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Interplaces for Solidarity Pedagogy  
Exploring joyful-critical spatial practices,  
for learning to co-create and connect through borders

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## Abstract

This thesis is situated in the context of Cyprus, a country divided after the war in 1974. It explores how the partly-accessible geopolitical border of Cyprus that marks the division on the ground, can create opportunities to increase the connections, and eventually, transform the relations between the two main communities living on the island: the Greek- and Turkish- speaking Cypriots.

The thesis revolves around three questions. Firstly, it asks what insights can be collected from theory and practice about possible ways of learning to connect and nurture relationships, so as to transform border conditions that produce division. For this, the research collects insights from everyday spatial practices that navigate Cyprus' frozen conflict and porous border; and it studies critical and practice-based theories of pedagogy, gender and space that can help to frame such practices.

Secondly, the thesis asks how these insights can support the creation of a new theory of action linking spatial practice and pedagogy. The aim is to conceptualize a form of practice that encourages Cyprus' residents to learn how to overcome division and relate across difference. For this, a situated research begins with an exploratory journey among spatial practices that are organized by different groups across the border, which is narrowed down with an in-depth research on two cultural-artistic festivals that were adopted as case studies.

Insights from the analysis of the festivals contribute to proposing the concept of Solidarity Pedagogy, which offers a critical-spatial approach to the process of learning about how to connect with others, through borders. In the context of Cyprus, this implies that learning solidarity can be achieved through embodied connections and temporary shared spaces, called in the thesis Interplaces. These shared spaces can be produced through spatial practices that are situated in everyday life, such as festivals, where the two communities cross the spatial border to meet, interact, and connect meaningfully, through critical and joyful forms of learning and co-creation.

Finally, the thesis asks what recommendations can be inferred from the case studies, two festivals, for a future practice and policy that help to transform perceptions of the other, and foster meaningful relationships between the two major communities of Cyprus. The thesis, thus, voices the urgent need to encourage embodied connections through the border, as a way to change perceptions about the 'other' community, and eventually cultivate acceptance across any otherness that exists on the island.



# Interplaces for Solidarity Pedagogy

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My journey towards this thesis on Solidarity Pedagogy started long ago. As a Greek Cypriot woman, born and raised in a troubled country, as well as someone who since a teenager engaged in political, feminist and peace activism, I was taught the importance of solidarity: not only through the little acts of caring shared with comrades, but also through the great social struggles I engaged in with them in acts of empathy for the underprivileged and support for the common benefit, for a more just living in Cyprus.

Within the context of division, my engagement in the leftist youth organization EDON, students' movement Proodeftiki, and AKEL party has been valuable in raising awareness about the life of the other communities in Cyprus and the "other" side, and in particular the Turkish Cypriots. I had the opportunity to cross the border to meet and familiarize myself with them which was contributive at two levels: in demystifying the myths and prejudice embedded through education, religion and conservative discourses about the other community, and at the same time, in realizing and feeling that fighting for the reunification of the island and its two communities was not just a reproduced discourse of the leftists, but a utopian aspiration that is tangible at the same time.

Without the above foundations I would probably not have finished my bachelor degree in architecture with a focus on peacebuilding and urban design, which sparked a greater interest for a PhD research project. This together with my passion for dance, performing arts and culture since my childhood and current engagement in cultural activism, have been the two underlying elements that directed my thesis: on the possibilities that recreational practices with artistic and educative content can offer in nurturing social relations between communities, cultures and groups, and in suggesting other ways of active and collective engagement.

Working on my PhD has been challenging and transformative at the same time both for (re)shaping my personal way of thinking and inevitably influencing the way I approached the research. I had to face chronic psychosomatic pain that escalated severely in the middle of my study and while I was writing the thesis, which however I was inspired to face by reading on self-transformation and empowerment in feminist literature and critical pedagogy.

These circumstances led to three important facts about the thesis. Firstly, by

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# 01 Introduction

## 01.01 Motivation

### On Cyprus frozen conflict and porous border

The thesis focuses on my homeland, the island and country of Cyprus. It is situated in the Eastern Mediterranean and is the third largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily and Sardinia. Cyprus is located south of Turkey, west of Syria and Lebanon, northwest of Israel, and north of Egypt. Also, it is constituted by the districts of Nicosia (the capital city), Limassol, Larnaca, Paphos, Ammochostos and Kyrenia (figures 1.1-2).

Cyprus's population includes two main communities, the Greek Cypriots (GCs) and Turkish Cypriots (TCs). The official spoken languages are Greek and Turkish, while in everyday life people use a Cypriot dialect of the two languages, that is, the Cypriot Greek and Cypriot Turkish dialects. Other languages are used as well such as the Armenian and Cypriot Arabic, indicative of the variety of communities, ethnic groups and cultures that have been living in Cyprus. For instance, within the Greek Cypriot community the three religious groups of Maronites, Armenians and Latins are included, and within the Turkish Cypriot community, the group of Roma is included, while in Cyprus other immigrant groups live as well such as English, Romanians, Bulgarians, Philippino and many more.

The intercultural character of Cyprus has been mainly shaped through the consecutive conquerors that sought the island to become part of their own administration. The latest conqueror of Cyprus before its division was the British



Figure 1.1 Pashia, E. (2019). Cyprus within the Europe continent.



Figure 1.2. Pashia, E. (2019). Cyprus and the neighbouring countries.

colony (1878-1955) which was preceded by the Ottoman Empire (1571-1878) after its victory over the Venetians (1489-1571).

Before the Ottoman Empire was established, Cyprus was mostly Greek-populated, which after the 300 years of the empire, changed with the rapid increase of the Turkish community with soldiers-settlers that arrived on the island, and therefore, the Cyprus population has been constituted by the two ethnically distinct groups ('Turkish invasion of Cyprus', 2020; 'Ottoman Cyprus', 2020). Since then, and before the British colony, the two communities of the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots were living peacefully with each other, even though the Ottoman Empire would intentionally highlight the distinction of TCs from the GCs also by religion, as the TCs were Muslims and GCs were Christians (Ibid.).

The quiet coexistence of the communities was unsettled by the establishment of the British colony and its colonial policies (such as the 'divide and rule'), perpetuating inter-communal hostility ('Turkish invasion of Cyprus', 2020). This, however, did not prevent the Turkish and Greek Cypriots from undertaking common actions to claim their independence against the British rule (Ibid.).

Resistance against colonial rule led to the formation of a Cypriot movement initiated by GCs, called EOKA, which began a military struggle against the British rule that lasted between 1955 and 1959 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006). The struggle ended with the Cypriots' victory, which was followed by the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) in 1960 marking the beginning of the recent history of the country (Ibid.). The Republic of Cyprus was established as a shared state between the GCs and TCs. Despite Cypriots' demand for independence, the new state would be of "limited independence" (Ibid.: para.5). This meant the establishment of three guarantor powers: Turkey, Greece and Britain, with the latter also maintaining military bases on the island until today.

As explained in detail in the following Chapter 2, geo-political tensions in Cyprus intensified greatly between 1960 and 1974, leading to a military coup d'état in Cyprus in 1974 by the Greek military Junta and Greek officers of the Cypriot National Guard which was immediately followed by the invasion of the Turkish army and military war. The invasion resulted in Turkey's on-going military occupation of the Northern third of the island, and marked the beginning of what is known as the 'Cyprus problem' or 'Cyprus dispute'.

The term 'Cyprus problem' describes the on-going territorial dispute between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The 1974 invasion and war left the island spatially and politically divided in two distinct parts: the Southern part of Cyprus is controlled by the already established Republic of Cyprus, while the Northern part of the island constitutes a self-proclaimed state known as the Turkish Republic of the Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which was established in 1983 and is still today deemed illegal under international law (figure 1.3).

Since 1974, the division has been enforced through a hard border that I will be referring to as the island's 'physical or geopolitical border': a buffer zone known as the 'Green Line', controlled by the UN forces. The Green Line runs across the island from East to West, and divides its capital city, Nicosia in two parts. At the same time, and alongside the establishment of a physical borderland, social segregation between Turkish and Greek Cypriots was also imposed via the displacement of an estimated total of 210,000 Cypriots, which enabled what I view and will be referring to as the communities' 'relational border'.<sup>1</sup> The term highlights the fact that the division of Cyprus in 1974 did not only result in the spatial division of the country into two distinct territories, but also in the discursive construction of two separate identities and social groups. For nearly 50 years, such a discursive segregation has profoundly shaped the relationships between Turkish and Greek Cypriots.



Figure 1.3 Pashia, E. (2019). Cyprus, its districts and the borderland.

<sup>1</sup> My view on relational borders emerges through my everyday experiences of living near the border and separated from the Turkish Cypriots, and away from the possibility to create relationships with them, as well as with other communities that exist on the island. Simultaneously, my view regarding relational borders is synthesized during my study on space and through a landscape of authors that share critical theoretical perspectives on space, mostly coming from post-colonial and feminist thinking. This helped me think beyond the physical nature of Cyprus's geopolitical border, and focus my work more on understanding potentialities that can emerge, by approaching it as a relational one and by realizing that their relationship (and so as the self) is always becoming. Therefore, their relationship *is* possible to change.



Figure 1.4. Pashia, E. (2019). The borderland with check-points across allowing access from one side to the other, shaping what is called in the thesis a ‘porous border’.

During the last sixteen years the previously impermeable, physical border that marks the territory of Cyprus has started to become a porous one (figure 1.4). Since 2003, roadblocks have been gradually removed and replaced with check-points which allow mobility between the Northern and Southern areas of Cyprus by crossing through the borderland. One could expect that this development should have signified the beginning of the resolution process and the improvement of social relations between the two communities. Instead, many years since the beginning of this process, the conflict remains unresolved.

These facts together perpetuate a challenging and complex reality for all citizens of the island — a reality which is at once both hopeful, and mournful. On the one hand, a “frozen conflict” is pending (Bjorkdahl & Kappler, 2017: 34), and reminds everyone of the long-lasting division of Cyprus, as negotiations for resolution have not reached an agreement yet. On the other hand, more and more barricades are being removed, increasing the porosity of the border and allowing mobility between the two sides of the border. A state of uncertain living arises from this situation, as it is unsure whether the current condition with no other violent incidents since the war in 1974 — or, in other words this “comfortable conflict that can easily pass off as peace” (Adamides & Constantinou, 2012:247) — foreshows the acceptance and establishment of division as a permanent outcome of the conflict. Inevitably, this complex reality lasting for many years makes it more and more challenging to nurture meaningful connections between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

## On Peacebuilding through Space

Although the current conditions in Cyprus are undeniably challenging, at the same time, they offer opportunities for re-imagining the relations between the island's communities, and establishment of a novel peace culture. Initiatives that started right after the division of the island aimed at building the ground towards peace, with formal negotiations for resolution. Although there have not been changes at the formal political level, other initiatives of conflict management have been put forward in space including the re-development of post-war Nicosia city, the substitution of roadblocks with check-points so that access is allowed between the sides through the borderland, and the establishment of a shared space within the buffer zone area of Nicosia city.

