the two communities.

Theme 2: Urban challenges and the image of the city

IV.   *According to the first campaign of interview, the public sees any change to the current situation in the city with scepticism; what do you think is the cause of this?*

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V.   *What do you foresee for the future of the Walled Town of Nicosia?*

Yeah, I like to see a unified city. You have a Nicosia masterplan from both sides, and we have to decide what to do in the buffer zone, which we have great ideas. Maybe all traditional Cypriot doesn't matter this community. Or by thinking that we have bought them in case we have to communities we tried to provide, even if ownership is not is not frequently divided, we think to have a regulation which is, for example, the left with user building to that brother community. We need to have them working or living side by side.

So this is not the fact that division is not resolving. The problem is starting from the from the buffer zone that runs along across the walled city and expanding outwards, where we will have similar function. The main things that are seeing now for the Walled City is a gathering point, a base where people meet and they educate. So these are the main thing which we foresee for both sides actually.

VI.   Do you know any actions of requalification in the central areas of the city, within the walls?

There is some some renovation projects going on inside the Old Town. I will let you know my opinion about them if you think they're good or if there is something missing or something more needs to be done or something like that. Yeah, well. Epecially the young people who studied in Europe and came back, and the family were living in the walled city. These children, now in their late 20s or early 30s, are very willing to come back to their families properties, to make an investment in the World City. So you are probably aware that there has been a lot of campaign of restoration popping up everywhere in the Walled City. And then this is actually a very good sign. It is beginning to show that there is value in the Walled City and. They generate new impulse, also students and tourists or seasonal workers come; some building are transformed into mainly workplaces or hotel or hostel. If this pace continued, which was really disrupted by the covid situation, I am sure its pace goes back to where it was. It will be the change I think and the people are not going to runaway just for profit making, but they would also renovate buildings for their residential use. This is where this happened, but as I said the covid situation makes people reluctant now to continue.
Things might go back to how it was going before: this was important because the crossing point was also open again two days ago and then thousands people crossed. So this help. People's properties are beginning to pick up value. And of course, with the encouragement that we are giving to universities to open their department there, there are quite a few students also, trying to find lodging in the walled City, so that makes the landowner eager to renovate their buildings so that they can provide it for the students. But we had this problem with the procedures for renovating. It was a lengthy procedure, and a lot of people, although there were not allowed,

doing extensions of repair work without taking permission. That's very bad to put in, it gives up, well, the actual beauty of the buildings. They are being lost because they are not being repaired according to the regulation or the according to the rules of restoration. So I said in one way we want development to continue, but we wanted in developing in controlled manner.

*VII.	According to this graph, the public indicated some aspects in which the city is lacking: according to your opinion which one of those aspects can be taken into consideration?*

Green areas in very important. Pedestrianization, here's another one, of course. Pedestrianization and public transportation goes hand in hand. The big issue is making the public transportation more widespread. This will resolve the traffic issue too, and also allow for pedestrianisation. So public transportation is another key aspect, which needs to be dealt with.

*VIII.	The majority of people sees the character of the city as the most important aspect of the city; with those interventions, HOW is the character of the city preserved?*

What I am interested in is more in planning: if you do the planning good, then the Urban décor and the image of the city will recover automatically. Also the facilities or gathering: if you start recovering places, then we will find its way automatically. Again, my main thing would be green areas, public transportation, and planning, sure.

Theme 3: The future of the Buffer Zone

*IX.	A majority of the interviewed public, in both communities, imagines a united Nicosia in the future; do you think this will be possible? In case of unification, which will be the biggest changes in the city?*

It could happen then. But everytime new leaders are elected, it becomes more difficult. Although the facial looks on the character of the people may look the same and we communities find the solution or understand each other if they are facing the same problem.

So it's time the problem or the big issues which doesn't help to make people feel that they can live together. So yeah, it is possible, but there needs to be a right moment, we have to wait to make people feel that they need each other. They are living in such close proximity that anything could affect through the other side. Well, for whatever it takes, from the South to the north, there is no other way, so people on both sides need to the need to collaborate.

Then people should be clever enough or wise enough to feel that the cultural heritage is shared, is not only for one side, and they can do much better when they work, there is one part, not separate. So where it becomes a common thing, people can realise that history is important for everybody and saving this heritage is vital. For example, because of this Division, a mediaeval church collapsed in the Buffer Zone. And no one was allowed the other to intervene so, in time, the elements took his way and we lost it.

So then we should act. Education is one of the important things in the people mind: so the education through education, and then finding common things from both for both side, I think can bring people together.

Then it will be facilitated for this. This could be the EU, eitherby funding the project or showing the both sides that put in operation and working together is good for everybody. But this is especially goes for the South, because now they are in the EU and there is no way anybody could stop them getting the funding, but the north is not. It's like, if your neighbot has a problem in its house, then the problem is also bound to reach you. There should be more influence or the urge to make collaboration and work together.

It's up to the world, I said so. At the moment we are not doing it effectively: for the last 10 years, we were not able to access to any new funding regarding several things of the walled city. We have done one pedestrianisation scheme, which is kind of parallel to the division wall, but that was with the Turkish fund. We need much more for the people to feel that European Union is also behind the Turkish Cypriot as well and they are not neglected in anyway

X.   Do you consider the Buffer Zone a place in the city on which is necessary to act, either with requalification or similar actions in the present? How?

My opinion is actually to bring something reason, attention to the present state. Like for example going around, finding people who own

shops, who are based in this area, and tell their story, how people were living or bring down shopping or working. It will be then a spotlight, to help preserving actually the oral heritage. From people, from the bottom, working together next to each other… And of course you see if you do this and you use this traditional function like coppermaker or a small coffee shop. So you know, that this is very good, very interesting because we see you get this sound, ou get the smell, you get a noise, traditional ones, you kind of create not something physical like building restoration, but then you will create a living, and livable history, let's say living monument. Well, this could attract a lot of interest from the road. Then it is a potential because it's empty now and it could be flat. It could be planned in this planthat we have in mind. It is very crucial, maybe supported by the international community.

So before any of this good thing is achievable though politics and talks, certain things can be done, for example, can be done which we have successfully done for 40 years now.

XI.   The interviewed public sees the Buffer Zone as a place to preserve for historical memory, according to the character of the city; do you agree with this or not? What do you think is the best way to maintain such an historical memory?

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XII.   When asked about the specific case study area of the Buffer Zone in Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, the public agrees it needs a requalification and a reuse; what do you think about?

Yeah, the most useful function we wanted we assigned actually in the plan is residential. So we want to keep this as residential area, but maybe we allow other types of public function in the area. Since this is not really money generating function, certain incentive should be introduced for the location. The South is lucky because they have Chrysalionitissa which we have developed because of the investment but in the north Kafesli is really a run down area. But together with the incentives, I think it's workable.

XIII.   When asked about which functions they foresee, the public indicated those: which one do you think is the most feasible, pragmatically, and which one will you say is the best for this place of the city, ideally?

According to Turkish side is Turkish side but according to the Greek side, is the battle zone. But it is it is evacuated is empty. So we suggested, among the technical team, discussing among them technical teams, for example, to restore the school and open it for use of both communities like just this is an example, but it could be a school where english is being thought or Greek or Turkish is being taught in this school, and it is accessible from north and from the South. That it can be a function to be given and at the same time. Of course for the people who wish to crossover. Another function could be a museum City Museum, again, accessible from both sides.

XIV.   According to the results of the first interview, what do you foresee as a possible function in the abandoned buildings of the A.K. area?

For the functions of the school, I told you they can be in school again, bi-communal schools, or maybe a bi-communal museum. Then they can be, I don't know, they can even be a confrontational area where the people, both communities can come in, traditional groups may be formed.

XV.   According to the suggestions given by the 4 different populations and the possible future tourists, which functions can accommodate and equilibrate all the opinions?

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Public bodies

Nicosia Masterplan Team, Greek Cypriot board

name	A.P.
position and qualification	Team Leader at Nicosia Master Plan, Head of Greek Cypriot Team
Institution	Nicosia Municipality
Date, time and media	25/05/2021, 10h00 GMT+2 Zoom meeting

Theme 1: The perception of the division

I.   According to the first campaign of interviews, a great majority of the population perceived an improvement in the city after the opening of the checkpoints. What is your opinion about it? Are the existing checkpoints enough or you think it is necessary to open more?"

