Introduction: Crossing Borders/Building Bridges. An Interdisciplinary and Research-By-Design Approach to Nicosia's Territorial Fragilities

Alice Buoli and Oana Cristina Ţiganea

Abstract This introductory essay aims to frame the book's primary research setting, contents and contributions with reference to a "polytechnic" interdisciplinary approach to studying fragile contested territories and cities in the Euro-Mediterranean space. The main research background and premises linked to the inter-doctoral research initiative entitled "Territorial Fragilities in Cyprus" are introduced, making evident the relevance of a trans-cultural and research-by-design approach towards a sensitive urban and built environment strongly politicized for its patrimonial acknowledgement while abandoned and defined by advanced material decay. Furthermore, the issues of knowledge production, urban design and planning, and architectural preservation within a divided territory are presented. The "bridging" communication and collaboration potential of the built environment is introduced to redefine local uses and urban functions. The case of Nicosia, and Cyprus more in general, is illustrated as a critical contest to explore integrated planning, conservation practices and tools in areas of historic urbanization crossed by (political) borders.

1 The Role of Language and Space in Contested Territories

Over the past three years, several major dramatic events have occurred, resulting in irreversible consequences for how we live and perceive our cities and homes, as well as the safety of public and domestic spaces. From the global Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and, more recently in 2023, the devastating earthquakes sequence in Southern Turkey and Syria. These events have widely prompted a deep reflection on the resilience and adaptability of local communities in the face of major political and environmental crises and their impacts

A. Buoli (✉) · O. C. Ţiganea
Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy
e-mail: alice.buoli@polimi.it

O. C. Ţiganea
e-mail: oanacristina.tiganea@polimi.it

across different scales on territories and societies, exposing the urgent need for multi-disciplinary and trans-scalar approaches to address and rethink such issues.

In this context, Cyprus, an island located at the "threshold" between Europe and the Middle East, and at the intersection of major (geo)political and geological fault lines, provides a unique vantage point from which to observe and respond to these complex challenges. It further represents an observatory of more resilient and sustainable approaches to urban planning and architecture while tackling the island's most pressing territorial fragilities. This is particularly evident if we look at the case of Nicosia, one of the divided cities in the world and the capital of both a member state of the European Union since 2004 (the Republic of Cyprus—RoC) and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). For more than five decades now, the Green Line, an "open wound" in the geopolitical body of Europe, cuts through the whole island of Cyprus as well as through Nicosia, including its historical center surrounded by the sixteenth-century Venetian Walls.

As a consequence of the anti-colonial struggles, ethnic and geopolitical turmoil that occurred in Cyprus since the 1960s (and more permanently after the events of 1974), the Green Line separates materially and symbolically the island into two distinguished territories and communities (Turkish-Cypriot in the North and Greek-Cypriot in the South). The roots and reasons for the partition are extremely complex and controversial and reflect very diverse and "entangled"[1] positions, identities, and imaginaries. It is not our intention to explore in depth the historical antecedents and roots of the "Cyprus problem".[2] However, it is worth mentioning here how the presence of the partition became engraved in space, language and people's imaginaries while it has been impacting everyday life practices and spaces of all Cypriot communities, including the foreign citizens that in recent years have settled down on the island.

"Occupation/occupied territories", "border", "displacement", "refugees", "enclaves", "us/them", "property" and "restitution" are only some of the most recurrent words that emerge from conversations with different generations of Cypriots on both sides of the divide. A recent initiative entitled "Cyprus Media Dialogue Project" funded by the OSCE and involving journalists from both communities as well as international colleagues, focused on the role of language and communication in the island aiming to "contribute to media pluralism and free flow of information, and advance accountable, quality journalism".[3] One of the main products of the project is a glossary, entitled "Words that matter: A Glossary of Journalism in Cyprus" (Azgın et al. 2018), including some of the most recurring expressions and phrases commonly used by the two communities. Interestingly, according to the study, words that have a spatial connotation can assume very diverse meanings,

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[1] "Entangled Milieus" is the title of one the research projects developed by prof. Socrates Stratis within the activities of LUCY (Laboratory of Urbanism at the Department of Architecture of the University of Cyprus) in cooperation with TU Delft and the University of Sheffield.