Nevertheless, encouraging as though such ventures may have been in terms of increasing the opportunities for interaction between the two communities and for connection between the two sides, according to recent researchers, this interaction and connection has not been achieved yet (Ersözer, 2019; Ker-Lindsay, 2019; Ioannou & Sonan, 2019; Tselika, 2019; Psaltis & Yucel, cited in Aygin, 2018). Evaluations show how the division continues to negatively affect local political cultures and educational approaches, both of which are increasingly underpinned by ethnocentric views. Segregation inevitably has a negative impact on each community's perceptions of and relations with the *other* community, especially among the youth; and increases the general lack of awareness that reunification of the island can bring a positive change to lives (Ioannou & Sonan, 2019; Christodoulou et al., 2017; Charalambous et al., 2013).

This is indicated in the fact that even though the border's physical porosity "allows" meeting with each other, the number of interactions across communities and sides remains significantly low. Therefore, to enhance the establishment of peace consciousness and culture, more inter-border efforts are required. This thesis builds on this idea, and on the understanding that it is imperative to work towards a different direction, one that will promote understanding about the importance of taking actions towards peace, especially among the youth.

## **Towards transformation of relational borders through the geopolitical border**

These conditions underpin the complex reality of today's Cyprus: a conflict frozen in time, and a physical border that became porous, but remains accompanied with

limited interaction between the its GC and TC communities. Sustaining a life away from each other for a long period of time — almost for five decades — can easily normalize division in people’s consciousness. Today reunification might not be perceived by the youth as necessary for the betterment of life and preservation of shared cultures on the island; and it is very much possible that the current situation might come to be considered by younger generations as an acceptable form of conflict resolution. This would mean confirming a *division* with a flexible border as a form of resolution of the ‘Cyprus problem’ — in contrast with the framework of *reunification* that formal peace negotiations have historically pursued. In order to resist the notion that division might be acceptable, it is paramount to continue nurturing awareness about the importance and benefits of peace and reunification, as well as of enhancing the interaction between the communities.

For these combined reasons, this thesis looks at the partially accessible border of Cyprus as a relational one. Specifically, the thesis draws on the reality that the border is now open, and that this openness has created opportunities for physical crossings and connections between the two communities, which can lead to the emergence of shared initiatives and subjectivities. Differently, the thesis supports that the relational border can be transformed through the geopolitical border, that is, through these *inter-border* crossings and connections which suggest pathways towards potentially resolving what formal peace negotiations have failed to resolve up until this moment.

Indeed, a porous border creates possibilities for crossings and exploits the condition of being *here-and-temporarily-there* in order to achieve the transformation of the relational border between the communities. The research aim is shaped around the need to transform and re-imagine established relationships and perceptions about the *other* community due to the long-lasting division, for which the accessible physical border is perceived as a first step towards. At the same time though, what is needed even more, which the thesis highlights, since this opportunity to cross the border exists, is to increase contacts and connections between the two communities. To this, the research points out the role of space in improving inter-communal relations, and as such voices the urgent need for critical-spatial approaches to connectedness.

Towards this, the research investigates a number of experiences and theories with the aim to propose a new theory of action to inform spatial practice with the ability to transcend the relational border through crossing the geopolitical border,



and eventually cultivate peace between the TC and GC communities. This implies practices that are developed in space and which invite the two communities to participate so as to interact, learn to connect and establish relationships; what I will be referring to as 'transformative spatial practices'. The term entails a dual capacity: firstly, the fact that they take place in space, and secondly, that they have the ability to transform established consciousness and relations. Consciousness transformation means that through these practices, communities can learn to accept the other, whereas transformation of relations means that communities can learn to connect and interact with the other community. I see transformative spatial practices as opportunities where the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities/subjectivities of Cyprus can engage in forms of *mutual learning*, where, therefore, do not only meet in space, but they also interact and create together, as a way of taking actions together for peace. More importantly, the thesis supports that increasing the frequency of such practices and opportunities of connecting through crossing the physical border, can eventually transform perceptions about the other, the divisive norm of the border towards one that relates and produce knowledge about bi-communal relations anew.

In other words, the thesis asserts that inter-border practices can create new shared experiences, and thus, help to re-articulate the current narratives of *division* as narratives of *connection*. The thesis supports that co-producing knowledge about each other and about Cyprus can be a powerful means to change perceptions of the *other* community, meaning either the Greek Cypriots or the Turkish Cypriots, and eventually cultivate acceptance of difference and any *otherness* that exists across the island, meaning the different social groups or communities. More importantly, the thesis encourages a bottom-up approach to defining peace, from and between the two communities.

The notions of Other, that is, a discursive view of a "member of a dominated out-group, whose identity is considered lacking and who may be subject to discrimination by the in-group", and Otherness, a "characteristic of the Other", have deep philosophical roots and have sparked important critical debates in post-colonial and feminist theory about difference, diversity and the construction of identity, of individuals and groups (Staszak, 2008:1).

In the thesis, other, otherness and difference are used as connected meanings, aligned with the post-colonial, critical spatial and feminist thinking. The thesis does

not aim to define these notions, but it is particularly interested in how dividing or discriminatory lines can be changed into lines that unite. Further to this, the thesis explores how there can be points of contact and shared spaces between different social groups and communities. This relates to the work of Stavrides (2007; 2016), who explores the in-between space of different communities or social groups. He emphasizes his opposition to approaching the differences between groups as concrete lines that divide and discriminate one group as less valued from another group (2007; 2016). Instead, he suggests to think of these concrete lines around a group as a 'porous border' and therefore, to think of the possibility to exit and enter a different group (Stavrides, 2007). This means that it is possible for groups to meet and co-produce a shared space, a 'threshold' space between them, where they meet and can possibly redefine their relationships (Stavrides, 2007; 2016). Thus, a concrete line or a border that divides and discriminates, can become one that relates.

Similar to Stavrides's position, Mohanty (2003) stands against colonial framings of identity. She emphasizes the need for a politics of difference and participation that can dismantle we-versus-they divisions (or dividing lines), and celebrate the very fact that we all are different. Against fixed norms or normative perceptions about others, she suggests that female subjectivities or groups should allow new or different voices to participate in the production of knowledge so that diverse groups, and their differences, are included and represented in the discourse (Mohanty, 2003). Thus, the dominant knowledge and therefore, normative perceptions about others can be transformed into more inclusive and accepting ones respectively. Stavrides's and Mohanty's ideas are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

## 01.02 Research outline

The thesis collects insights about the everyday experience of navigating a frozen conflict and a porous border through a diverse range of spatial practices; as well as about practice-based theories that can ground and frame such practices, specifically offering a *critical-spatial approach to the process of learning about how to connect with others, through borders*. The thesis results in proposing a new theory of action, which utilises critical and joyful modalities of learning in space as a means to enhance interaction, connection and co-creation between individuals and groups, across difference and across communities. Based on this proposition, the thesis hopes to open up a discussion for inter-border and embodied methodologies

of learning to connect with others in Cyprus, so as to address the relational border between its communities and cultivate a culture of peace.

## Research Objectives and Questions

The thesis is built on a broader objective and question, channelled into two sub-objectives and sub-questions, as follows:

**Broader aim:** To explore different definitions and forms of *learning* by investigating both critical theories and (existing) practices in the space of Cyprus, so as to gain relevant knowledge from both theory and practice.

- **What insights can be collected from theory and practice about possible ways of learning to connect and to nurture relationships, so as to transform border conditions that produce division?**

The question reflects the exploratory nature and focus of research, which investigates how individuals and groups can learn to connect and nurture relationships with others, reflecting also a broad exploration of connectedness across difference.

To respond to the question, the research establishes a back-and-forth or reflective relationship between theory and practice. This includes a move from influential practice-based theoretical positions including critical pedagogy, feminist praxis and critical spatial theory, to a situated research on spatial practices in the Northern and Southern areas of Cyprus. Specifically, the three theoretical positions inform: firstly, the conceptual framework (Chapter 3); secondly, the methodological approach to explore a range of spatial practices (Chapter 4) and two individual case studies in Cyprus (Chapters 6 and 7); and thirdly, the detailed analysis of material collected from the cases and the outcomes.

**Objective 1:** To utilize insights from theory and practice so as to propose a new theory of transformative action that can inform spatial practice with guidelines on learning how to connect with others, and with the ability to encourage connections between communities across the geopolitical border in Cyprus. The thesis hopes that over time, applying the informed spatial practice will allow for increasing the number and frequency of connections between Turkish and Greek Cypriots; and will facilitate the spreading of a culture of connectedness across the island.

- **How can these insights contribute to creating a new theory of action that informs spatial practice with pedagogical guidelines that encourage connectedness through the border of Cyprus?**

In response to this question, the research (in Chapter 3) draws from different practice-based perspectives to develop a conceptual framework informed by critical pedagogy, feminist praxis, and critical spatial theory, namely *Solidarity Pedagogy*. Solidarity Pedagogy is a concept or a transformative theory of action that describes the pedagogical and spatial act of learning to connect with and be in solidarity with others, as a means of understanding and supporting each other, deconstructing and eventually redrawing the lines that divide us.

The concept of Solidarity Pedagogy emerged through a theoretical exploration of ideas about how different individuals and social groups that are situated across the world can cooperate. Following this, the thesis recognizes the fundamental role of space in shaping consciousness and social relations, and therefore, its capacity to shape how we learn. For this reason, the thesis goes further to explore the concept of Solidarity Pedagogy in space, and questions how solidarity can be learned, and eventually practised, through spatial acts. The discussion then moves on to the context and space of Cyprus, where I contend that spatial acts for Solidarity Pedagogy need to encompass the crossing of the physical border, in order to transform established relational ones. Practising Solidarity Pedagogy in space means to develop practices that invite the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities to participate, cooperate and co-create, and have the capacity to transcend relations. Through the act of crossing the geopolitical border of Cyprus, new shared spaces can be produced: spaces where different individuals and groups can connect meaningfully, at least temporarily, by cooperating and co-creating. These shared spaces are what I will later term *Interplaces*.

Following this theoretical framing, the same research question is then addressed through the empirical study, which is informed by an exploratory journey (Chapter 4) and develops through the in-depth analysis of two case studies (Chapter 6 and 7). Whereas Chapter 4 reconnoiters a range of bicomunal, learning or awareness-raising initiatives crossing the island's physical border, Chapters 7 and 8 investigate in detail two cultural festivals.<sup>2</sup> In doing so, these two chapters test the concept of Solidarity Pedagogy in practice, and at the same time, explore how practice can inform back the idea of 'learning solidarity'.