Well, from from my point of view and my colleagues, of course we have a different perception since we are professionals that have been dealing with the issue of the buffer zone and the communication issues and their collaboration issues ever since 1980s, not myself, personally I have been part of the masterplan team, the Bicommunal team since 1999.
And over the years, because at the core of the initial masterplan document was the recognition of the significance of the historic city of the Old City, and as you may know, then you can see your master plan. The initial study recognises the buffer zone as the most important glueing area to bring back together, reunify the city. So all its priority projects and pilot projects and twin projects that have been implemented all throughout the years. Of course you have two version per intervention, one where emphasising oriented towards that goal of unitiy and you have studies that have proposals that include the presence of the buffer zone but also without the buffer zone so you have room double work, yeah?

And because at the the chapter which is the rehabilitation and conservation of the heritage of the of the old city is very important. Accessed of regenerating the city, so that's part of it.

Therefore, we developed also proposals to increase the connexion points. Of course, this is more recent, and in the last 10 years, let's say and after the opening at Ledras/Lokmaci, which actually was very important to our work as technical people because as you may understand, you can just walkover and visit each others officers and visit the sites that we are proposing proposals or that we have worked on.

That's being executed, and we went ahead and and proposed an additional additional points being one where the Catholic Church is on the West, where Paphos gate is, you know where the obstacles are today. That was one. There, moving eastwards will come across Ledras to maintain and improve that checkpoint. And also another checkpoint exactly where Agios Kassianos Schools are. So, one in the West, one on the East End, one in the middle is safe. Of course there were other additional ones outside of the walled city in the east in Kaimakli area, which would facilitate the access of cars. But that's outside outside the historic centre, so. More openings I think would help definitely the perception, although on that level I know that it would be a tricky perception because by just increasing openings it doesn't mean that the problem is solved, but it helps peoples everyday lives. It helps their day to day contact. And economically: it helps commerce, it helps visitation to monuments and for people to get to know both sides of the city.

II.   The public perceive an ongoing "detachment" between the two sides of the city; do you think this phenomenon is happening or not?

I think unfortunately may be a lot bigger than that, the amount of population, which is natural. I think I mean the prolongation of the Cyprus problem…It's to be expected that people are growing apart, but also in in physical development. Of course you have a development of the city in two opposite directions because the partition in the middle so, but coming back to the perception, I mean, it depends where each individual lives, what they believe politically and about the progress or not progress about the solution of the Cyprus problem. It has a lot to do with how they feel.

Their day to day lives are about an if they have a friends or acquaintances

Turkish Cypriots, if they are active in any of the activities. Because there are quite a few activities, NGOs or UN or bicommunal… I couldn't say I couldn't put a number to show the people that actually participate, but I think it's a lot. Also, given in March in the protest during the pandemic I think the prevailing feeling at the core of these marches, which were against austerity and against corruption of the Cyprus Government in the South.

III.   If yes, do you think it is possible to reverse it, and with what challenges/ actions?

I think a lot of these people were also pro reunification and clearly expressed that the checkpoints the connexion points should reopen and that you know the future is united, and I learned this should be a common feature with our Turkish Cypriot compatriots.
There are quite a few people that you know, I pro reunification, So I guess depends on who you talk to. So always about this this same matter, I realised that most of the people I talk to that kind of sceptical towards any change in the near future, let's say.

Theme 2: Urban challenges and the image of the city

IV.   According to the first campaign of interview, the public sees any change to the current situation in the city with scepticism; what do you think is the cause of this?

I'm sure it stems from the lack of progress in the talks. But there haven't been any talks for the last three years regarding the Cyprus problem after Crans Montana… The five party meeting that happened a few weeks ago in Geneva, once again, nothing, it did not show any progress towards a solution that would entail living together under a federal solution. On the contrary, for the first time there is open statements about two separate countries. The formation of two separate states, which is not a good development, so you know, even if you're positive and optimistic, you can't help with be affected by the lack of progress.
So the towards a federal solution, that was for me, is the only way to have a common future, I mean, two states is not acceptable for me.

V.   What do you foresee for the future of the Walled Town of Nicosia?

I can say that in the South there have been many urban redesign with the aim of urban regeneration schemes that have been implemented basically from this office and majority of them from Structural Funds, EU structural funds. You probably walked and have seen few of these projects. There is quite a difference if you compare to the physical situation of the old city in the north. Because they didn't have the same scale of funding there have been. There has been a pedestrianisation project that's very near Selimyyie, the mosque, and where the shops are connecting, well, the commercial streets. But there's still quite a bit of work to be done in a lot of decaying historical buildings, and I'm not saying that in the South, everything has been taken care of, but there is this inequality. I think we share. I mean with my Turkish Cypriot colleagues that are involved in either Nicosia, masterplan or antiquities or the planning department… We share the values of conservation and value of heritage and how it can play a primary role in the regeneration of the Old City.
But you know how you go about doing that is a lot about money, but it's even more about a planning and managing resources and having a bigger strategy. Also, I mean, one of the initial core provisions of the initial masterplan was to actually create the conditions in order to attract private investment also. Even on in the South, where there has been quite a bit of public funding, we are still struggling with getting private initiative to come in and join in order to maximise the public intervention.
So also is very important that, I'm sure you're aware that there is an area scheme for the core of Nicosia, which has been in effect in the South since 2017, and it was unfortunate that we couldn't do it as one. I mean at the same time for both sides. But they are in the final stages in the north. I think to get the area scheme for the North approved an implemented. So through that, which is an important tool planning tool, they may have the same tool with very very similar objectives.

VI.   Do you know any actions of requalification in the central areas of the city, within the walls?

Well, you know Ermou St which, if you would start from Famagusta

gates, that street which connects to Ermou St, which is one of the projects in the period, the programming period. I think that was instrumental to attract along that street different businesses. Carpenters, I mean carpenters with with a design edge not only a workshop. Let's say, well, shop windows to advertise their products. There's also a quite a bit of creative industry. Let's say the broader creative industry. Activities which is primary to our strategies that we work with when applying for structural funds is to establish a creative industries. It's a quarter beginning from the core of Nicosia, an now at the old a few metres from my office, at the old municipal market. That will be the headquarters of, it's called Science Now, which is a an innovation hub. Innovation, entrepreneurship and innovation hub, which is a collaboration between the three public universities, University of Nicosia, UCL London and the Max Planck Institute in Germany, to have coworking spaces and makerspace and researchers… also Multimedia and virtual reality applications, and they also will have seminars and working groups to support start ups. So there's a connexion between research and the market so around that there have been younger professionals that are interested in coming to the historic city. There has been communication and collaboration with our Turkish Cypriot colleagues so they can form the same type of ecosystem in the north. So right across from the divide where their municipal market is an around the same area, together with schemes, there is an interest, fter grants that are given through the District office, so we're gradually building up this momentum for creative industries quarter. So there's quite a bit going on. And we're hoping that you know this will developing a way that it will actually be sustainable, and we're hoping that art recipient colleagues can develop in a similar way.

VII.   *According to this graph, the public indicated some aspects in which the city is lacking: according to your opinion which one of those aspects can be taken into consideration?*

I think first of all, public transportation has to be a very high priority because Municipality has made steps towards this direction to facilitate access to the old city without having to use your private car, which were the municipal Nicosia minibuses project. But you know, transportation and management issues are interrelated. It was not very successful on its own

because the same time you can't create parking spaces in the in the historic centre and expect that people will use the minibus. It's contradictory.

And also the public transportation company. We haven't seen you know a major improvement from the past. One which means more frequent bus routes, more reliable. I mean I know there are actions to improve all of this. Also, bus stops, accessible bus stops, parking, ride places.

But the whole issue is quite slow also in the in the mobility scheme Nicosia masterplan, which was done in 2010 that was 10-11 years ago, the 2020 was the target year to make the old city into an access residents only zone area. We're 2021 and all the the parallel actions haven't been haven't succeeded yet. Have been put in place. They haven't started even and so you had this lack of efficiency. So I think that's very major to get the private car out of the old city to have it for residents only. And you know loading zones and It has been managed more more efficiently. So all that goes with traffic management and the public transportation pedestrianisation that all all related. I think the redesign projects that have been implemented may include the improvement of facilities, I mean, daily public utility networks as well, I mean but generally I mean other facilities can be can be improved. For example, there's no pharmacy in the old city.