[2] For more detailed and clear explanation please see James Ker-Lindsay (2011), Strüver (2018), Papadakis (2018) and Casaglia (2020) among others.

[3] Source: https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/cyprus-dialogue. Accessed April 2023.

strongly politically charged, depending on the person or community using the same expression. For instance, when referred to the Green Line, the term "border" is considered differently by the Turkish Cypriot or the Greek Cypriot community: "there is a Greek Cypriot view that using the word 'border' as an indicator of geographic boundaries of political entities or legal jurisdictions in the Cyprus context may suggest that there are two sovereign states in the island separated by a border" (Azgın et al. 2018). Similarly, Papadakis (2018) explains the "paradox" and the ambiguity of Cyprus' border in historical, cultural and political terms which are "perceived in different ways by people in each side: Turkish Cypriots more often argued it was a line of protection, a state border and a permanent division, while Greek Cypriots regarded it as a line of aggression, a boundary with an unrecognized political entity, and an impermanent one that should be abolished in order to reunite the island" (2018: 288).

Along with spatial expressions of division or occupation, as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is not recognized by the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and by other countries, except Turkey, all terms related to institutional forms or collective infrastructures, can become objects of contestation, depending on who is using them.

However, both in the RoC and in the TRNC, the built environment and the social interactions and practices occurring in space and through collective infrastructures, like those in Nicosia, are expressions of a *civitas*, bonded by rules of coexistence and governed by elected representatives.

As the essays in this volume will show,[4] language and space contribute to the formation of collective and individual identities that are constructed through the exposure to verbal and non-verbal / tangible and intangible expressions of belonging that can either align or collide with diverse word views and narratives. However, as language, space can be molded, bended, and "manipulated", conveying diverse messages and symbolic meanings, including ways of re-conceiving the partition (and its various articulations along and within the Buffer Zone) away from binary oppositions and expressions.

The manipulation of historical built heritage to define specific local, regional, and national identities is something quite common throughout modern and contemporary history, when the continuous redrawn of geopolitical maps and circles of influences (i.e., religious, economic, cultural) hardly takes into consideration the connection between space, identity, and community. Furthermore, the manipulation of cultural heritage in demeaning and even canceling "the other" became quite in the spotlight of all recent armed conflicts and wars. Less attention has been given to the situations in which elements of the cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) brought together communities in dialogue and communication. As "space matters" when dealing with local memories and identities (Nora 1989), the role of heritage as peace-making device can become the most desired tool in "stapling" what was "broken" by the partition. This relates also to the effects of the partition on the fragility of the built environment dealing, both in south and north Nicosia, with the same construction

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[4] See for instance the contribution by Montedoro and Lemes de Oliveira.

materials and techniques and, thus, experiencing similar problems when dealing with its vulnerabilities.

Among the two communities is shared a common preoccupation for the state of conservation of the cultural heritage within the Buffer Zone, something already tackled by specialists from both sides in Nicosia, that organized common surveys and proposed interventions.[5]

Furthermore, the state of abandonment and decay of the built environment outside and in close proximity to the Buffer Zone keeps citizens and members of the communities afar while attracting new populations that perceive and interact differently with the existing urban and architectural heritage. On top of that, we should mention the commonly shared values of the cultural heritage, such as the Venetian Walls, which represent a symbol of Nicosia as a whole. The overlapping of these spaces and symbols, elements of the local cultural heritage, has the potential of enhancing communication and cooperation by tackling everyday urban habits, practices and *new* uses of the built environment.