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'bicomunal' refers to the fact that initiatives were organized by groups/organizations from both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, and/or were addressed to both the communities.

In particular, through a focus on the festivals, the thesis questions the role of both *joyfulness* and *criticality* in encouraging interaction and connectedness between individuals and groups and in imagining tangible spatial practices for Solidarity Pedagogy. Finally, the analysis to socio-spatial production of the two festivals allows clarification of the role of joyful-critical spatial practices as a methodology to pursue pedagogy of solidarity.

The empirical work was initiated with the exploratory journey with the aim to be developed as an inter-border trajectory, as a way to trace different bi-communal initiatives and connections that take place in both the sides of Cyprus. However, follow-up reflections led to decide that for the second stage of the empirical work, the in-depth research, I should be more open and focus on exploring spatial practices that can provide tangible ways to facilitate interactions and connections, either between the Turkish and Greek communities, or between other social groups, and with either having or not to cross the border.

**Objective 2:** To use knowledge gained from the research to inform future practice and policy recommendations.

- **What recommendations can be inferred from these cases, for a future practice and policy towards transforming perceptions of the other, and foster meaningful relationships between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities in Cyprus?**

In response to this question, the research utilizes the insights which emerged from the previous sections to advance a set of suggestions and recommendations for future practice and policies, included in Chapters 8 and 9. These chapters articulate a broad set of values of Solidarity Pedagogy, and a particular set of guidelines for facilitating Interplaces in Cyprus, through combining critical and joyful activities.

Recommendations are related to non-formal learning ways and pedagogical processes (that hopefully can be adopted as formal) that can facilitate the emergence or strengthening of connections across differences. They are addressed to practitioners of different fields — academia, activism, cultural and spatial studies/initiatives — and invite them to reflect upon and improve existing practice. More broadly, these recommendations are addressed to anyone who is interested in contributing to social change, community building and conflict transformation through culture, learning, creation and joyfulness.

## Research Strategy

The research design has been shaped by the foregrounding of social sciences alongside feminist thinking on empirical research, shaping a participatory approach to knowledge production. For the purpose of this, a multi-method strategy has been adopted shaped by combining multi-sited ethnography, case study and auto-ethnography; also, by utilizing situated forms of data documentation, visual and textual, including participant and non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, reflective writing, and interpretive ways of analysing data, mainly based on content analysis.

The theory development, empirical work and produced knowledge of this research have been constantly informing each other, through adopting a circular-reflective mode of work, moving from theory to the field work and reflection, and back to theory. Also, my role as researcher followed this mode of work by being interchangeably an observer and participant. The approach allowed flexibility and response to the specific nature of each spatial practice, regulated by auto-ethnographic techniques that ensured constant self-reflection. Moreover, the selection of case study ethnography allowed me to focus on the particularity of each case study, to examine and interpret the ways the spatial practices influence both participants and the wider context of the research, by documenting the lived experiences of the participants and the process of participation these practices.

### 01.03 Thesis outline

#### Chapter 2

The chapter elaborates on the context of Cyprus and its complex reality characterized by *a frozen conflict* and *a porous border to arrive* to the thesis position that more efforts have to be initiated so as to reinforce connectedness across the border and improve the interaction between the two sides and communities of Cyprus. The chapter includes an overview of important historical facts that led to Cyprus division, alongside facts related to the conflict transformation and peace progress.

#### Chapter 3

The chapter presents the concept and theory of action which reflects the intention to establish ways to learn to connect rather than to remain separated from each other, namely what I call *Solidarity Pedagogy*. This is explored also in space to arrive

to the argument that solidarity can be *learned and practised* in space, pointing to a different way of thinking about peacebuilding in Cyprus.

## Chapter 4

Following the conceptual framework, this chapter moves from theory to practice to describe my exploratory journey in Cyprus among a range of spatial practices. The exploration arrives to a number of interesting elements and pointers that help to start thinking more tangibly practising Solidarity Pedagogy in space, and select two case studies for in-depth research.

## Chapter 5

The chapter explains the way this research was designed, and the specific methods that were used for the thorough investigation of the two selected case studies, the EDON and Xarkis festivals. This is accompanied with descriptions of the challenges and necessary decisions that had to be taken at the different steps of the research process.

## Chapters 6 and 7

Chapters 6 and 7 are dedicated to the two cases, the EDON festival and Xarkis festival. Each chapter includes contextual information, details on the socio-spatial production, and analysis of the data collected related to the social interactions found. Each spatial practice adopts different *techniques* for the facilitation of connections between groups that participated in the festivals. Also, each of the case-spatial practices reveals enabling and disabling factors that allowed meaningful connections to emerge. Key-learnings help to arrive to a set of *principles* for learning to connect meaningfully with others and which could be used to practise and produce tangible Interplaces for Solidarity Pedagogy.

## Chapter 8

The chapter brings learnings from the two case-spatial practices together, leading to proposing *pedagogical guidelines* that inform future spatial practice of Solidarity Pedagogy, for learning to co-create and connect through borders.

## Chapter 9

The thesis concludes with drawing key-points from the research to arrive to contributions and implications to theory, practice and policy that entrench the

possibilities for establishing an activist, pedagogically-oriented and spatially-grounded approach to the practice of solidarity, in seeking to engage the youth in conflict transformation. Policy recommendations are followed by suggestions for further research.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 sets out the list of practitioners that have been interviewed during the exploratory stage and influenced the research. Appendix 2 includes a sample of interview transcript and its coding, from the in-depth study. Appendix 3 includes research ethics approvals, for the conduct of field-work in Cyprus.



## 02 On Cyprus division, the border and space

Following an introduction to this research, it is relevant to return to the research problematization and elaborate on the context of Cyprus, characterized by a rather complex reality of a *frozen conflict* and a *porous border*. This is combined by a review of peacebuilding initiatives that were developed in Cyprus, which in regards to promoting contact and interaction between the two communities, especially among the youth, are evaluated as not effective enough. The table below (figure 2.1) highlights the key facts related to the conflict transformation and peace progress, presented in the following sections. Based on these facts, the thesis is directed towards the position that more efforts have to be initiated so as to reinforce connectedness across the border and improve the interaction between the two sides and communities of Cyprus, pointing towards the need to establish ways of *learning to connect with each other*.

Conflict Transformation - Peace Progress	
1489-1571	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cyprus part of the Venetian Republic</li></ul>
1571-1878	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cyprus a province of the Ottoman Empire</li></ul>
1878-1959	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cyprus a colony of Britain</li></ul>
1955-59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cypriots' fight against British colonizers claiming their independence, which ends with the victory of Cypriots</li></ul>
1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cyprus is established as a state, namely the Republic of Cyprus, as a co-shared administration between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities</li></ul>
1963-1974	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The 1st president of the Republic suggests a number of amendments on the constitution</li><li>• An inter-communal fighting sparks killing two Turkish Cypriots (and more followed)</li><li>• UN forces arrive on the island</li><li>• A ceasefire line is drawn, namely the 'Green Line' as a physical border so as to regulate the clashes between the communities</li><li>• Turkish Cypriots are forced to live in enclaves</li></ul>

- Turkish Cypriots withdraw from the co-shared administration of the Republic
- Greek Cypriots establish the National Guard

1964

- The first peace plan was introduced, namely the 'Acheson Plan' which is not adopted

1974

- Turkish military forces initiate a coup d'état and a few days later invade Cyprus leading to a war that ends with Turkey conquering 36.2% of the island

1977-9

- The High-level agreement 77-79 was signed within the framework of peace process

1979

- A joint Master Plan for Nicosia is put forward as a 'bi-communal' project

1981

- Nicosia Master Plan: 'Phase A'

1983

- Establishment of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus that administrates the northern area of Cyprus

1984

- Nicosia Master Plan: 'Phase B' begins

1992-4

- The 'Ghali set of Ideas' were proposed within the conflict resolution framework

2003

- Opening of the first check-point at Ledra street within Nicosia district
- Nicosia Master Plan: 'Phase C' begins

2004

- Accession of the Republic of Cyprus in the EU
- The 'Annan Plan' was proposed for conflict resolution, and put forward for public voting, which did not meet Cypriots' agreement

2005

- Launch of the 'Green Line Regulation' for smoother movement of people, goods and services through the border, from and towards Northern Cyprus

2011

- Establishment of the 'Home for Cooperation' as a meeting place for the two communities, placed within the buffer zone of Nicosia

2017

- The last round of negotiations takes place at Crans-Montana of Switzerland, when a historic opportunity for conflict resolution was missed

2018

- The latest check-points open in Deryneia and Lefka within Famagusta district

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Figure 2.1. Pashia, E. (2020). An outline of the key facts that led in setting up the status quo of division, as well as facts related to conflict's and border's transformation alongside peace progress steps.

## 02.01 Cyprus' Division: a frozen conflict

As mentioned earlier, the thesis focuses on the country of Cyprus, the population of which includes two main communities, the Greek Cypriots (GCs) and Turkish Cypriots (TCs), who were living peacefully until the years of British colony when this started to change dramatically. The chapter presents a number of significant facts that marked the recent history of Cyprus and its communities, following its independence from the British colony and its establishment as the Republic of Cyprus.

Not long after the establishment of the state, the instrumentalization of the socio-spatial division began, leading to the commonly known 'Cyprus problem'. After the first GC President of the Republic of Cyprus, President-Archbishop Makarios, suggested amendments of the constitution, something which the TCs strongly objected to, an incident of "inter-communal fighting" in 1963, resulted in the killing of two TCs (Theodoulou, 2016a: para.8). Consequently, a ceasefire line was literally drawn by a British military officer with a green chinagraph pencil, which is still known until today as the 'Green Line' (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009). This also meant the physical establishment of the border with the first arrival of the United Nations as a peacekeeping force on the island (UNFICYP, 2018), in order to "halt hostilities and save lives" since killings during the 1960s had been significantly increased and "widely interpreted as a threat to the Turkish-speaking Cypriot community as a whole" (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009: 133).

It later became evident that the intercommunal clashes were used as a pretext for initiating a war and division plans. This included the displacement of thousands of

TCs to live in specific, restricted areas known as “enclaves” to signify the separation of the two communities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006: para. 10). Also, the TCs participating in the government withdrew from the co-shared administration (Theodoulou, 2016a). This left the administration of the government only to the GC members who also established the National Guard, a compulsory military service supported by Greek troops (Ibid.).