Then let's see… Yeah, gathering places. I don't think that's an issue on its own because you have to follow the urban fabric which is existing. You're not going to, you know. Tear down places to create. It has to be managed and restored according to the existing fabric.

Clearly, also I think planning general and monitoring has to be improved… The maintenance of the urban spaces has severely must be improved.

Sure, so yeah… Yeah, basically it's like all of those should be taken into consideration because they're all interconnected. Basically, you cannot just take one alone.

VIII. The majority of people sees the character of the city as the most important aspect of the city; with those interventions, HOW is the character of the city preserved?

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Theme 3: The future of the Buffer Zone

IX.   A majority of the interviewed public, in both communities, imagines a united Nicosia in the future; do you think this will be possible? In case of unification, which will be the biggest changes in the city?

Well, it will be possible depending on their political solution, but let's assume that a political solution takes into consideration a United city. The strip that we call buffer zone in the world, you know, we visited occasionally there is cleaning activity of the vegetation, but the buildings are very very bad state. So you have trees growing through the roofs, so it's a major operation to make them functional again, we need to renew infrastructure facilities, and then the construction issues the restoration issues. I think it will be possible to. It's a major major project. It's a multi level approach.

X.   Do you consider the Buffer Zone a place in the city on which is necessary to act, either with requalification or similar actions in the present? How?

Well, for one thing, I mean, we've tried to find funding to actually go in and restore and not just do emergency support works. We have to preserve these buildings. They have to remain. Unfortunately it's very difficult because it's difficult to attract funding because access is forbidden. I mean it's restricted as controlled by the UN. Only technical teams go in and that would be after a lot of red tape, to do support work. But because the buffer zone is such was one of the seven most endangered sites again by Europa Nostra in 2013, and that the aim of that was to generate publicity too, to find funds to actually do work on these buildings to support them, and maybe fully restore some of them... Which was not successful so... It's a very difficult situation. Publications have been done. People have written about this zone. I mean the the owners of the buildings are dying off. Their children probably have never experienced these buildings. You know, maybe we'll be left with a virtual image or virtual tour of this area

XI.   The interviewed public sees the Buffer Zone as a place to preserve for historical memory, according to the character of the city; do you agree with this or not? What do you think is the best way to maintain such an historical

memory?

I would see it to go back to its role as a commercial axis in the city, which historically brought together all the communities of Cyprus because it was a commercial area. You had shops you may had, you know, specialty shops, say fabrics that were more Armenian descent, old or jewellery shops or I mean there is evidence and some of these are mapped out. As you probably know I wouldn't see it as as a big Green Zone because I wouldn't see it as a stage set a theme park. The sustainable way to go is to bring back life to these buildings. Give thim back to the life of the city, which can include, you know, public spaces, public used buildings, but also the commercial side of things.

XII.   When asked about the specific case study area of the Buffer Zone in Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, the public agrees it needs a requalification and a reuse; what do you think about?

I think it's a priority. As I said it was one of our proposals to have an opening there. Also the two buildings are very significant architecturally. But it is a very, very sensitive place. As you may know, because it's a contested area. Turkish Army does not recognise that this part it's buffer zone. They say it's under the Turkish army control. Because there were killings there, done in the past in the 1963. But you know, there's a lot of potential for the two schools, so the reality of today's is what I just said. And then that presented even difficulties of access of a contractor to clear the vegetation. That wasn't even possible. There was some clearing done, but you know, not enough. This was a few years ago. For future proposals, I mean it all depends, but if you're doing theoretical projects, you can propose anything.

XIII.   When asked about which functions they foresee, the public indicated those: which one do you think is the most feasible, pragmatically, and which one will you say is the best for this place of the city, ideally?

Right now, none of them. But yeah, I think educational area that combines within the open spaces and the bastion itself can combine green areas. Definitely bi-communal access at well. All communities, I think it would

be ideal and you can combine, I will say, all of the above, in a management scheme.

XIV.   According to the results of the first interview, what do you foresee as a possible function in the abandoned buildings of the A.K. area?

Both buildings I think you know they can accommodate. I don't know. I schools open to everyone. I think something with a more public use in order to bring people together at that point. So there's a lot of potential.

XV.   According to the suggestions given by the 4 different populations and the possible future tourists, which functions can accommodate and equilibrate all the opinions?

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Active citizenship

Home for Cooperation

name	H.R.
position and qualification	Head of the Communication office
Institution	Home for Cooperation
Date, time and media	20/04/2021, 14h00 UTC+1
	Zoom meeting

Theme 1: The perception of the division

I.   According to the first campaign of interviews, a great majority of the population perceived an improvement in the city after the opening of the checkpoints. What is your opinion about it? Are the existing checkpoints enough or you think it is necessary to open more?

Well, there is always the need for more, because these are kind of the access points, but the barrier is still there... they are the breaking point within the line, but the line is still there, so the more access point we have, the less walls we have also in between the two sides! But I also agree, the city has improved, especially in Ledras street, because a lot of new shops open and especially the younger generations of both sides started getting closer to the area where the checkpoints are... which is a change, because previously people were moving away from this area as it was considered the border, the end of "allowed territory"... and now due to this exchange between the two side a new dynamic came into the old areas around the crossing point!

II.   The public perceive an ongoing "detachment" between the two sides of the city; do you think this phenomenon is happening or not?

I can separate this into two, the before Covid and the after Covid... before the closure of the crossing point as a measure for the spreading, we

were seeing also here at the HfC an interest and an increase interaction and willingness from both sides to engage in activities and willingness to form new relations and interactions on several topics... so here actually everyday was busy, full of people, we have these rooms that are for people to use to organise or held meeting... and the period before covid it was fully booked... It was kind of the peak of the two communities, to the extent that we could observe... but then yes, some people continued these relations via zoom meetings, in an online form... it was a difficult period! It is expected that maybe some people will go back to as it was before the checkpoints, so that they don't think about crossing to the other side to go to a restaurant anymore, but I cannot see this as detached from the covid experience... so I will not say that this is the trend that we are seeing... but of course, there are also changes within the communities, politically and socially, I wouldn't say that it created further distance, but there are different elements to consider.

*III.	If yes, do you think it is possible to reverse it, and with what challenges/ actions?*

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Theme 2: Urban challenges and the image of the city

*IV.	According to the first campaign of interview, the public sees any change to the current situation in the city with scepticism; what do you think is the cause of this?*

	I mean, it's been four decades that this situation continues, and there has been little development when it comes to ease the tensions, real political breakthrough... I think the major step at this political level is the opening of the crossing points, but apart from that everything is much tied to the perspective or the approach of the political leadership! Of course, after so many years that people try so hard to also voice their opinion about this and being denied, every time they face defeat, now people kind of adjusted their expectations, not to go through another disappointment... and that's why now everybody is suspicious and they try to analyse every small modification, to give hints that things may get better, they find small

stuff to stick to

V.   What do you foresee for the future of the Walled Town of Nicosia?

Well, Nicosia is the city that most benefitted from the exchange between communities and especially the walled city, because it's the historic centre of the city and of Cyprus, it is a very important location in general and it has the cultural elements historical sign from many different cultures and many centuries. So I think it's very difficult to answer this question about the feature of the city. I see two scenarios in relation to what happens in Cyprus next: it is the capital, and the last divided capital of Europe, it ha s a significance on its own even only with this situation, and it has to depends if it stays as the last divided capital or if it becomes the capital or reunification of this long lasting conflict… and I think this will shape also the future of the city, because if we have the whole walls as a circle it's very different than having those usual two semicircle with just a small passage, it's a very symbolical meaning and shape about the situation here… also about the development of the city, Nicosia was the first city to have collaborations between the mayors of the two communities, to have a sewage system, and they still continue up to today, so it's more beneficial for the two to connect rather than having them separated in such a small area.

VI.   Do you know any actions of requalification in the central areas of the city, within the walls?

In terms of the cultural preservation and the architectural one, in the walls now there is this bi-communal technical committee about cultural heritage, they work to preserve the common cultural heritage, and they recently renovated the walls that were damaged… and also some important sites of historical, social and religious significance… there are also some projects with the EU and the cultural heritage Ambassador of the UN… so there are some initiative trying to protect and promote shared cultural activities in the city… but I cannot say I am very familiar with them…

VII.   According to this graph, the public indicated some aspects in which the city is lacking. According to your opinion which one of those aspects can be

taken into consideration?