The research presented in the volume explores alternative views from the North–South divide, to suggest—through the "external" viewpoints of a group of affirmed and young scholars—a combination of research-by-design, place-based, and policy-oriented approaches to urban transformation and heritage preservation, in which tangible and intangible elements are equally considered and synergically reframed into short- and long-term scenarios. The theoretical reflections and (meta)design explorations presented in the essays suggest the inter-communal use and reuse of the built environment in the proximity of the Buffer Zone, pushing towards its potential permeability and thus opening new opportunities for "visual recognition and social negotiation" (Bakshi 2017: 128) and ultimately of "cohabitation" between all Nicosians.

The idea of bi- (or inter-)[6] communal cooperation in Nicosia comes in continuity with the work already accomplished by the Nicosia Masterplan (NMP) initiated during the early 1980s, which has been one of the main references for the research presented in this book.[7]

As suggested by the NMP team leaders, the original idea behind the program was to plan for the future of the city in light of the potential reunification of the island, but also in view of the current conditions of separation, to offer improved collective services, safe and accessible housing and quality open spaces on both sides, starting from the walled city and the spaces in the proximity of the Buffer Zone.

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[5] See for example the interview with Güralp and Petridou published in this volume.

[6] As for instance suggested by the approach proposed by the Home for Cooperation, a community centre opened in 2011 and located within the UN Buffer Zone, in the Ledra Palace area. The H4C is regarded by Nicosia's communities as a landmark in the city, "acting as a bridge-builder between separated communities, memories and visions through its physical presence and its peacebuilding programs benefiting from the transformative power of arts and culture". Source: https://www.home4cooperation.info/who-we-are/. Accessed April 2023.

[7] See the essays by Bricocoli and Chrysochou and Gaeta and Pasqui, and the interview with Güralp and Petridou for more detailed discussion.

The research presented in the volume intends to push further the idea of transforming the built environment around the partition, through the involvement of multiple local actors and stakeholders towards the acceptance, preservation, (re)use, and transformation of these spaces while tackling common issues for both south and north parts of the city, and the island in its complexity.

The outcomes of this debate between the *outsiders* (the authors of this book) and the *locals* (specialists invited to attend and actively participate in the project in its different development phases) are integrated within all proposed scenarios for the walled city.

2 Territorial Fragilities in Cyprus and Nicosia

The book builds on the outcomes of an inter-doctoral research initiative among the Urban Planning, Design and Policy (UPDP) and Preservation of the Architectural Heritage (PAH) programs at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano. The doctoral project entitled "Territorial Fragilities in Cyprus. Planning and Preservations Strategies" run from February to October 2021 and involved teaching staff and Ph.D. candidates with expertise in the areas of urban planning and cultural heritage in conflict zones, approached from a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural standpoint.

As editors and authors of this volume—involved from the very early stages of the initiative—we acknowledge the complexity of addressing Cyprus and Nicosia's vulnerabilities emerged as both a long-term consequence of the partition, but also as the combined effects of political, social, environmental and geological threads. Under-used and decaying architectural heritage, sustainable urban development, water scarcity, climate crisis, cultural diversity and access to public amenities are only among the most pressing issues that the essays contributing to the volume adopted as potential common challenges to be tackled synergically across divided territories.

From this point of view, debates on "territorial fragilities" emerged as a general conceptual and cultural framework for the analytical and design-oriented explorations in Nicosia.[8]

We looked at the local fragilities through the lenses of space-society relationship and interconnection while considering Nicosia as a city exposed to different environmental, political, economic, and socio-cultural risks. These are linked to global–local challenges that regard the island in its entirety. This way of reading and interpreting a territory through the effects of major trans-regional processes on the built environment and communities is common to a "polytechnic" approach that was foundational

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[8] Since 2018, the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies at Politecnico di Milano has built extensive knowledge and a rich scientific production on the topic of "territorial fragilities" under the "Department of Excellence" program of the Italian Ministry University and Research (MUR) - https://www.eccellenza.dastu.polimi.it/en/homepage/.

to the research, deeply rooted in an understanding of territorial fragilities as potential resources for local sustainable development.