The years that followed, that is, 1963-1974, brought about dramatic changes that lead, finally, to a war and to the division of the island and of the two communities. After a withdrawn first attempt by Turkey to invade Cyprus in 1963, armed attacks took place by the GC National Guard against TC enclaves (Theodoulou, 2016a). Also, the cooperation between the Greek military Junta with the leader of EOKA was reinforced, after Archbishop Makarios, abandoned completely the idea that the Junta and EOKA wanted, that a final resolution to the conflict would be the *union of Cyprus with Greece*, proclaiming instead that the independence of Cyprus should be maintained (Ibid.). At this period of time EOKA became a “paramilitary instrument of right-wing Greek-speaking Cypriots” (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009: 127), and was renamed ‘EOKA B’ to join forces with the Greek Junta against Makarios, who was believed to have “betrayed” the vision for the union of Cyprus with Greece (Theodoulou, 2016a).

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of July in 1974, the Greek Junta, using Greek officers of the Cypriot National Guard, carried out a military coup d’état against Makarios which forced him to escape to London. A few days later, on the 20<sup>th</sup> July, Turkey making use of its rights as a guarantor power, invaded Cyprus with the pretext of protecting the Turkish Cypriots from possible acts of violence against them. Supportive to Turkey’s stance was the fact that the new President appointed by the Greek Junta, Nikos Sampson, was feared by the TCs as he was associated with murder of TC civilians (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009; Theodoulou, 2016a).

This invasion sparked a military war that ended with Turkey conquering 36.2% of the island on the Northern side, over the course of two phases; the invasion on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July and another almost a month later, on the 14<sup>th</sup> August. Consequently, after the war, the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, which was spread over the whole of the country since its establishment in 1960, was restricted only to the Southern side. From 1983, the Northern side of Cyprus has formed a self-declared state, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), meaning that it is not formally

recognized as a state, apart from Turkey, as according to the UN Security Council it is “legally invalid” (Theodoulou, 2016a: para. 40).

The impact of war was marked on the ground by drawing two ceasefire lines that defined an area between North and South Cyprus, a borderland called ‘the buffer zone’ marking the division of the country (Theodoulou, 2016b). Also, the borderland marked the separation of the two communities of Cyprus. Specifically, the heavy militarisation of the island that followed the war was accompanied with yet another even greater displacement of people, this time from both communities. About 160,000 GCs were forced to move to the south and likewise, about 40,000 TCs living in the south were forced to move to the north, resulting in Cypriots becoming refugees within their own country (BBC news, no date). In addition to these forced demographic changes, a Turkish military human force arrived to serve in the Northern areas while also the Turkish government forced Turk civilians, who had been living by that time in Turkey, to settle and continue their life in Northern Cyprus (PIO, 2011).

Currently, the overall population on the island is estimated at 892,000, with the GCs in the south forming the larger group with 672,800 inhabitants (75.4 % of the total). Of these, about 500 are living in the north of the island — including Maronites, Latins and Armenians (PIO, 2011). In the north, TCs are estimated at around 88,700 (9.8 %), which is nearly half of the population that used to be there in 1974 — it was about 116,000 (18.4 %) out of the island’s population then, that is, 572,000. Turkish settlers are estimated at about 160,000, indicative of the continuous transfers from Turkey in north Cyprus and which the RoC considers as “negative...on the search for a solution to the Cyprus problem” (Ibid.: 18).

As far as conflict resolution negotiations are concerned, peace plans were suggested even right after the very first clashes in 1963, as mentioned earlier, but none was materialized (Theodoulou, 2016a). The first plan was proposed by the USA, the well-known ‘Acheson plan’, named after the USA former Secretary, Dean Acheson, (Ibid.). Following this, what would be named as the ‘High Level Agreement 1977 and 79’ between the GC leader Makarios (and later President S. Kyprianou) and the TC leader R. Denktash would become a foundational framework of negotiations for resolution and the basis of peace plans in the years that followed (Ibid.).

The High-Level Agreement describes the resolution aftermath as Cyprus became

“a bicomunal federal republic, with a central federal government empowered to safeguard the unity of the country” (Cyprus Mail, 2016: para.2). Together with the agreement, what is included within the United Nations General Assembly and United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Cyprus, frames and encourages the intercommunal negotiation processes until today (Security Council Report, 2019).

However, among the following plans that were created the only one that was managed to be put forward for public vote until today was the ‘Annan Plan’, which did not meet the agreement of the majority of Cypriots, while negotiation rounds that followed have not been fruitful. In fact, the latest round of negotiations in Crans-Montana between the GC representative N. Anastasiades and TC representative M.Akinci, where despite the significant progress that was achieved at some point, resulted in another deadlock while the peace negotiations have been halted since then. This has been a disappointing moment for the conflict progress, characterized by the UN General Secretary, Guterres, as “a historic opportunity [that] was missed” (Psyllides, 2017: para. 2). Inevitably, the fear among communities that a permanent division is around the corner has been intensified as the conflict with no other outbursts of violence since 1963, remains unresolved and frozen until today.

## 02.02 Border transformations: from concrete to a porous line

The discussion continues with a review of the transformations that the established physical border underwent and consequently changed it from a concrete to a partly accessible, or borrowing from Stavrides’s (2007) metaphor into a ‘porous’ border that allows crossings to and connections with the *other* side. Although the metaphor was used to think of the perimeter or the boundary of a community, a subjectivity, a culture or a group, it helps to transfer it into the physical space to explain the “double nature” of the geopolitical border in Cyprus, after it changed; that is “a porous membrane, [which] separates while connecting” (Ibid.:2).

To begin with, since the end of war in 1974, the buffer zone area between the ceasefire lines of the Cyprus National Guard, and of the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot forces has been surveilled by the UN forces (UNFICYP, 2018). The buffer zone runs across the island and horizontally from East to West, dividing the country in two parts, Northern and Southern Cyprus (figure 2.2).

The zone divides the capital city of Cyprus, Nicosia, in two parts, a fact that records it as the last divided capital city of Europe (Nicosia Municipality, no date). Also, a part



Figure 2.2. Pashia, E. (2019). Cyprus divided by the borderland.

of the buffer zone surrounds the village, Kokkina, within the Nicosia district, on the East side of Cyprus. The zone is also disrupted by the British bases in Dhekelia within the Larnaca district, in the Western area of Cyprus. The width of the buffer zone fluctuates between a few metres and a few kilometres (UNFICYP, 2018). Therefore, the buffer zone area covers even whole villages with around 10,000 people living or working in them (Ibid.). However, large areas of the buffer zone have been left untouched since 1974, with nature taking over, enriching the flora and fauna with different species (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the buffer zone area is also marked in the physical space with roadblocks, which are approached differently at the two sides. Interestingly, apart from guard rooms, on the north side a more permanent approach is used for barriers including for instance concrete walls or metallic doors, while on the south side a more temporary approach is indicated with the use of barrels, soil sacks or barbed wire (figures 2.3-4).

Barriers reflect the fact that the two sides had been inaccessible to each other since the division was officially established. However, the fact changed after 2003, when the TC leader R. Denktash made the historical decision to remove the first barricades. In 2008, the fifth one was replaced by a check-point in Nicosia city centre, known as the 'Ledra Street check-point'. Since then people are allowed to move from one side to the other, while more check-points have been established across the borderland within Nicosia, Larnaca and Famagusta districts, with the most recent one in 2018



Figure 2.3. Pashia, E. (2019). A road situated within a neighbourhood of the Northern Nicosia city, blocked by the borderland and a metallic door.



Figure 2.4. Pashia, E. (2019). A road situated within a neighbourhood of the Southern Nicosia city, blocked by the borderland and barrels.



near Deryneia and Lefka within Ammochostos district (figures 2.5-7).

In addition to the opening of the check-points across the borderland, it was necessary to improve law regulations for a smoother crossing and movement through the border. This was especially reinforced after the Republic of Cyprus entered the European Union (EU) in 2004, when formalities to cross to and from the north were relaxed, making the physicality of the borderland even more porous. Specifically, the European Union proposed the 'Green Line Regulation-GLR' (Ministry of Finance, 2006-2020) in order to address, firstly, legal issues regarding the movement and crossing of people, services and goods through the border, towards and from the north. Secondly, to address the fact that on the north side the EU laws are suspended until a resolution comes, as it constitutes a non-recognized state. Thus, in order for the movement to be allowed, the areas in the north are referred to as "those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control" (Ibid.: para. 2). This had also a political perspective behind it where the EU aimed to allow the TCs to enjoy benefits of the EU membership to some extent — instead of excluding them completely due to them living in the northern area that is excluded from the EU laws (Ersözler, 2019).

The abovementioned shape a complex combination of conditions in Cyprus, where despite the frozen conflict that has been on-going and unresolved for more than forty years now, the borderland has been gradually transforming into a porous border, allowing crossings and connections between the two sides and communities.

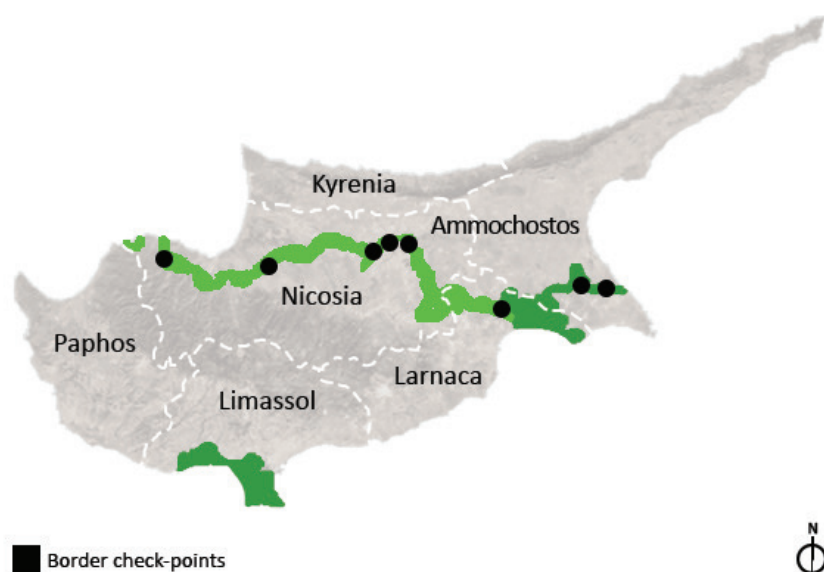


Figure 2.5. Pashia, E. (2019). The porous border with check-points across, allowing movement from one side to the other.



Figure 2.6. Homeboy Media News. (2008). The Ledra Street barricade in Nicosia before its demolition in 2003. View from the south side.



Figure 2.7 HomeboyMediaNews. (2008). The day when the Ledra street barricade was demolished. View from the north side.

Such conditions raise simultaneously challenges and opportunities for the future of communal relationships and even the resolution to the conflict.

Different pointers that are highlighted in the following section direct the focus of the research towards the opportunities that possibly already exist but need to be enhanced, while considering at the same time the challenges that might be entailed when working through and over the border.