I would say that all of those aspects are lacking in Nicosia... Green Areas for sure, and also planning and traffic... they all go hand in hand, you know? Even with planning permit or building permit, when they are issued there is no law that actually takes into consideration the necessity of providing also parking spaces and escape routes, or even the character of the neighbourhood... so You have a traditional house and next to it ha huge concrete plaza, and we see that all over Nicosia! Pedestrianization, is important, it happened only in the Old Town with some extents, but I think it is missing because it is not connected with the reality of the city: public transportation is not well organized, so you need a car to go downtown, and then you don't have a place to park it in order to then walk! And you don't have bike roads to complement this... so in general basically you have to improve all that, together. When it came to the character of the city, I will make the same comment about the concrete plaza and the house: in a very old, compact centre, with yellow stones building, then you have concrete benches, for example! It just doesn't add up. In general, we lack the vision, I would say, of all of this.

VIII. *The majority of people sees the character of the city as the most important aspect of the city; with those interventions, HOW is the character of the city preserved?*

I think I answered to this question already... I don't think it's preserved in general, in Nicosia... I mean, because it's also, even sitting here and the HfC, we are facing a part of the wall and the moat, it's actually sad to see that some parts actually fell down, and imagining that these walls have been standing for so many centuries and now we cannot protect them , it's very sad to see these things happening. For example, a lot of venues are open on the wall, but no one takes into consideration that these new activities on them can damage the wall! Also when there is a good intention behind activities around the city, in some case in just created damages... I am thinking about the Nicosia Festival or the Nicosia Rally, that passes along the wall and damaged the moat to the point that now it's no more permeable and there are big issues of water management. So also things

done with good intention they are not well thought to preserve the historical significance of the city.

Theme 3: The future of the Buffer Zone

IX.   A majority of the interviewed public, in both communities, imagines a united Nicosia in the future; do you think this will be possible? In case of unification, which will be the biggest changes in the city?

To answer the first part, it is always possible, it's just finding the will to do it. As long as we want it it is possible. For the second part, the unification itself is a big change. Nicosia is a bit different than the other cities in Cyprus, it has a lot of crossing points within the city and there are lots of interactions, compare to other area that are far from the checkpoints or the Buffer Zone. So I think that people in Nicosia will be able to adapt more, or easier, compared to others, in case the island is united... and as I said earlier, if you help with the planning of the city, it must be done carefully: now in the buffer zone there are a lot of beautiful building, they showcase the traditional structure and architecture of Cyprus, the materials and the style, culturally very significant, and now they are falling apart, only inhabited by street animals. So even these thing that maybe you don't consider, they can be affected in a good way in case the situation Is solved and there is no more a buffer zone in which no-one can enter.

X.   Do you consider the Buffer Zone a place in the city on which is necessary to act, either with requalification or similar actions in the present? How?

How, is a big question... Yes, of course, for the first part. For example, the HfC was also in the Buffer Zone, and outside of it, in its façade, you can still see the marks of the conflict, that were kept when this building was transformed, but always according with the history of it... It preserved a memory of the past... but the building next to it is still in ruin, and it still has the sandbag for the barricades inside, and they left it there as a reminder of what this area went through, it's stuck in time, in 1974, and you can see it every time you pass in front of it... the same can be said for the Ledra Palace Hotel, but that's different because it's the UN headquarter basically... but it

was a landmark, and now this landmark cannot be even accessible… the whole buffer zone, it's kind of a museum that nobody can see, it hosts the memory of the people, but they are memories that are not accessible… It's a very delicate matter, I think. Also, the buffer zone is part of the city, and it has been for 40 years, even if it followed a life on its own, opposite to the city itself, and you can perceive it. So, if you want a more welcoming Nicosia and reconcile with the past, I think the Buffer Zone needs to be transformed, to allow people inside of I and to build things inside of it.

XI.   The interviewed public sees the Buffer Zone as a place to preserve for historical memory, according to the character of the city; do you agree with this or not? What do you think is the best way to maintain such an historical memory?

It's very tricky, because the memories are not always positive, also not of them are negative, of course, and it's important to have both in order to learn the past, the mistakes r the good things done in the past. I don't know personally if I would like it to preserve as it is, I think I would not like to see a buffer zone in Nicosia, because if there is the need for a "buffer", I cannot see that part of the city belonging to my life, because it's outside of my daily life. On the other hand, there needs to be a way to also respect the originality of this place, but of course not in the way it is now, but to preserve historically, in lime with the historical centre of Nicosia… the same comments I made in relation with the walls and the central areas… It is the culture of Nicosia at the end, I wouldn't like to see it as a buffer zone but as it was before the buffer zone: and that's a way to keep the memory of the events.

XII.   When asked about the specific case study area of the Buffer Zone in Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, the public agrees it needs a requalification and a reuse; what do you think about?

I mean, the buffer zone in general is a very specific location in the case of Cyprus, but it's also, it can be considered as an access point that can be reached by everyone, without having the need to present documents or identification to the other community… and this is something we observe

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here at the HfC, you don't necessarily step out of the control zone when you are in the buffer zone, is a safe place to come together. So, every building inside the buffer zone can have a function of communication, integration and dialogue, similar to what the HfC is trying to do here. It can be used for different reasons to create more contacts. I don't know personally the area, but it looks green actually from the maps, so maybe the much needed green area in Nicosia, for example, can be located here and utilised in this way.

XIII.   When asked about which functions they foresee, the public indicated those. Which one do you think is the most feasible, pragmatically, and which one will you say is the best for this place of the city, ideally?

To be honest, I am not very familiar with the area, so I am not sure on how it was used and for what purposes exactly... But I see that some functions combine: I would like to see it as a green area, which can be used to gather and to create bicommunal and cultural events, I am thinking about sports and so on... I mean, there are a lot of buildings in the area, they can be used as open spaces to gather. So, I would see a combination of all these functions basically... But basically not the prime real estate, the development of it, that's a no. The educational functions it's very hard and it has a lot of implications in Nicosia, but for sure most of those functions can come together in a singular arrangement.

XIV.   According to the results of the first interview, what do you foresee as a possible function in the abandoned buildings of the A.K. area?

I would have two suggestion: one of them is to have a business or start-up centre, that is open to both communities, because we see that there are new initiatives in this area that try to come together across the divide, and so it will be very useful to have meeting and office spaces in the buffer zone through these buildings. Here at HfC we have a lot of request for office space, and we are a small building, more and more people start arriving... Of course, that was before covid era, but I don't think it will change... The second suggestion will be to make an educational space, it's a very big topic in history and politics, but it will be amazing to have a school managed by both communities to have teacher and kids come together... for cultural

activities too. But that's my personal opinion, my ideal scenario.

*XV.	According to the suggestions given by the 4 different populations and the possible future tourists, which functions can accommodate and equilibrate all the opinions?*

I think I answered to that already. Basically, mixing together all these functions, having a big communal space. It's the same concept, same function and the same vision of HfC, just in a diversified area and in a bigger space.

Active citizenship

Association for Dialogue and Historical Research (ADHR), Turkish Cypriot

name	K.A.
position and qualification	Researcher
Institution	Association for Dialogue and Historical Research (ADHR)
Date, time and media	30/04/2021, 16h00 UTC+1 Zoom meeting

Theme 1: The perception of the division

*I.	According to the first campaign of interviews, a great majority of the population perceived an improvement in the city after the opening of the checkpoints. What is your opinion about it? Are the existing checkpoints enough or you think it is necessary to open more?"*

I agree with the improvement aspect, when I think on how the walled city has changed - and I am talking about the northern part of the city, because it is the one that I saw - there weren't as many establishments or businesses as there are now, so I'm guessing that the checkpoints opening there and the fact that people could cross and it was easiest place to cross. It had an impact on having businesses, more cafes or restaurants, more bars, more shops and I think it's kind of the same for industry as well. As far as Iknow, but I'm not sure. in terms of improvement, I do agree. I mean, I think it has changed the whole setting, the checkpoints opening, and for sure some more checkpoints. I don't think it kind of depends on the location and of course in the end of the day... If there's no chance that we could move freely but in Nicosia I don't know where the other points would be. For instance, maybe in Kaimakli.

*II.	The public perceive an ongoing "detachment" between the two sides of*

the city; do you think this phenomenon is happening or not?