Our "gatekeepers" to Nicosia were the colleagues and experts invited to present their research remotely—also due to the measures against the Covid-19 pandemic that was still in place in early 2021—in the context of an intensive guest lecture seminar organized in February 2021. International contributors included Anita Bakshi, Anna Casaglia, Nasso Chrysochou, Anna Grichting, Ali Güralp, Agni Petridou, and Guido Licciardi, professors and experts in the field of architecture, geography, urban planning and heritage preservation. Lectures touched upon different angles on both the island and the city of Nicosia, such as: the complex geographies of the partition in Cyprus, mapping memories and identities in old town Nicosia, landscape design proposals for the Green Line, the Nicosia Masterplan, the preservation of the architectural heritage of the walled city, urban heritage in fragile and conflict contexts.

This early cycle of lectures and conversations with experts and colleagues allowed both the teaching team and the Ph.D. candidates to develop a framework for their own approach and views on the study context, broadening the fields of analysis and setting the main topics to be later assessed and verified "on the ground" during the fieldwork activity. Due to the pandemic situation, the entire program depended on the mobility restrictions that overlapped with the existing divide in Cyprus. Therefore, after the preliminary research was already accomplished through online lectures, meetings and use of available research tools and databases, the study mission and fieldwork took place in September 2021 and run for a week in south and north Nicosia. Throughout our stay, the involvement of local stakeholders was key for exploring both sides of the city, by including visits and thematic walks curated by our guests. City walks in Nicosia played an important role in both understanding the complex and fragmented geographies of the city, and also as a tool for collaboration: walking together guided by a certain topic or "red thread" represented a powerful experience creating bonds around common interests and views. This approach was pioneered by two of the most important inter-communal initiatives and organizations in the city, the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research[9] and the Home for Cooperation.

Our walks included trails on both sides of the Green Line, touching main heritage buildings and sites in the Chrysaliniotissa neighborhood with Nasso Chrysochou, spaces of nation-building identity in the south with Yannis Papadakis and Michalis Moutselos, North Nicosia public spaces and housing with Bahar Akpinar, Kaimakli neighborhood along the Buffer Zone with Yiorgos Hadjichristou, Urban Gorillas, Marina Christodoulidou and Evagoras Vanezis. Unable to gain access to the Buffer Zone, due to the pandemic restrictions, hindered mobility initially represented a

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[9] "AHDR is a unique multi-communal, non-for- profit, non-governmental organization established in Nicosia in 2003. Since its foundation, the AHDR has enlisted members from various ethnic, linguistic, and professional backgrounds working at various educational levels in Cyprus, making the first steps towards a greater effort to maintain a continuous, open dialogue about enhanced pedagogic practices that could encourage the values of the discipline of history". Source: https://www.ahdr.info/.

major limitation of the research program. However, this limitation allowed further investigations of the urban spaces and architectures close to the Buffer Zone, or in direct connection with it, opening new perspectives and scenarios that helped the doctoral researchers to refine and define their ideas, testing them with continuous engagement with the context and the people encountered. The projects eventually focused on all those "residual" spaces (e.g., vacant plots, neglected heritage buildings, living urban ruins, dead ends) in proximity to the Buffer Zone. As a result, the intervention strategies that emerged from the work on the ground suggested reconsidering those places—once positioned in the town center and then turned into peripheral and marginal realities due to the partition—as potential "inter-communal communication bridges" across the city and its communities.

The intermediate results of the research were presented and discussed with colleagues and guests at the Home for Cooperation during the final seminar of the on-site workshop (September 2021). Comments and suggestions by the audience were later implanted in the final report produced by the Ph.D. candidates, that served as a starting point for their contributions in this volume.

Back in Italy, our team was able to engage further with the research results, thanks to an invitation to present the final report at the Cyprus Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2021, hosted by the curatorial group and in particular Marina Christodoulidou and Evagoras Vanezis. This was a key moment of discussion of the work, including the participation of an "external" audience (the visitors of the pavilion) and other colleagues on-site and online.