### **02.03 Peacebuilding through space**

Different initiatives that aimed to build the ground towards peace started right after the division of the island with formal negotiations for resolution as seen earlier in the text. Although there have not been changes at the formal political level, other initiatives of conflict transformation have been put forward in space including the re-development of post-war Nicosia city, the opening of crossing-points across the borderland that allow movement from one side to the other, and the establishment of a shared space within the buffer zone area of Nicosia for communities to meet. Nevertheless, according to recent researchers although one would expect improvement of the interaction between the two communities and sides, this is not achieved yet (Ersözer, 2019; Ker-Lindsay, 2019; Ioannou & Sonan, 2019; Tselika, 2019; Psaltis & Yucel, cited in Aygin, 2018). Upon this, evaluations highlight how division has impacted the way the local political cultures and educational approaches and structures have been developed, which consequently prevents the establishment of peace consciousness and culture, especially among the youth, indicated in the low number of interactions between the two communities and sides (Ioannou & Sonan, 2019; Ioannou & Charalambous, 2017; Christodoulou et al., 2017; Charalambous, 2014; Charalambous et al., 2013; Orinos, 2013;).

Therefore, in order for peace culture and consciousness to be achieved among the youth, the thesis supports that it requires more efforts that aim to perpetuate the understanding that peace is important to be established, and not only that, in order for peace to be achieved, it requires both the communities, and even more of the youths, being actively engaged in the process.

#### **Initiatives**

A notable initiative that started not long after the division is the bicomunal project that aimed to reconstruct the city of Nicosia, namely the Nicosia Master Plan (NMP), which was carried out under the supervision and with funding given by

the UN bodies. For this, practitioners and experts from both the communities were brought together, while the implementation started even before the opening of the first crossing-point in Nicosia.

The aim of the project was to revitalize the local economies in the northern and southern centres of Nicosia, through the preservation of smaller projects focused on the cultural heritage and the buffer zone, and a large-scale pedestrianization at the heart of the old centre that moves between shopping areas that were left abandoned after the war in 1974 (Petridou, 2003). The implementation would be completed in two stages and focused on the city centre, while during the beginning of the process planning included two future scenarios for the greater area of Nicosia, with and without the buffer zone (figure 2.8).

The NMP, as described in one of the Nicosia Municipality's publications then, was enthusiastically accredited for its contribution to peace due to the opportunity that was given to both the communities "to work together to a non-political manner ... for the overall well-being of all Cypriots" (The Nicosia Sewerage Project, 1995:10). However, through the perspective of a local architect and urbanist, Zinovia Foka, the fact that a non-political approach was "an essential component of a peace strategy" met critique due to the fact that detachment from any political frame of reference in peace and reconciliation strategies such as these redevelopment projects might be related to the reluctance of communities to participate in past bicomunal cultural events (Foka, 2015a:10). Also, since specific agendas of the involved actors were those that determined the outcome of decisions in these projects, with evident distortions during informal discussions, the projects cannot be seen as indicative examples of 'collaborative planning' between the two communities (Abu-Orf, 2005: 54), but rather as a 'top-down' process of planning (Foka, 2015b: 54).

On the other hand, the reconstruction project seems to have achieved economic exchanges between the two local economies, evident in the mobility of people that is mainly by tourists and shoppers (Yorucu et al., 2010). However, with the improvement of local economies of the two sides being the main aim of the project at that time, substantial improvement of the relations of the two communities was of a second importance. Specifically, the revitalization of Nicosia city included the reconstruction and redevelopment of its historical centre, and more importantly, its historical buildings situated within. The centre then, which was important to be re-developed so as to improve the "image of the city" (Petridou, 2003:1), offered a "rebranded product

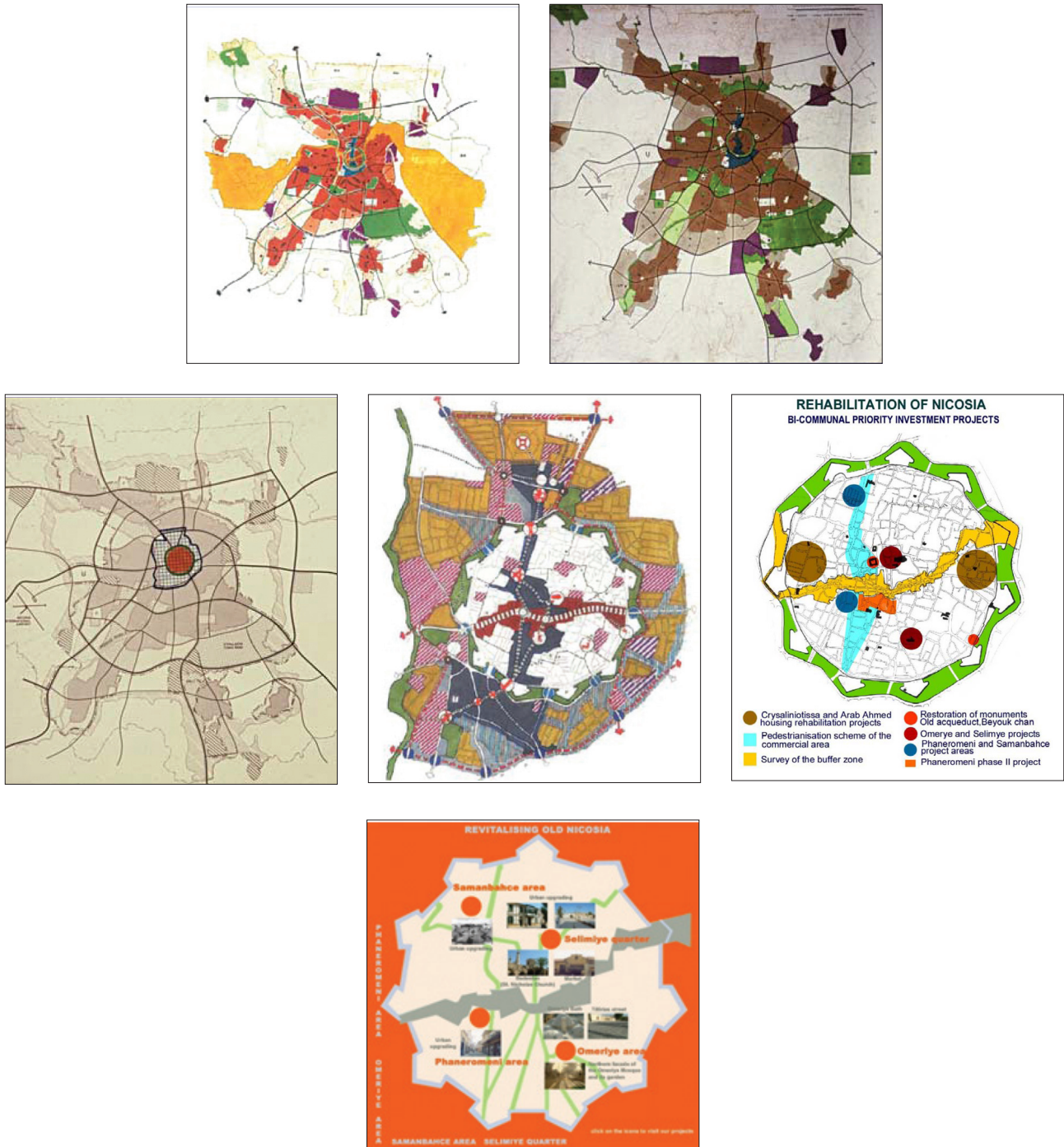


Figure 2.8. UNECE. (no date). The Nicosia Master Plan. (a'-top): 'A' phase: a future plan for Greater Nicosia, including two scenarios, with and without a buffer zone. (b'-middle): 'B' phase: detailed plan for the City Centre including schemes for the Central Business District and small-scale twin priority projects within the Walled City. (c'-bottom): 'C' phase: "New Vision for the core of Nicosia" including evaluation and reassessment process, with small-scale projects of rehabilitation.

for cultural consumption” (Foka, 2015a: 14). Subsequently, “private investment” would also be attracted and secure “the Plan’s viability” (Ibid. :9).

Following the reconstruction project and the opening of two crossing-points in Nicosia city, another initiative was established in the physical space of the buffer zone, within the Nicosia district. The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR), a multi-communal, non-profit and non-governmental organization, conceptualized the establishment of a shared space, namely the Home for Cooperation (HFC). This was meant to be a “community centre” (HomeForCooperation, 2015: para. 11) aiming to promote “intercommunal cooperation” through establishing an “educational centre” in the buffer zone (Ibid.: para. 6).

By 2011, the AHDR managed to establish the HFC building within the Buffer Zone near the Ledra Palace check-point of Nicosia centre (HomeForCooperation, 2015), and to become a meeting point for ordinary citizens and bicomunal platforms (figures 2.9-10).

The HFC is considered a form of “institutional activism...promoting cooperation and peace” (Foka, 2015b: 52) and aims to collect economic sources for itself in order to host activities that would give the two communities the opportunity to interact. It is also argued that this initiative alters the divisive character of the buffer zone and instead it is changed “into a bridge” (Ibid.: 53). It is claimed that the HFC indicates one of the “examples of instructive bicomunal activism” that escapes “capital and power” and transforms the buffer zone into a space of shared imaginaries that claim the right to its “re-appropriation” (Sadri & Sadri, 2012: 6-8). At the same time, the HFC constitutes an “infrastructure of peace” as a physical point where communities can meet (Till et al., 2013) or in other words “a third space for people from both sides who choose to go there knowing they will meet the ‘Other’ for a cup of coffee and conversation” (Hadjipavlou, 2012:5).

While the reconstruction of Nicosia’s historical centre was taking place, the opening of check-points occurred in 2003, and the entrance of the Republic of Cyprus in 2004, thus before the opening of the Home for Cooperation in 2011. Despite these changes and the Green Line Regulation that would resolve legal issues about the movement of people, services and goods, recent studies show that there have not been significant interactions between the two sides and communities, indicated in the low number of crossings (Christodoulou et al., 2017; Psaltis & Yucil, cited in Aygin 2018), and especially among the youth related to the latest setback with



Figure 2.9. HomeforCooperation. (2013). The Home for Cooperation building within the buffer zone area.



Figure 2.10 Home for Cooperation. (2011). Events outside the Home for Cooperation on its opening day.

negotiations for conflict resolution halting (Ker-Lindsay, 2019).

Interestingly, a study conducted in 2017 within groups of younger and older TCs and GCs, titled “Inter-group contact and willingness to live together again in Cyprus”, reveals that out of all the participants “only 33% of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots have contact with the other community” (Psaltis & Yucil, cited in Aygin 2018: para. 2). Also, the younger group of TCs hold the majority in “often or very often contact” with GCs, while the older group of TCs are reported to have made less contact effort in relation to the same age-group in GCs (Ibid.: para. 6). It seems that elder TCs only “regularly talk to Greek Cypriots” which reflects the high percentage of their prejudice towards the GCs (Ibid.: para. 7).