I mean, I'm not sure if it's making the communities go further away, but it's a fact that a lot of people that do interact on a daily or did interact on a daily basis currently cannot. At the moment I mean, okay, we have other ways of interaction or communication, but people are full of longing for that, you know, face to face interaction with their friends, their colleagues, or just simply the part of this today. I can't see at the moment. I hear this a lot from people that cannot cross at the moment. it's an issue is a concerning issue I think, they should reopen the crossings as soon as the pandemic situation is better.

III.   If yes, do you think it is possible to reverse it, and with what challenges/actions?

It's an issue, a concerning issue I think, they should reopen the crossings as soon as the pandemic situation is better.

Theme 2: Urban challenges and the image of the city

IV.   According to the first campaign of interview, the public sees any change to the current situation in the city with scepticism; what do you think is the cause of this?

I wouldn't expect that. I mean to me not everyone is that sceptical. I mean it depends. There are people that are in there people that are very supportive of activities, or, you know, initiatives that are taking place. But people who are sceptical, they don't feel that you can have an impact yet doing anything because the political situation will not change like that there. So there is a gap in the understanding of what your personal changes that you're doing a personal level, how they can impact or not. They then political process can continue. I mean, it depends on who you who you ask, like on a personal level. I think there are many people who feel that they are having an impact on the situation by just interacting or reaching out to the other community. And I think maybe it's mostly what we see before the pandemic everyday.

I mean, activities have been affected a lot, but, not that we are shocked when we hear something like that, but we have to sort of remind ourselves that we are in a strange situation, a bubble, and for a handful of people here, and this is not the situation for everyone living in Nicosia.

And it's very different to see people who haven't had an experience like with the other community and to see their reactions after and see how they see the matter and there are a lot of people who are willing to take this chance and see how their opinions on the other change, they change after that. But there are people who don't and we're in Nicosia, so maybe it's more likely to see some people who are willing cause the buffer zone is right next to us. There are people from Limassol, for example, have no idea what buffer with the buffer zone is so.

V.   *What do you foresee for the future of the Walled Town of Nicosia?*

In the South there are quite a lot of buildings being preserved now more than before, which is a good thing and renovated, and they may. The image has changed, but for the functionality I must be sceptical has gone. Move on and whether people would actually feel it, like their city, and even though they're not customers. I agree that in the sense that there's more of like understanding of preserving cultural heritage, but I'm not necessarily sure whether this is the general public or it's just, you know initiatives by UN or EU funded projects that trap where it's more.

On a higher level, and say where buildings are being more preserved, could you see a lot in the walled city of Nicosia? Some of those undergoing a project or will be undergoing a project or has just completed the project, so there's more of an understanding of preserving it by understand why beans with functionality as well. I don't know. I was going to change that to be honest. I mean it's becoming the centre again for sure. I mean maybe in the last years… it's become more of a centre and I think it's going to stay like that after a while because it's like, especially in the northern part of the walled city, quite empty. Let's say 10 years ago and people thought, I don't know just simply hanging out, people are moving towards an outside of the walled city, but now that's going inward again and it seems like that's going to continue. I mean it's good in the sense that it revives the city. But can it be used for other purposes as well, like public spaces, where people can meet?

VI.   Do you know any actions of requalification in the central areas of the city, within the walls?

There's the armenian monastery in Arabahmet neighbourhood. That was renovated. I don't know when, but in recent years have been a lot. My thing is, there's more renovations going on. There's something going on in centre Sophia Cathedral setting them off because they closed it down and you can't enter it, and it's been like that since the beginning of the pandemic, so I'm guessing there's some sort of work that is either going on or will start. Recently they did the walls here… that's what I remember

VII.   According to this graph, the public indicated some aspects in which the city is lacking. According to your opinion which one of those aspects can be taken into consideration?

I mean gathering places, I think of that. I mean, there are places, but there sort of organised in that sort of way that you only gather if there is a manifestation or a protest or a specific thing happening. But it could be sort of organised in a way where it's a daily gathering place as well, like a group of people just gather to chat about something, hang out, whatever. But I mean I do know, for instance, the Ataturk Square. I mean these are places that people gather when there's some sort of protest manifestation going on, but it's not something that you use to gather with your friends to socialise or I don't know, do an event or an activity, but I think it's a bit of the way that its use, if that makes sense. Then, I mean, public transportation is something that we lack in Cyprus but I think the Old Town is one of the best place in Cyprus in terms of public transportation. I mean you can get there and easily in comparison to a lot of places, I think. Easier than a lot of places in Cyprus, let's say.

VIII.   The majority of people sees the character of the city as the most important aspect of the city; with those interventions, HOW is the character of the city preserved?

For me depends on the different areas in the old city likes. In some

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areas everything looks crazy and the old buildings are in a good like shape there. Others, like Ledras Street is like whatever, brand still can put up like huge signs and stuff… It depends: there is a very big policy in the South and part of the Old City. And there's so many different like people living in from different socio economic backgrounds, and that affects like the feeling we get in the city. But for me, I don't know: I like being in the old city, I like the characters in different areas, you see something different and you feel really differently. But they're definitely areas that need to be warned

Theme 3: The future of the Buffer Zone

IX.   A majority of the interviewed public, in both communities, imagines a united Nicosia in the future; do you think this will be possible? In case of unification, which will be the biggest changes in the city?

I think I got so so used to the statute standards of crossing checkpoints like thinking of with division, but I don't know how possible it is. I hope it is. I mean, to the point that I can't even envision it now, the one united city… Hopefully we can get there. Let's hope that they will often attempt wins eventually, and we can get back to where we were before cause now it seems that we've done steps. By simply has to be hosted. By the way, I mean. Because that's what's going to give us the drive to work towards achieving that. I mean, if we move all hope. People that are already in contact already interact and I don't know have sort of ties in both communities or both parts of the city. I don't know we should have faith that there is a future where Nicosia is non-divided, where you can just close without showing your ID.

X.   Do you consider the Buffer Zone a place in the city on which is necessary to act, either with requalification or similar actions in the present? How?

I mean, we shouldn't wait for buildings to collapse. The sense of their consider culture heritage, who spent of them are in there as far as I'm aware. There it's very difficult causes to give permission to preserve ability, and I mean some cases that I remember is that they have been trying to restore a collapsed church and then it collapsed. It became even more difficult. It sounds like very challenging to do so, but they should have found

a way to actually not let culture heritage collapse that easily, even if they it is in the Buffer zone

XI.   The interviewed public sees the Buffer Zone as a place to preserve for historical memory, according to the character of the city; do you agree with this or not? What do you think is the best way to maintain such an historical memory?

I mean, it makes sense though, doesn't it? The parts I mean isn't that the case when it's not just for the buffer zone, but in general I mean. Some structures are sort of a testament to her story, and it's important to remember. So deserve that cultural heritage and why won't the buffer zone be any different than that? I mean, maybe I'm not saying to make it to continue it being completely inaccessible and just a place that's preserved as it is. But sort of. Combining the two, buying a possible future where because there is no longer divided, that's what I mean where its functional yet preserved at the same time. If that makes sense.

XII.   When asked about the specific case study area of the Buffer Zone in Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, the public agrees it needs a requalification and a reuse; what do you think about?

I don't go often to that district… it is a bit run-down and mainly residential, there is no attraction… maybe it need something, like a restoration campaign, and to have new attraction points.

XIII.   When asked about which functions they foresee, the public indicated those:Which one do you think is the most feasible, pragmatically, and which one will you say is the best for this place of the city, ideally?

For me could be a multi functional area. Like I think, educational areas gathering areas, even green areas and culture areas, and by communal. I think it all this can be either very close like you can have it culturally and cultural area at the same time, functions as educational a green like the greenery is preserved. You have gathering spaces or spaces that hosts interaction of people and have a bicommunal character. And so form could

even be an arts centre and going with what is missing I think.

XIV.   According to the results of the first interview, what do you foresee as a possible function in the abandoned buildings of the A.K. area?

Multifunctional, again! A big gathering place, educational activity, and so on!

XV.   According to the suggestions given by the 4 different populations and the possible future tourists, which functions can accommodate and equilibrate all the opinions?