The outcomes of the thoughts, talks and walks that occurred in Nicosia, Milano and Venice accompanied the production of this book, which collects theoretical reflections, hands-on experiences and radical design visions for the city in reason of and "beyond the partition".[10]

3   How This Book is Structured

While most recent research projects, design workshops, and/or photographic projects concentrate on the Buffer Zone in its various manifestations and potential regeneration strategies (utopian or not), the book is devoted to analyzing, understanding, and reframing Nicosia's socio-spatial fragilities with the lens of urban planning, design and policy and architectural preservation.

To this purpose the book is structured, besides this introductory essay, in ten contributions by colleagues from Nicosia, professors, and experienced and young researchers from Politecnico di Milano, acknowledging the complexity and variety of understanding, viewpoints and research trajectories developed on the city by the authors.

The first three contributions (Chaps. 2, 3, and 4) aim to provide an interdisciplinary background for the volume, through the voices of scholars and professionals directly

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[10] Here the reference is to the book by Anna Casaglia "Nicosia beyond partition" (2020).

engaged with the Cypriot context and its built environment, and through the editors' opening contributions.

Chapter 2 "Moving on the Borderlines. Legacies and Long-term Perspectives of Academic Encounters" by Massimo Bricocoli and Nasso Chrysochou provides a recount of a long-lasting friendship between the two authors, started during an urban regeneration and development workshop in Dortmund when they were architecture students in the early 1990s.

Based on the authors' shared ideas, mutual understanding, and professional and personal knowledge developed over time, the chapter explores the value of on-site didactic activities in borderlines. The two authors engage in a free and open dialogue about the past, present, and future perspectives of the many borders (in space and time) that characterize Cyprus and Nicosia, providing both an academic "overture" and a personal take on the main issues and key topics that will be discussed in the essays presented in this volume.

Chapter 3 "The Experience of the Nicosia Masterplan. Interview with Agni Petridou and Ali Güralp", edited by Alice Buoli and Oana Cristina Ţiganea, collects the results of a conversation recorded in July 2022 with the team leaders of the Nicosia Masterplan. As for the first contribution, the interview recounts crucial turning points both in their professional and personal relationship, another long-lasting friendship that crossed the last forty decades of Nicosia's urban planning and regeneration projects. The interview testifies the role and challenges of being a "public servant" in a contest of a divided city, reflecting the pioneering trajectories, successes but also disillusions of the former NMP coordinators, in view of the current difficulties that bi-communal cooperation is experiencing in Nicosia, marked by political and financial unbalances.

Chapter 4 "Territorial Fragilities in Nicosia. Tangible and Intangible Heritage Constellations in Nicosia" by Alice Buoli and Oana Cristina Ţiganea illustrates the key thematic and methodological elements of the research-by-design didactic explorations proposed in this volume, drawing on and feeding back the theoretical and empirical contributions of the book. Through a series of collective "walks" on both sides of the Green Line—adopted as an explorative method and a narrative device—a series of constellations of open and built public, semi-public and secluded spaces emerge.

Even though discontinuous and episodic, these spatial narratives develop a composite and multi-layered image of Nicosia, of its tangible and intangible urban conditions along and inside the Buffer Zone.

The chapter also introduces the main academic debates on "divided cities", challenging such a definition in the specific context of Nicosia.

The second sequence of contributions (Chaps. 5, 6 and 7) reflects the rich interdisciplinary theoretical dialogues between the research lines and expertise represented in the volume. The contributions discuss the role of urban heritage, planning and design in divided cities with different perspectives and takes on the "Cyprus problem" and on Nicosia's multiple fragilities.