Looking specifically at crossings, the Green Line Regulation (GLR) was going to encourage economic activity and exchanges across the divide and by extension, it could lead to the development of social interactions, potentially contributive to a smoother reunification (Ersözer, 2019). However, as recent data shows “the movement of goods across the Green Line has overall remained very low”, indicative of the fact that “there is no concrete evidence of economic interdependence and integration between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities” (Ibid.: 28). Likewise, services including utilities (sewerage, water, electricity, telecommunications), transportation (haulage, passenger), tourism and other small-scale services present “exceptionally low and very limited” movement although it is believed there is a “fertile ground for economic cooperation” (Ibid.: 32). Regarding the movement of people, there has been a dramatic decrease since the first years of the border opening, even though it might be the highest movement in relation to goods and services (Ibid.) Although this could be perceived as a positive sign, the opening of crossings did not improve the “integration” of one community with the other as crossings mostly occur for “touristic trips and consumer-related activities” (Ibid.: 37).

It seems, therefore, that although a number of check-points have opened across the borderland, they are not effective as one would expect.

## **Evaluations in relation to the youth consciousness and relations**

Despite these efforts to encourage interaction between the communities, the long-lasting norm of a frozen conflict and a porous border inevitably continue to leave the two sides/communities significantly separated in all aspects of life. Specifically, as studies show, the impact of division on the local political culture



and educational approaches and structures, prevents the establishment of peace consciousness, especially among the youth, and thus, the engagement with each other in view of cultivating a culture of peace in Cyprus (Ioannou & Sonan, 2019; Ioannou & Charalambous, 2017; Christodoulou et al., 2017; Charalambous, 2014; Charalambous et al., 2013; Orinos, 2013;). In order to reverse this, studies also recommend that it is important to encourage more connections across the border, so as to combat suspicion and mistrust through interaction and cooperation (Ibid.).

To begin with, the outcome of the latest presidential elections (2018) in the South part of Cyprus revealed a general distance and unwillingness of the GC youth to actively engage in efforts for bringing social change — whether this is about changing a lifestyle affected by the capitalist economy and/or the economic crisis and/or the division. The reason for the youth's disinterest to engage seems to be the inability of traditional forms of political engagement to trigger consciousness and awareness. Specifically, the elections were characterized by the political apathy of the GC youth, reflected in the increased numbers of absenteeism and by the fact that three quarters of the young voters would not register their right to vote (Kades, 2018; Euro News, 2018). Despite this fact, a recent study showed that the young GC voters consider elections as a powerful tool for change, which contradicts the increased absenteeism over the last presidential elections (Christodoulou et al., 2017).

A study carried out (with GC participants) in 2017 sheds light on the matter of political apathy and disinterest to politics with the most significant finding that the youth's "political disaffection and distrust" is related to the disappointment for their current conditions of living, including the increased unemployment and insecurity linked to the global economic crisis (Ioannou & Charalambous, 2017: 2). However, in contrast to the European scene, the precarious living due to globalization forced the reaction of the youth against it and into the evolution of new and more radical forms of political engagement across Europe that challenge "conventional" politics as they are currently inadequate to respond to people's concerns (Spannring, 2008: 44), the youth in Cyprus does not react at all (Ioannou & Charalambous, 2017). Specifically, the research emphasizes that while there has been a significant increase of unemployment and austerity measures in Southern Cyprus, like elsewhere in Europe, at the same time there has not been a mass reaction to it (Ioannou & Charalambous, 2017). This contradicts the fact that the young GC participants view demonstrations as another form of action (Ibid.). It also reveals the inability of local

organizations to engage a wider audience, indicated in dramatic instances when demonstrations were held against announced austerity measures, but with a small number of demonstrators (Ibid.).

The study moves on to link this with the public's general disinterest in politics due to its disappointment with politicians and politics in Cyprus, as they are characterized by "incompetence and corruption" (Ioannou & Charalambous, 2017: 10). Also, the decreased participation in traditional forms of political engagement especially among the youth (Orinos, 2013), also characterizing the youth across countries of the European Union (Sloam, 2016), in Cyprus is related to the lack of trust in institutions (Ioannou & Charalambous, 2017; Christodoulou et al., 2017).

The observations about the GC youth's non-engagement in traditional politics are associated with the political culture of Cyprus that is characterized by traditionalism, fatalism and clientelism (Charalambous, 2014), and party-led politics. Consequently, it is a political culture that reproduces perceptions in the youth that associate "politicisation...with involvement in party politics" (Christodoulou et al., 2017: 383). At the same time, the youth seem to have limited awareness, interest and concern about the Cyprus problem as there is limited understanding of the significant positive impact that the resolution of the conflict can bring in their personal living conditions, even in economic terms (Ibid.).

Building on the aforementioned, the youth's decreased consciousness regarding the importance of reunification, seems to be related to the separated educational structures, as well as educational approaches. In the south, critical views of the youth characterize education as "superficial" and in need of reforms "towards the cultivation of 'critical thinking'" while at the same time education seems to be determined by the strong political culture constituted by the antagonistic views between left and right wings and therefore, the educators' personal political views and teaching approaches (Christodoulou et al., 2017: 381-383).

Specifically, GC educators of secondary education in Southern Cyprus show preference in decontextualized teaching of peace meaning they are detached from students' own experiences. This seems related to their own vulnerability in the sense that they consider themselves as victims of human rights violation due to the war and division, and thus they feel more comfortable in teaching peace-related subjects using more "neutral" humanistic interpretation of values instead of contextualizing them in Cyprus reality with which students could possibly relate more (Charalambous

et al., 2013:78). An indicative instance of educators' resistances are past attempts of the Ministry of Education related to the re-articulation of formal discourse when referring to the encouragement of bicomunal relations as "rapprochement" to instead refer to as encouraging the "culture of peaceful coexistence" (Ibid.: 72). However, in this case it is believed that resistances to accept the changes in the formal discourses of education establishment were also associated with the fact they were suggested by a (past) leftist government showing the way personal political positions of educators define education in the south (Ibid.).

What seems to be common on both sides is the fact that education perpetuates ethnocentric views, a consequence related to establishing two separated educational structures (Ioannou & Sonan, 2019). For instance, in the south, due the fact that the curriculum has been traditionally dominated by and attached to "Hellenocentrism", it has subsequently been creating negative perceptions of the Turks when explaining the Cyprus problem (Charalambous et al., 2013: 73). This results in perpetuating representations of "hostile otherness" between the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots as well as Turks and Turkish-Cypriots (Ibid.: 72).

It is inevitable then that such systemic approaches perpetuate biases among the youth about the other community, limited awareness on the betterment that reunification can bring and by extension, increase the lack of peace consciousness, and the distance from political engagement, even in the traditional forms discussed earlier. Against this background, and following pointers from local scholars and personal experiences, this thesis takes the stance that it is imperative to work towards a different direction that can contribute to what formal practices cannot at the moment. That is a direction that aims to improve connectedness and consciousness across the border and communities by establishing everyday practices of learning to connect and interact with others, and understand that it is imperative to take actions for peace together.



## 03 On Transformation, Space and Co-creation

The chapter reflects the first step in the research process (discussed in detail in Methodology, Chapter 5, section 05.03 *Research design*) in order to address the first objective; to utilize insights from critical theories and existing practices in Cyprus, to propose a new theory of transformative action to inform spatial practice with guidelines on learning how to connect with the other community, and with the ability to encourage connections between them through and across the geopolitical border in Cyprus. The objective emanates from the need to critique and transform the divisive norm of the physical border into one that relates and connects, and re-imagine established relationships and perceptions about the other community. This reflects the fact that I look at the partially accessible border in Cyprus as a relational one and thus, as an opportunity to encourage physical connections and new relational ties between its two communities, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. <sup>1</sup>Desirably, this will be expanded to create and improve relational ties between any differing social groups or communities.

As already mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, this new transformative theory of action emphasizes the importance of *learning* to connect to each other rather than to remain separated. I call this theory of action *Solidarity Pedagogy*, which is explored also through space showing that solidarity can be *learned and practised* in space. Taking this into the context and space of Cyprus, practising solidarity means to facilitate *connections* between the two communities, through crossing the geopolitical border of Cyprus. These connections can produce new *shared spaces* where the communities cooperate and co-create, at least temporarily; I call these shared spaces *Interplaces*.

To develop the concepts, I turned to a number of practice-based traditions of critical theories including critical pedagogy, feminist praxis, and critical spatial theory that form a lens through which to examine *divisions* and *connections* across other relational borders than the one in the context of Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities' segregation in Cyprus and are generated by class, ethnicity and gender. These lines of thought, inform an activist, pedagogically-oriented and spatially-grounded approach to the practice of solidarity, in seeking to transform social divisions. Although constituting different theoretical positions, it was the

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on the communities' relational border, see Chapter 1.

interesting intersections between them that helped to see tangible possibilities, and more importantly, to reinforce my hope and aspiration that peace in Cyprus is possible.

I contend that Solidarity Pedagogy offers a different way of thinking about peacebuilding in Cyprus. Also, that practising solidarity in space opens up ways to explore forms of activism and civic pedagogy that combine elements of critique with joyfulness and encourage connectedness and collectiveness. Interestingly, establishing a repetitive practice of solidarity, then, could *transform* fixed knowledge about and perceptions of the *other*, norms of living separated from each other, and potentially, social relations.

### 03.01 Solidarity (Pedagogy)

#### In Critical pedagogy

- **Solidarity as cognitive crossing, a radical posture of love, empathy and understanding**

The notion of solidarity is central in discussions about the role of critical pedagogy in the political aim to generate social change. In fact, it highlights that change is possible within oppressive conditions of capitalist living that disempower one's capacity as well as they isolate one from another. Critical pedagogy supports that change or transformation can be achieved through firstly, knowledge co-production as a way to empower one's consciousness and will to take action towards change; and secondly, through social solidarity as a way to develop social relations. In view of the context of Cyprus, ideas of critical pedagogy help to think social solidarity as a way to connect its two communities and discover their own way to engage in building peace.

The discussion draws on the ideas of Paulo Freire, a Brazilian philosopher and educator and most importantly, a leading writer on critical pedagogy and informal practices of adult literacy, influenced by ideas of Plato, modern Marxism, post-Marxism, and anti-colonial thinking.