Well, al those fuction can be used by tourists, they can use a new part of the city as they use the old town… actually it will be nice for them to "discover" the buffer zone and an area of the city that was abandoned for 50 years, almost

Active citizenship

Association for Dialogue and Historical Research (ADHR), Greek Cypriot

name	E.G..
position and qualification	Researcher
Institution	Association for Dialogue and Historical Research (ADHR)
Date, time and media	30/04/2021, 18h00 UTC+1 Zoom meeting

Theme 1: The perception of the division

I.   According to the first campaign of interviews, a great majority of the population perceived an improvement in the city after the opening of the checkpoints. What is your opinion about it? Are the existing checkpoints enough or you think it is necessary to open more?"

I can't remember how it was before the tech points open in the southern part of the Old city, but for sure there seemed to be improvement in literacy then the streets nearby and I don't know How related it is with the checkpoints. But there was a point, that there was a lot of attention. People started going back to the old city, but the centre moved back to the Old city actually and I think this development happen earlier than the North Central part of Nicosia. I mean the type of development. I think it's mostly touristic cafes, big more touristic style development. The closer you move towards the checkpoint and this ends so. I mean, the ideal thing is not to have checkpoints. It's very interesting to see how your perception of the city changes the more you move between the two sides of the buffer zone and how you think that "I would be there if I cross from here, I mean, if this crossing existed". I would be easier ideally. It's like a puzzle in the head so that that's an interesting thing that I see also every time. Me personally, I realised the connections between the street. But yes, I think the more

checkpoints we have, the more contact we have, the more we can hang out on the other side of the divide. I like also the entertainment aspect that you have more choices go out. On the other time it is time saving, you don't have to deal with this puzzle in your head when you cross and you have to go there and there…

*II.	The public perceive an ongoing "detachment" between the two sides of the city; do you think this phenomenon is happening or not?*

I don't know about that, I don't know if it is related to Covid situation… it's even before when the checkpoints were open. A very big part of the population didn't move between the checkpoints, so I don't know what the impact is. Of course they impact on the people who have contacts and friendships, or I don't know. And working on the other and other community, they have been more affected. But I think it is a concern that the more the checkpoints they close in my opinion, the further away we were moving and all the work that has been done by people, organisations, initiatives, it gets lost.

*III.	If yes, do you think it is possible to reverse it, and with what challenges/ actions?*

I don't know. I have the feeling that it's you who will need to do it again when their checkpoints or plan when their communities can meet and a lot of things are discontinued, like project and. Initiatives at working together. I don't think that they have the same impact online, or the same appeal. So yes. And of course, okay at the beginning when the checkpoints first closed, there was a lot of mistrust on the way the other community handles the pandemic, and so I think that's adding up to the stereotypes that already exist. And I don't know if they are going to come up again when the checkpoints open.

Theme 2: Urban challenges and the image of the city

*IV.	According to the first campaign of interview, the public sees any change to the current situation in the city with scepticism; what do you think is*

the cause of this?

Yes, I can understand, I mean, you hear from the news that okay, the talks stops, they start again, no solution, and in a cycle. That helps them go towards skepticism. The politicians didn't decide on the resolution of the Cyprus problem, so if this is the image that you have, the other community only in the news and only their leaders then I guess that you can get this feeling of a stalemate that nothing is happening. I think it's not moving, nobody's interacting.

V.   What do you foresee for the future of the Walled Town of Nicosia?

I mean the most recent developments that happen in the South early part of the old cities. Then charge doing whatever they want with their property, like demolishing buildings, building a new cathedral, kicking out the kids from a historic school to turn it into architecture department.
Unfortunately, I don't see a lot of development for the people like public spaces. OK, part from the Eleftheria Square. A places where people can act like indoors and outdoors. Public spaces where people can actually use. An intact two different actions there, like the way that. Where are the old municipal market is a you, so it seems that they're trying to like. I don't know, make it look nice.
Function in specific ways, but I don't see it happening for the people unless you are a customer at cafes and restaurants so, but on the other side that there is.

VI.   Do you know any actions of requalification in the central areas of the city, within the walls?

In the South, I recently seen buildings, residential buildings that are happening committed close to faneromeni square... Then they restored the walls, when they created the new Square, Elefteria Square. But yeah, every now and then and you really think that you didn't notice his pops up when they like looking shiny and nicer, and a new cafè or restaurant pops up.
So it's again always pushed towards the commercial aspect, let's say. I've seen recently in a party where the most interesting part really it is not as what they did there with the I mean there are some buildings with a face like

only the facade is renovated and behind the buffer zone, but I've seen like artist using them like that area. I looks pretty interesting, like I architectural he says and this sort of thing. So my opinion about it is that they're not like those renovations are not in a general idea of renovating the city is just like punctual like this. Building this building and that's it.

Like very, very small and punctual… Not something significative… It doesn't seem to be part of the cities in that there have been renovated under a plan to. I don't know, either fix the roads or and some of them look very nice and they become like cleaner looking. I don't know an and more functional and yeah I will say that all over the development cost is not nice, but in that it does specific square, it's interpreted weird. It's a bit out of nowhere in the middle.

VII.   According to this graph, the public indicated some aspects in which the city is lacking. According to your opinion which one of those aspects can be taken into consideration?

I mean green areas, something that definitely lacks in the Walled city of Nicosia. I mean, seriously, I can't even really think of any green areas, almost. I mean, you say also practical thing, that you need to survive the summer in the city! Yeah, and gathering places for me, not in this. There might be some, but I think the quality of them should be improving, to make you feel that you own the space and you don't have to sit somewhere or I don't know, those too many rules. There was a big issue in in the new square they have, especially in the beginning, if you stepped on the benches, if you did something that they didn't agree with that, they would come and tell you off in a very bad thing. I think this is not the sense of public space that that makes people feel like they can use this as they want to, or even enclosed spaces that you can do whatever. I don't know, a Public Library that you can just go inside the place with no problem. You can do events… I am saying whatever come sinto my mind now… In this sense I think is lacking a lot

VIII.   The majority of people sees the character of the city as the most important aspect of the city; with those interventions, HOW is the character of the city preserved?

I mean, I don't know. Overall I think there's a specific attention to preserve it, and you can just sort of naturally stayed somewhat preserved. Let's say if that makes sense: we have to put up efforts to preserve this. I think it just happened to continue as it is, but yeah, there are like building things that you see suddenly that kind of don't really fit, but overall I think it is sort of cohesive looking. I mean, there are like little elements where you see in your life, I mean, you have a different sense when you come into the Walled City, you know it's the Walled City

I don't know if I understand this. I like the places that they make me feel like, they're from another era, like the coffee shops that have been around for a long time. Like small places that you feel like I don't know that people are more relaxed. Can you get this? Like, I don't know, I hear the call fo prayer from a mosque nearby, if you turn around the corner you will find old people sitting and talking, stuff like that... The point is more like about the intangible elements.

Theme 3: The future of the Buffer Zone

IX.   A majority of the interviewed public, in both communities, imagines a united Nicosia in the future; do you think this will be possible? In case of unification, which will be the biggest changes in the city?

I think one side might be that we got so used to crossing from certain places like I don't know. Let's say I'm going to go from station like for me to find and I was visiting cafe or bar. It said there might be a way this is going to be like a two minute walk, but I would choose the 25 minute one because that's the only one I know... I guess it challenge with those, so we want to do with the buffer zone like I don't know thinking keep it as it is. It is the reminder of the division. Do you use the real things? Who uses it? Who gets the park there? I don't know. It sounds like a very something that they will have to figure out, like what to do with the buffer zone, and then I don't live there was gonna be competition between the two communities there... I don't know or even I can't even imagine an identity.

X.   Do you consider the Buffer Zone a place in the city on which is necessary to act, either with requalification or similar actions in the present? How?

Yeah, sure. But, how would that be like? Because I don't know how we work, that's why I'm asking and legally I mean. Can anything be done in the buffer zone? I'm not talking about preservation, I mean, depending on what the idea is. It can be something as it is done… Like next to the checkpoint, the one outside the walls next to home for cooperation… So like some buildings that are actually inside the buffer zone are given to any organisation or public bodies or whatever to be restored, and then we used for some functions that like communal ones.