Chapter 5 "Shared "Values" in Divided Contexts. Some Reflections on the Role of Urban Heritage in Cyprus" by Mariacristina Giambruno and Annunziata Maria

Oteri proposes a focus on the role of urban heritage in divided contests. The purpose of the essay is to analyze two different perspectives through a preliminary critical overview of the law and initiatives defined at an international level to protect the cultural heritage in conflicted areas since WWII. The urban and architectural heritage as a peacemaker or, on the contrary, how urban, and architectural heritage can become the symbol of conflicts and divisions. The essay focuses on some specific case studies, analyzing how buildings and sites once considered symbolic and relevant in terms of history, memory, and identities can become "difficult heritage"; the representation of divisions, defeats, and subjugations. In the last part of the essay, a specific reflection on the case of Nicosia in Cyprus is offered, considering the current perception of buildings and sites, once shared values of multi-cultural communities and now divided by a physical, political, but also a cultural border.

Chapter 6 "Engaging Impossibilism in Planning Practice. Reflections from the Case of Nicosia" by Luca Gaeta and Gabriele Pasqui applies the concept of impossibilism (initially developed by Marxist political theorists) to make sense of the bi-communal planning practices undertaken in a city structurally divided along lines of ethnicity and military occupation. The Nicosia Masterplan is a four-decade-long bi-communal initiative to comprehensively plan the city's future, whether political reconciliation will be achieved or never. By pushing the notion of impossibilism beyond the limits of reform under capitalism—as Marxists have it—the authors aim to frame a planning process entailing a radical degree of political uncertainty as part of its mandate. In doing so, the authors are mindful but also critical of Hirschman's possibilism as insufficiently accounting for the Cypriot planners' experience of active disillusionment. Impossibilism describes a condition of political stalemate in which no realistic solution exists for the main problems of urban coexistence. However, planning actions are necessary to make everyday life tolerable. The conclusions discuss tactics and tools for enabling spatial planning when cities are suspended in a state of impossibilism with long-term socio-spatial imbalances.

Chapter 7 "From No Man's Land to Everyone's Space. The Potential of Radical Design to Transform the Green Line in Cyprus" by Laura Montedoro and Fabiano Lemes de Oliveira interrogates the real potential of spatial transformation projects for the Green Line, in light of its political and spatial contentiousness and complexity. How could an intervention in the physical space help foster dialogue between the two parties? And, more broadly, how could the Green Line be re-signified from nobody's land to everyone's space? The operability and effectiveness of design (landscape, urban and architectural) in a situation of long-standing socio-political conflict are deeply challenged; the spaces for interventions capable of making sense are limited.

Starting from the analogy between language and space, this chapter proposes a re-interpretation of the Green Line as a Mediterranean free space, and provocative design actions are hypothesized to reinforce its "pidgin" character as a condition for potential new beginnings.

The third sequence of essays (Chaps. 8, 9, 10 and 11) presents the research focused on Nicosia's old town, through four different urban designs, urban planning and policy explorations, suggesting other ways of seeing and intervening in the city's

manifold urban spaces and its cultural, environmental and architectural patrimonial legacies[11].

Chapter 8 "Stapling strategies around the Green Line in Nicosia's Old Town" by Federico Barbieri, Wenshan Chen, Wei Lyu, Francesco Pasta, and Dafni Riga outlines a theoretical and methodological framework for the proposed intervention strategies for Nicosia's walled city center.

The authors define a "stapling strategy" as a process which builds upon and develops existing socio-spatial interlinkages between the two sides of Nicosia's historic city center, metaphorically "stapling" or "stitching" together spaces that used to be contiguous and continuous but are now severed by the Green Line.

The first part of the chapter provides a conceptual background, relating a range of subjects that are relevant to the research and intervention approach in the divided city of Nicosia such as e.g., the concept of a "thick" border, the ambivalent semiotics of urban space, the gap between conceived and experienced space, the materiality of everyday life, and the idea of cross-border engagement. Grounded in the theoretical framework and based on fieldwork conducted in Nicosia, the second section identifies three main themes, which can be considered as both challenges and opportunities from a strategic design point of view. These are: (1) bridging inter-communal planning with civil society; (2) reactivating under-used or abandoned spaces; and (3) building upon a shared socio-ecological system. Such macro-subjects constitute criticalities that present the potential for action and intervention.