Freire (1997) contextualizes the discussions on empowerment and liberation within the fight against capitalism and social divisions, for which solidarity can reverse its effect. Capitalism is a way of living that reproduces oppression, based on the economic exploitation of the poor and underprivileged people (Freire, 1997). It also reproduces discrimination and individualism, by isolating one from the other and

teaching to prioritize personal needs and situations (Ibid.). In other words, capitalism led to the de-humanization of people and a mode of living *without* each other, that detrimentally impacts both individuals' capacity and their social relations (Ibid.).

Instead, within a democratic way of living, one is envisioned to be solidary to other's differences, needs and concerns, shaping what Freire conceptualizes as "*unity within diversity...between people, groups, and ethnicities*" (1997: 45). Differently, this is imagined as an anti-discriminatory way of living with others based on *collectiveness and acceptance of difference*.

Interestingly, in one of his most influential pieces, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* solidarity is associated and presented as the force that guides actions of empowerment and support of others. This goes further to inform the pedagogy of the oppressed that positions solidarity as a guiding force that aims to engage and support the oppressed in their own struggle for self-liberation. More importantly, critical pedagogy helps to think of solidarity as a force that produces acts of love towards the others, while the act of *practising solidarity is simultaneously a practice of cognitive crossing*: it requires for one to "enter into the situation of those with whom one is solidary, denoting a radical posture" (Freire, 1996:31-32). Put differently, to be solidary to each other teaches to understand, empathize and support them, to stand *with* them in their own everyday struggles for change.

• **Transformation as thinking differently, meaning critically (to eventually act differently)**

Freire's solidary stance towards those who find themselves oppressed by these conditions, leads him to do-something-about-it. He materializes his vision and political aim for the re-humanization of the world and thus, for social change through empowering and transforming the oppressed, and specifically through his activist-oriented pedagogical practice. That is a direct act of social solidarity, of standing with them, which transforms pedagogical practice into another site of struggle, against capitalism and its effects, indicating its simultaneous nature of being an activist praxis towards social change.

Specifically, the empowerment or liberation of the oppressed refers to their cognitive transformation, their *consciousness*. This can be achieved through a process of *cooperation* between the two parts — learners and pedagogues — where learning simultaneously becomes a process of knowledge co-production. Specifically,

pedagogues facilitate a process of realization of learners' own situation through which they shape a new "perception" [and knowledge] about their surrounding world and their position within it (Freire, 1996: 31). These are the conditions — inequalities and complexities — that shape their oppressed reality and their objectification by the oppressor. The process ends with co-produced knowledge about the world and each one's position within, an important step towards changing embedded structures of thought.

At the same time, only realizing their oppressed situation cannot bring a change, neither is what Freire envisages as "revolutionary leadership" (1996: 51). Knowledge and awareness about their own world "must become the motivating force for liberating action" (Ibid.: 31). This means that for a revolutionary pedagogy to achieve its aim to empower the oppressed, learners must also be encouraged to go a step further, that is, to *take action on their own situation*, in order to change that situation and free themselves. Simply, to do-something-about-it once they come to realize what it is, and believe what Freire states: "I am a being who rejects the condition of being a mere object" (1997:5). Interestingly, it is what Freire conceptualizes as the *politicization* of the oppressed where a process of critical thinking will potentially lead them to take a different course of action and finally change it. In other words, they learn to move from a position of being mere objects, that is, receiving and accepting every given situation, into subjects/agents who act independently in order to create their own desired reality. This is what makes human beings differ from animals who can only adapt to the "life support" (Ibid.: 5), whereas humans have the capacity to think and consciously act, to intervene and change the world.

Critical pedagogy then, helps to think of solidarity as a way to love, empathise, understand and more importantly, to support others and engage them actively in the process of change and self-liberation. Practising solidarity constitutes at the same time a way to form social relationships viewed as active engagement in the fight to change a divisive way of living imposed by individualism and discrimination that capitalism reproduces.

Taking this into the context of Cyprus, Freire's understanding of solidarity helps to see that change might be possible to come bottom-up, from its two communities as *building our own peace* by practising solidarity with each other. Interestingly, this notion challenges formal processes of peacebuilding that are focused on resolving the conflict at the political-territorial level, leaving social reunification on the side. Instead,



discovering our own peace, implies that social solidarity can start to be put in practice without waiting for formal politics to resolve the conflict, and so to help communities start imagining and taking actions together for their future living in Cyprus.

## In Feminist praxis

### • Solidarity as collective-cooperative practice

Moving on, solidarity is also found as a central notion in feminist discussions about the need for a more inclusive world, in the political aim to generate social transformation that can be achieved through honouring the differences that exist between subjectivities. In fact, in feminist praxis, transformation can not only be achieved through developing critical abilities as Freire shows, but through also, a collective practice of critique and of knowledge production. Whereas Freire's view on solidarity suggests *cognitive crossing* as a way to develop social relationships through support, empowerment and understanding of each other, Chandra Talpade Mohanty focuses explicitly on ways to form international relationships by crossing or *overcoming geopolitical borders*. That is important in thinking solidarity developed as connection between the two communities of Cyprus, and through its geopolitical border.

Mohanty is a contemporary writer on gender, feminism, education and politics of knowledge, and part of a wider movement of post-colonial feminist thinkers who have been reflecting upon the legacy of Western [British] colonialism and capitalism.

As seen earlier through Freire, solidarity is important when facilitating transformative pedagogy in view of the re-humanization and democratization of the world. Similarly, Mohanty aspires to a more just world through limiting discriminations reproduced by capitalism and dominant Western, phallogocentric views that operate as dividing social borders. The discussions on solidarity then, are contextualized in the feminist praxis where Mohanty suggests that dividing relational borders, inevitably exist as well between female subjectivities — or oppressed in Freire's world — and that for a more inclusive feminism, practising solidarity is a catalyst.

Interestingly, in her book *Feminism without Borders: De-colonizing Theory, Practising Solidarity*, borders, boundaries and traces of British colonialism of India inform Mohanty's feminist view on engendered borders and argues that "feminism needs to be attentive to borders while learning to transcend them" (2003: 2). Borders are perpetuated by the conditions and inequalities that surround female subjectivities:

The interwoven processes of sexism, racism, and misogyny, and heterosexism [which] are an integral part of our social fabric, whenever in the world we [women] happen to be...in conjunction with regressive politics of ethnic nationalism and capitalist consumerism (Mohanty, 2003:3).

Borders are perceived as the established concrete social boundaries or dividing 'lines' that exist between "nations, races, classes, sexualities, religions, and disabilities" (Mohanty, 2003:1), embedded in discourses and knowledge, and thus in consciousness, defining views about *others* and relations with another. At the same time, dominant globalized discourses on cultures can perpetuate 'border-less' views (Ibid.: 1), that homogenize differences, and thus knowledges, that are found and produced by subjectivities situated in marginalized locations and social positions. These dividing or borderless views are perpetuated by the dominant Western and phallographic views of gender that see from the position of the *centre* (Ibid.: 1). Such views marginalize, undermine, homogenize or even conceal women's experiences through a constant "tension between the simultaneous plurality and narrowness... exclusionary and enabling" that is perpetuated even within the feminist movement (Ibid.: 1), and distract the feminist struggles towards claiming the "autonomy" and "self-determination" of women (Ibid.:5).

Therefore, in order to reverse this, it is imperative for differences and experiences to be enunciated and revealed, for "feminism without silences and exclusion" (Mohanty, 2003:1-2). A more just world then, can be achieved through making feminist praxis more inclusive or *without borders*, by practising solidarity with each other. According to Mohanty, in feminist praxis, practising solidarity describes the ability of every female to understand, accept and empathize other female positions and differences, and more importantly, to stand with them in their own struggles for change. Solidarity then, becomes a transnational collective practice, where a personal matter of concern becomes a collective one, for which subjectivities fight together as a 'we'.

*Feminist praxis without borders* is not just a radical framework, a concept that interprets, but is a *theory of action*. It suggests that for a social change to come, actions of solidarity should be taken at multiple sites of collective struggle that are situated in the everyday life, including "relational communities", "groups, networks, and movements" as well as forming knowledge production such as "writing practices" (Mohanty, 2003: 5). It implies that practising solidarity constitutes engagement in different forms of collective doing, through which communities are shaped, by just

connecting with another that itself critiques collectively the divisive way of living.

- **Transformation as doing differently, meaning collectively: networks of knowledge co-production and connectedness across geopolitical borders**

According to what has been discussed on feminist praxis, a change can be achieved through collectiveness, meaning the collective doing among differences and subjectivities from across the world that unite under the same cause. That is to critique oppressions and divisions that are shaped based on whether one is privileged or disadvantaged due to her gender, and define social relations. This signifies also connectedness across subjectivities from different positions in the world, thus over geopolitical borders.

Collectiveness and connectedness are embedded in what Mohanty suggests as *cooperative networks* that co-produce knowledge (Mohanty, 2003). The notions of cooperative networks and of knowledge co-production are both central to Mohanty's argument. Cooperative networks are systematic unions and associations between different and diverse subjectivities, that ultimately aim to bring social change by critiquing "operation, discourse, and values of capitalism and of their naturalization through neoliberal ideology and corporate culture" (Ibid.:9). Cooperative networks bring together — rather than separate — experiences of different oppressed subjectivities, located in different places. The process of cooperation constitutes and ends with the co-production of a new knowledge, undisrupted by geo-political borders and social divisions, thus inclusive.

The belief is that the process of sharing and generating knowledge together can result in lessening discriminations and increasing connections where differences/subjectivities are allowed/invited to participate in the co-production and transformation of knowledge, and therefore empower the marginalized voices and positions as well as relations between them.

In Freire's ideas on critical pedagogy, it is seen that the development of critical thinking skills includes a process of knowledge co-production between the pedagogue and the learner/oppressed. In Mohanty's ideas on feminist praxis, the notion of cooperative networks emphasises that co-producing knowledge constitutes a way of learning to form new relationships — by participating together and connecting under the same struggle for change. To put it differently, de-constructing established knowledge about cultures and subjectivities, is as well a learning process; a process of learning to

cooperate and form relationships.

Also, what feminist praxis without borders highlights, that critical pedagogy just connotes, is that an inclusive process of knowledge production constitutes simultaneous politics of difference and participation in the aim to dismantle we versus they divisions, and to eventually multiply effects of connectedness across the world. At the same time, the politics of difference and participation implies that a 'we' of associations and unions should not result into a homogenized static representation of subjectivities. Instead, the communities of struggle should be open enough to allow new differences/subjectivities to participate, and relations between communities to constantly be transformed, revisited and reshaped. It is what Mohanty calls "self-reflective collective practice" (2003: 8), to respond to the "temporality of struggle" (Ibid.: 120), subjected to the constantly changing world and in line with what Freire highlights about the importance of critical reflection.