I think there was also a project like that along the checkpoint of Ledras, but now I think it's stopped, but there was an idea to restore the just those these two lines of building along the path to put like shops and other activities like that. So yeah, it's very hard legally and politically, there is not a clear framework. So of course like you have to do this process like via agreements and agreements and agreements and create a new framework, let's say. But it's feasible. Very hard but feasible. But there are other questions was maybe about we cannot enter. We cannot visit. How would something be done there? Whether it's going to be? I'm not sure where the idea is, I mean, it's a process, so I will say that first you start the renovation campaign just to preserve the building. So avoid collapse or whatever. And then once it's preserved you can start talking and deciding. Maybe open a bit this area, having a new checkpoint like very little by little and building by building almost tried to go further. I mean, that's what I think, but of course I mean I'm not sure… It sounds that I mean to meet up the buffer zone is something very political, but I mean my years that unfortunately their decision-making is happening at a higher level. Sounds like something impossible without the solution too, unfortunately.

*XI.		The interviewed public sees the Buffer Zone as a place to preserve for historical memory, according to the character of the city; do you agree with this or not? What do you think is the best way to maintain such an historical memory?*

I like the idea of keeping part of the buffer zone. And I mean the division is also part of the history of the island, and it's good to combine it with other no one exhibition space. And you feel my place where I don't

know. You can actually learn about what happens. Of course some parts there should be that can be restored and returned to their initial state, let's say it would be good to put them in use, but also I envision it as having some parts that are camps like as they are now or I don't know being made safe, at least so that you can visit and also some parts where you can use them to actually bring the people together like commonplaces. Because even in the case of the division I don't think that… let me explain… The division of the population might still be around but I think the buffer zone can actually be used to bring the people together in common places.

XII.   When asked about the specific case study area of the Buffer Zone in Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, the public agrees it needs a requalification and a reuse; what do you think about?

I think it's a very calm area of the city, It's very nice, but it's only residential and it misses a lot of functions… I don't know much…

XIII.   When asked about which functions they foresee, the public indicated those. Which one do you think is the most feasible, pragmatically, and which one will you say is the best for this place of the city, ideally?

For me there are these multifunction aspects… let's say area where you can play around with all those functions, even in Botanical Garden. It sounds good and I think culture is the key. Actually I don't know being able to cultivate your own food in the buffer zone: I can't imagine the agriculture aspect of it. I don't know why, but I agree with it in the sense that could be used more than one function. I mean it's an educational area by communal area, cultural area, gathering area, spaces used for multiple purposes and these purposes can be linked as well.
And for me, this is the way to go. There are areas that are very specific to like, I don't know, museums: they are designed as a museum. You need to be quiet in there. There is a specific function. But they don't become part of the people that can use the mall. The time they use them only when there are events or they're not even open all the time. So for me it could make sure these a place where it's easily transformed into something and available to everybody.I also have increased engagement as well. I mean

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when you said if it's a museum, obviously specific rules for specific things happening and there's only specific people going as well, but when there's multiple purposes, I mean it's an educational area. You might be comingon by communal anymore. Might be coming, yeah. And if you want it to be a place of interaction between people of different backgrounds, different expertise, I think.

XIV.   According to the results of the first interview, what do you foresee as a possible function in the abandoned buildings of the A.K. area?

Well, it can be as the area, multifunctional, or it can be used as the part of the Buffer Zone to be preserved in order to have a memory symbol!

XV.   According to the suggestions given by the 4 different populations and the possible future tourists, which functions can accommodate and equilibrate all the opinions?

Well, all those multifunctional aspects can work also for tourists, they can become actually an attraction no? Tourist will come and see the Buffer Zone

Private companies

Architectural studio and building company, Turkish Cypriot

name	T.P.
position and qualification	Architect
Institution	Architectural studio and building company
Date, time and media	25/06/2021, 16h00 UTC+1 Zoom meeting

Theme 1: The perception of the division

I.   According to the first campaign of interviews, a great majority of the population perceived an improvement in the city after the opening of the checkpoints. What is your opinion about it? Are the existing checkpoints enough or you think it is necessary to open more?"

Yes, the checkpoint opening did help the city, both on the economical level and the turistic level. There was a lot of intervention of requalification and it reconnected new areas of the city... The one in Ledras especially created a flux of people from both sides, even though especially from the north to the south, mostly temporary workers that prefer to work in the South, but also normal tourists and people visiting, going to the other side to meet friends and take a coffee, for example. I cannot answer properly on the necessity of opening more checkpoints, it's a very complicated political matter and I cannoty really say how... but for sure I would like to see more checkpoints, I think it is feasible to open more and connect the two halves of the city

I.   The public perceive an ongoing "detachment" between the two sides of the city; do you think this phenomenon is happening or not?

I think it is related to the pandemic situation. You know, with CoVid, the first thing that the Greek government did was to close the border, in order to prevent the diffusion of the pandemic, they say... But let's not get into that... This give the public the idea that everything that happened in the last decades was forgot... and after almost one year of closing, it seems like the two halves got completely detached and now it's hard to come back

III.   If yes, do you think it is possible to reverse it, and with what challenges/ actions?

As I said, I think it is just a matter of perception, if you are talking about the phenomenon of detaching due to CoVid... If you are talking in general, I don't think it is happening, probably you see a sort of "detachment" of interest from the matter beacuse people got fed up with the matter and they prefer not to consider it anymore

Theme 2: Urban challenges and the image of the city

IV.   According to the first campaign of interview, the public sees any change to the current situation in the city with scepticism; what do you think is the cause of this?

I will say that this is hardle news! Clearly they are skeptical, it's been 50 years and nothing changes! I fear now it is going to change for worse, such as the situation in Varosha [in Famagusta, ndr], it will just complicate the relationship with the Greek side. It is a matter of political talks and their unsuccessful ending

V.   What do you foresee for the future of the Walled Town of Nicosia?

Personally, but also professionally, I am a Nicosian, so I think the city is one of the most important in the island, and it also has a lot of potential. The centre has a lot of potential... I am happy that now there are a lot of requalification programs in the centre, like Arabahmet or Chrisalionitissa district or the area of the Old Municipal Market, also next to Selimyye Mosque, there wasa campaign of pedestrianization, and now it's a beautiful area to

enjoy and to visit. I think it is going to be a great hub for tourism, now it is at the beginning, especially in the North side... In the south it is a bit more developped, but Nicosia is still not a touristic hub in general, if compared to other parts of the island, like Kyrenia or Limassol. One thing that a lot of tourist come and see is the division of the city, the Buffer Zone. The division of the city is a peculiar thing, several tourist come and see it because it is probably the last city in the world to be really divided. This means tough that a lot of actions should be taken to improve the area next to the Buffer Zone, if not the Buffer Zone itself. I hope those actions of requalification continues and improve the city

VI.   Do you know any actions of requalification in the central areas of the city, within the walls?

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VII.   According to this graph, the public indicated some aspects in which the city is lacking. According to your opinion which one of those aspects can be taken into consideration?

    I can see a lot of common issue already identified in Nicosia... for sure green areas are lacking, as they are gathering spaces and a better traffic management, but also public transportation is bad... To be honest, you cannot divide a single issue from the other: it is all part of what is identified in the graph as "planning": I think this graph joined either puctual actions with bigger scale problems... if you plan the city good, you will take care of all the aspects you think are missing, but you cannot just put a park or a new square without planning the rest of the city accordingly, if you know what I mean

VIII.   The majority of people sees the character of the city as the most important aspect of the city; with those interventions, HOW is the character of the city preserved?

    The old town as a very particular character, I think it derives from the different cultural layers of the city, the Ottoman, the Greeks, the British,

and so on. I don't think that I can separate that to what I was saying about your previous question. It is again related to the issue of planning: I mean planning in the general sense, so also requalifications and better policies for the old town... like the pedestrianization you named before, this will boost the conservation of the character of the city, without it getting denatured by wild parking and car traffic. In the end, it is a part of the planning matter, to also identify a common and working strategy for the city, and especially for the historical importance of the Old Town.

Theme 3: The future of the Buffer Zone

IX.   A majority of the interviewed public, in both communities, imagines a united Nicosia in the future; do you think this will be possible? In case of unification, which will be the biggest changes in the city?

If I hope it, yes, if it is possible, I don't know. I don't really like to enter these arguments, it is a huge geopolitical issue, and I don't think we can see a solution in the next future. We lost a change in the referendum in 2004, and I think now it will take several years to come up with a similar working plan. But if it happens, the biggest change will be of course the merging of the two sides: the southern part is economically more advanced, it will hard to harmonize with the northern side, which is a bit more depressed and it will need more investments in the first years. But also physically, the Buffer Zone will be the place to talk about, what to do with this area... this will be the main topic probably, if a unification solution is reached.