The third section outlines the principles of community-based action planning, the key guidelines for intervention, and the community actors to be involved. Based on these elements, the authors discuss how the proposed planning strategies do not constitute a prescriptive masterplan, nor an inflexible vision. Rather, they compose an open framework for strategic and concerted action. They are complementary but not necessarily interdependent.

Chapter 9 "Tackling Residuality through Nicosia's Market Heritage" by Roberta Pellicano, Verdiana Peron, Aubrey Toldi, Constanze Wolfgring, and Shifu Zhang addresses marketplaces and residual spaces in old town Nicosia as catalysts of reactivation strategies. Markets were central in the old city of Nicosia for decades, playing a crucial role in bolstering relations between different communities. Locals developed memories and attachments to these everyday spaces, demonstrating how they are part of a common tangible and intangible legacy, which still serves as a strong point of reference of what Nicosia used to be before the partition. The establishment of the buffer zone in 1964 disrupted the marketspace, transforming once bustling market streets, that were a common ground to the ethnically divided neighborhoods, into disconnected residual spaces. When considering how to mitigate the existing barriers between Nicosians on both sides, these spaces could play a crucial role. Based on the hypothesis that Nicosia's history as a market city embodies a common, predominantly positively connotated heritage, this study explores its potential in tackling

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[11] All maps of Nicosia depicting the Buffer Zone use as main reference the "Nicosia Master Plan Archives". Source: http://udsnicosiabufferzone.blogspot.com/p/blog-page_2.html. Accessed April 2023.

residuality within the area of the historical marketspace and in promoting opportunities for dialogue and encounter. The research was developed through bibliographic research, interviews and on-site surveys. The authors propose short and long-term strategies concerning residual spaces and buildings to reactivate and re-center the former marketspace, arguing that these once vivid spaces in the very heart of the city can again assume bridging functions between communities.

Chapter 10 "Civic Water. Bridging Culture, Nature and People" by Samidha Pusalkar, Norma Camilla Baratta, Massimo Izzo, Danila Saulino, and Filippo LaFleur explores the potential reuse of traditional urban water infrastructures in Nicosia, with reference to the walled city. The political and physical partition of the city has not only pushed for the material decay of the built environment inside and bordering the Green Line, but also the abandonment of various common infrastructures, such as the water system. This is even more critical in Cyprus, an island suffering from severe water scarcity. Hence, Nicosia's water legacy has been studied, mapped, and analyzed from its patrimonial perspective, with attention to its tangible and intangible manifestations. This research enables the potential to connect the two communities by virtue of the social and renewable use of water. To promote this vision, the research puts "water heritage" as a theme under which community-based initiatives and the reintroduction of nature as a service in the urban fabric are proposed with different social and cultural target actors, based on the methodology of "stapling strategies".

Chapter 11 "The Venetian Walls of Nicosia. A Palimpsest for a Common Future" by Giulia Bressan, Anna Evangelisti, Paola Martire, and Livia Shamir aims to address the role of Nicosia's Venetian Walls as a platform for symbolic and physical communication bridges between the two divided sides of the city. This goal is rooted in the potential of attributing new meanings to Nicosia's cultural heritage, particularly the tangible heritage of the Venetian Walls. Despite their historical significance in defining the city's history and symbolically representing it, they form a complex defensive system composed of walls, bastions, and moat structures that have always been perceived as shared heritage by the various communities that have inhabited the city since the sixteenthcentury. Even today, despite the persistent division, the Venetian Walls represent a rare example of shared cultural heritage among conflicting communities.

To explore how the Venetian Walls' heritage component can be reconceived from being a valuable static palimpsest into an essential tool and occasion for the construction of new spaces and shared values, this research has developed a multidisciplinary research path and a series of transformative scenarios. This vision aims to reimagine the walls system and its surroundings as new urban green and public spaces, serving as a new urban catalyst that defines the city as a whole. The original contribution of this study lies in the possibility of considering the Venetian Walls system as the object and space where the Green Line can be reconsidered and ultimately crossed, allowing for tangible connections that blend the different urban communities and cultures.

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