X.   Do you consider the Buffer Zone a place in the city on which is necessary to act, either with requalification or similar actions in the present? How?

It is almost impossible to act on the Buffer Zone now, even though it will be a very interesting place to act on. I think it is necessary to do something, for the preservation of the properties, the buildings and the monuments inside! We cannot wait for them to collapse, they must be preserved, either for the historical value of it, but also because people that use to live there would like to have their house back in case of a solution.

XI.   The interviewed public sees the Buffer Zone as a place to preserve for historical memory, according to the character of the city; do you agree with this or not? What do you think is the best way to maintain such an historical memory?

I am not sure about it. It is a very sensitive topic, and I have already heard several people trying to support this idea. It is understandable why some people think that, it has been part of their life since 50 years… even though it is not a pleasant memory to preserve. But memory is made also of bad things, no? I think it will be feasible to keep some small parts of it as a reminder, like a "Berlin Wall" in Nicosia, but I think the rest, or at least, the majority, should be given back to the city and reused. People will like to live the city again, not having another "buffer" in the middle of the city.

XII.   When asked about the specific case study area of the Buffer Zone in Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, the public agrees it needs a requalification and a reuse; what do you think about?

That area is a very nice residential part of the city, but it is a bit secluded and hard to reach... I think it does not need a requalification per se, it need a better integration in the city! There are no attraction points, there is no interest in going there now...

XIII.   When asked about which functions they foresee, the public indicated those. Which one do you think is the most feasible, pragmatically, and which one will you say is the best for this place of the city, ideally?

It's hard to think about it now, it seems almost impossible to imagine whatever function within the limit of the Buffer Zone. If I have to point a few, it can be nice to have there a green area, maybe on the bastion, as it is on the other side of the city next to Paphos gate. That's probably the most feasible and the most useful for the city, and it is probably easy to create, since it will touch an empty part of the Buffer Zone, and not an area where property rights are frozen.

XIV.   According to the results of the first interview, what do you foresee as a

possible function in the abandoned buildings of the A.K. area?

Well, as I told you, it is almost impossible to act on the buildings… I think they should be consolidated and restored for a brighter future, you know? Give the possibility to reuse them in a future, in case of a solution. It is early now to think of a function, and it is very hard to instal a function within the Buffer Zone... probably just consolidating and restoring, that can work.

XV.   According to the suggestions given by the 4 different populations and the possible future tourists, which functions can accommodate and equilibrate all the opinions?

All the functions you proposed are feasible also for tourists… especially a park, I think they will appreciate it in the hot summers in Nicosia

Private companies

Building company, Greek Cypriot

name	A.V.
position and qualification	Contractor
Institution	Buiding company
Date, time and media	05/07/2021, 9h00 UTC+1 Zoom meeting

Theme 1: The perception of the division

I.   According to the first campaign of interviews, a great majority of the population perceived an improvement in the city after the opening of the checkpoints. What is your opinion about it? Are the existing checkpoints enough or you think it is necessary to open more?"

It did help the city, we saw more flux of people, more shops opening along Ledras and Kyrenia streets axis... We also saw an increase in workers from the north side coming to work in the southern part and crossing every day, and also on the opposite sense, not for economical opportunities but to visit... I cannot answer on the necessity for more because it is a complex process involving a lot of people, institutions and political powers.. Also professionally, I don't think I have the expertise to talk about it... I can say that personally I would like to see more openings

I.   The public perceive an ongoing "detachment" between the two sides of the city; do you think this phenomenon is happening or not?

What do you expect, after 50 years? The two sides are detached, there are few things keeping the two together, even if there are a lot of initiatives and bi-communal events... it is probbaly the obvious outcome, after 50 years of complete division. But since the opening of the checkpoint, more than 10 years ago, it changed, I can see hope now.

III.   If yes, do you think it is possible to reverse it, and with what challenges/ actions?

As I told you, I think there are some NGOs or institution trying to do bicommunal activities. The only thing needed it probably a change in the mentality of people, I think it will be clearer with the generational change

Theme 2: Urban challenges and the image of the city

IV.   According to the first campaign of interview, the public sees any change to the current situation in the city with scepticism; what do you think is the cause of this?

I can confirm that I am also skeptical about the situation… It is due to the stalemate of the situation, the continuous unsuccess of the talks between the two communities.

V.   What do you foresee for the future of the Walled Town of Nicosia?

I think the centre will continue to develop as the economical and touristic core of the city, as it is starting now: it was not like that in the previous years, it was a run-down area, next to the occupied part, where few people wanted to live; it is probably the checkpoint that helped this requalification, and several campaing of restoration... With our company we oversaw several project of renovation and we are glad to come back to work in the old town, it is a trend of the last 20 years I would say, but I am sure it will continue in the future.

VI.   Do you know any actions of requalification in the central areas of the city, within the walls?

There was a big renovation of Ledras and Onasagorou street, with several shops opening, repaving and pedestrianization of the city... It brought back attention to the old town, and now it is the real core of the city as it used to be before the division

VII.   According to this graph, the public indicated some aspects in which the city is lacking. According to your opinion which one of those aspects can be taken into consideration?

Those issues are very common in Nicosia, as a resident I can assure you that I feel them too, but I cannot really point out one of them as the main one, I think they are all interconnected: traffic management goes together with public transportation and pedestrianization, pedestrianization goes with gatgering spaces, that involves also parks and green areas, and so on. You see, you cannot really detach one from the other, I think they should all be taken into account.

VIII.   The majority of people sees the character of the city as the most important aspect of the city; with those interventions, HOW is the character of the city preserved?

I think it is an important aspect of the city, and I believe it should be preserved since it is what makes the city unique, its historical buildings and its stratification. You know, in the prospect of making the old town the touristic hub of Nicosia, it will be useful to preserve the character, otherwise there is the risk of loosing some, if not all, appeal of the city.

Theme 3: The future of the Buffer Zone

IX.   A majority of the interviewed public, in both communities, imagines a united Nicosia in the future; do you think this will be possible? In case of unification, which will be the biggest changes in the city?

 I cannot really say, I don't think I am able to foresee it. There are some bigger bodies involved. But I can tell you that in case of unification, the main issue will be what to do with the buffer zone and the other contested areas around the island... I am thinking of Varosha for example, if it will ever be given back to Greek Cypriots, or if it will fall into ruins, or if the occupied part will keep it for itself. It will be a great discussion in that case on what to do in the Buffer Zone, and how to rebuild them

X. Do you consider the Buffer Zone a place in the city on which is necessary to act, either with requalification or similar actions in the present? How?

I am sorry to be so definitive, but it is impossible now, it will be impossible for both sides to agree and allow even minimal works on the buildings within the Dead Zone. I know there should be some actions of conservation, especially for those buildings inside that are not in ruin… there are still people with property rights on them and I think they would like to go back to their houses, in case of unification

XI. The interviewed public sees the Buffer Zone as a place to preserve for historical memory, according to the character of the city; do you agree with this or not? What do you think is the best way to maintain such an historical memory?

I don't think it is a nice memory to preserve… It can do more harm than good in case of unification, it will remind that the two communities were detached and fighting each other, you know what I mean? Memory is an issue that should be carefully handled, otherwise it will imply dangerous precedents.

XII. When asked about the specific case study area of the Buffer Zone in Agios Kassianos/Kafesli, the public agrees it needs a requalification and a reuse; what do you think about?

I don't know the area very good. It is mainly residential, there is no attraction or interest to act there also… Probably it need more focus on the planning level, to have a better integration with the rest of the city?

XIII. When asked about which functions they foresee, the public indicated those. Which one do you think is the most feasible, pragmatically, and which one will you say is the best for this place of the city, ideally?

Again we are speaking hypothetically: I think the functions should go back at what they were. If there were schools, we should bring back that

funtion there. I know it is impossible now, but it will be interesting to preserve the building in order to instal back the function once a solution is reached.

XIV.   According to the results of the first interview, what do you foresee as a possible function in the abandoned buildings of the A.K. area?

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XV.   According to the suggestions given by the 4 different populations and the possible future tourists, which functions can accommodate and equilibrate all the opinions?

I don't think the area should accomodate tourists, it is residential and mostly for Nicosians. For tourists or foreigners, there are other tourist areas in the city. But maybe, I think that if you preserve the character of the district and you restore the building as they were, tourist will go take a walk in there, it is a pleasant and lovely area, to discover what once was the Buffer Zone.

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