Feminist thinking then, helps to think of *solidarity as a practice* that engages subjectivities in processes of collective critique and knowledge co-production that itself constitutes already a different course of events, a different acting social divisions defined either by gender, ethnicity or class. *Practising solidarity* then is about finding ways of "crossing through, with, and over these borders in our everyday lives" (Mohanty, 2003:2), relational but also geo-political, in order to generate new experiences of connectedness across the world. Connections or cooperative networks will help to overcome and transform divisive lines to ones that connect, and finally, reconstruct new knowledge, and new narratives that give voice to the world's different subjectivities, moving towards a more accepting and united world.

Taking ideas about *solidarity as a practice* into the context of Cyprus, helps to re-conceptualize the building of peace as practising solidarity. This means a practice of learning to connect through the geopolitical border and to form relationships anew. *Practising solidarity* could create a common ground to transform established knowledge about division — that has been perpetuating divisive relational borders — so as to transform further relations and perceptions about the *other* community, and desirably, about any *otherness*, meaning any social group or community that lives in the island.

## In Critical Spatial theory

### • Solidarity as a shared space

The discussion builds upon the aforementioned to add another perspective of solidarity. In the context of Cyprus, critical spatial theory helps to think of practising solidarity not only as cognitive crossing (as Freire suggests), or geopolitical crossing (as Mohanty suggests), but also as a spatial crossing. This is achieved through looking at the borders between differences and communities as *porous*, so able to connect with each other. This is important for imagining tangible possibilities to connect in space, and transform the relational border that currently divides the communities in Cyprus.

From Mohanty's lens, cooperative networks are important in creating a 'home' for differences, for those subjectivities finding themselves marginalized or excluded (2003). Metaphorically, cooperative networks are *shared spaces* that are shaped as connecting nodes within a network, perceived as a 'strategic space' between subjectivities (Ibid.). Similar to the understanding of a shared space of differences, Stavros Stavrides discusses about what he calls 'threshold' spaces between different cultures and communities (2016). That is a shared space that can be shaped in the in-between of subjectivities, cultures and groups, which helps to transform the view on differences and borders; *from borders that divide, into borders that relate*. Stavros Stavrides is a Greek contemporary writer who writes critical spatial theory from the position of an architect and activist.

### • A porous border that relates and allows co-production of shared spaces

Mohanty describes solidarity as a collective process of knowledge production and envisages that feminist praxis should be felt as "a strategic space I could call 'home'" (Mohanty, 2003: 128). For a *home or solidarities* to be shaped requires acts of love meaning standing with and for each other as well as recognizing and accepting the differences between each other — as building *unity within diversity* in Freire's words. This implies that it is imperative to know each other's personal experiences of *injustice*, and simultaneously feel those experiences as a collective matter. Therefore, fighting for it implies a collective struggle, a methodology of *we*, as making "history, memory, emotion and affectional ties" together (Ibid.:5).

Akin to these considerations, in his book *Common space: The city as commons*, Stavrides (2016) emphasizes that although contemporary urban life is defined by

capitalism and its control over social life, it is possible for connections to emerge between different cultures. Furthermore, multiplying such connections across differing groups and communities constitutes a direct act of critique against the social divisions and oppression that capitalism reproduces (Ibid.). Specifically, his conceptualization of 'threshold' encourages one to think of the surrounding perimeter or boundary of a community as 'porous' which then allows to imagine possibilities of moving towards others, and shape relations, and ties with each other (Stavrides, 2007: 2). Meaning that, a porous perimeter allows to think of the possibility to exit and enter the community, which denotes a "spatiotemporal" practice of "separation" and "connection" that "can be taken to epitomize the double nature of a porous border: a borderline, transformed to a porous membrane, separates while connecting bordering areas (as well as bordering acts or events)" (Ibid.: 2).

To understand his ideas, Stavrides describes that a community within which individuals share beliefs and habits but newcomers cannot have access, denotes a concrete periphery and border towards others, which however, can be transformed into an open-accessed group with porous borders (2007). For this transformation/ transition from concrete to porous borders, it requires what Mohanty describes as the internal process of self-reflection within a group. That communities should make sure they are not static, but rather they should be viewed as temporary, always changing and likewise relations and ties within and between other communities. Along the same line of thought, Stavrides understands the ability of transformation as a process of constant self-reflection through which shared beliefs and concerns can be constantly questioned, rather approached as a given or as a "fact" (2016: 32). Then, a collective that is flexible and constantly changing, can as well allow for new relations to be initiated and new communities and cultures to be shaped and re-shaped or differently, to otherness to perpetuate (Ibid.).

More importantly, thinking the perimeter of cultures, communities, of differences as porous, opens up the possibility to think also of connections, where differences meet and can co-produce a shared "in-between" space (Stavrides, 2007:2). It entails "a crossing act [that] is indeed to leave a condition that is familiar and to enter a condition that is essentially 'other'" (Ibid.: 2), in order to inhabit and co-produce this in-between space.

To add to Freire's thinking of solidarity as cognitive crossing and Mohanty's view of

solidarity as crossing and connecting over divisive relational, as well as geopolitical borders, Stavrides' metaphor can allow to think of living possibilities of *solidarity as crossing in the physical space*. That is connecting in space with others will allow to practice acceptance of otherness, overcome relational dividing borders and form new relational ties. Subsequently, connections denote inhabitation of a shared space in-between, where differences and communities can experience "moments of encounter" with others as "instances of otherness" that connect (Stavrides, 2016: 32).

Connections are marked by acts of co-producing or 'commoning' and co-production or 'commons' that are self-determined (Stavrides, 2016). What matters is the very process of connectedness and co-production between "subjects of sharing" or "creative individuals" as it signifies the desire to connect with the other while it lays a shared ground through which different others can discover together what their shared "representations, practices and values" are (Ibid.: 34). Subsequently, the process of connectedness allows "to rediscover solidarity and to fight the destructive individualization imposed by dominant policies" (Ibid.: 180).

What critical spatial theory helps to add on the notion of solidarity, is that this can be seen as practice and a shared space created as a common site by different knowledges and subjectivities that meet and connect, even temporarily. This itself constitutes a way to transform views of the in-between of differences and communities in Cyprus: from divisive concrete lines into multiple lines that represent relational ties. Also, it helps to hope and imagine for solidarity as tangible shared spaces that can be created by the two communities, which implies crossing through geo-political so as to connect, creating new experiences and co-producing then, new knowledge. In other words, to utilize the opportunity of a physical porous border, so as to initiate more connections that hopefully will transform divisive views of the other and subsequently form new relational ties, so as to finally transform the divisive norm of the border, to one that relates.

## **Towards a framework of transformative, inter-border practice in Cyprus**

### **• Solidarity as practice**

As viewed from the discussion in this section, solidarity can emerge and be learned during processes that aim to transform consciousness and empower the self. It

is viewed as a force that generates cognitive crossing and connecting, meaning practising empathy and understanding one's position and conditions that surround her/him, as a way to support their fight to change them.

Also, solidarity can emerge and be practised collectively during processes that aim to transform and empower relational ties. It is viewed as a collective practice of firstly, critique (against divisive perceptions of the *other*), and secondly, of knowledge co-production (among different others). These processes of knowledge co-production are initiated by cooperative networks formed when differences and subjectivities connect over geopolitical borders. Thus, by practising solidarity not only is it possible to transform established knowledge to a more inclusive one, but also to transform relationships by learning to accept diversity and otherness. In addition, connections initiated by practising solidarity transform the view of the in-between space of cultures from concrete lines that separate into porous borders that allow connections. Then, it is also possible to think connections made in practising solidarity, as inhabitations or shared spaces created after differences, cultures and knowledge(s)/experiences cross porous borders and connect. More importantly, inhabiting spaces together with others allows us to think of the possibility for solidarity to be practised in physical spaces, after subjectivities cross through porous geopolitical borders, such as the one of Cyprus. Hopefully, then crossing the geo-political border, will allow new relational ties to be formed.

Ideas collected point towards understanding that solidarity can be learned and practised. Practising solidarity then with others, will be a different course of action that is taken so to generate social change; so as to transform the divisions that define our way of living. This then, I suggest as *Solidarity Pedagogy*, where pedagogy implies the way through which to learn and how to achieve the vision for a more connected and less divisive world.

### • Solidarity (as) Pedagogy

Taking this into the context of Cyprus, *Solidarity as Pedagogy* points towards a framework of a *transformative* and *spatial* practice in Cyprus, in the quest to spread connectedness through and across its physical border. This refers to practices that aim to transform established knowledge, norms, perceptions of the other and relations between each other, by connecting through and across the geopolitical border of Cyprus in shared spaces. More importantly, I believe that practising solidarity can eventually multiply its effects over time and transform divisive-



discriminatory social borders between subjectivities that exist on either side of the island, that is, to spread co-production of shared spaces between otherness. To put it simply, I contend that Solidarity Pedagogy in Cyprus can be envisioned as a way to transform the imposed divisive norm that the border imposes, into one that relates.

The following section develops the ideas introduced in ways that respond to how solidarity is imagined as a pedagogy, as a pedagogical practice that can be practised in space.

### 03.02 (Solidarity) Pedagogy in Space

#### A Critical and Spatial practice: learning to think and act differently

- **Transformative or *Critical Practice*: Transforming consciousness through critical reflection**

Towards understanding how solidarity pedagogy operates as a spatial practice, it is relevant to turn back to critical pedagogy so as to understand it first, as a transformative or *critical practice*. Critical pedagogy helps to understand processes and pedagogical tools that can transform embedded structures of thought and knowledge, imposed by (class) oppressions. Upon this, sections after this one, see how transformation as well operates in space.

Critical pedagogy translates the liberation of the oppressed as the empowerment or transformation of their consciousness: as a way to learn to think differently, that is, critically about themselves and their own position within the world, and the reality they live within. These ideas are based on Freire's approach, who believes that the empowerment of the adult oppressed will be achieved only through democratic education, literacy and learning. That is a *critical* educational practice that critiques and works against depository-knowledge; or against *uncritical* education.

To begin with, Freire critiques the undemocratic mode of teaching that characterizes neo-liberal societies and is imposed by the rules of globalized capitalism, resulting in the "depoliticization of education", one which only deposits knowledge (1997:11). Instead, Freire suggests an educative praxis that politicizes and prepares learners to become independent, that is, to develop the capacity to think independently and critically, so as to potentially act as the agents of themselves, agents of change, rather than to remain objectified and oppressed (Ibid.).

The undemocratic mode of teaching is based on what Freire calls “banking education” (1996: 56). It is an oppressive mode of *teaching* rather than learning, where knowledge-deposition means a *given* set of facts that learners have to receive, accept and memorize (Ibid.). Therefore, knowledge-deposition allows no access, remains fixed, unchangeable and unquestioned while learners reproduce a mere technical and essentialized knowledge; the embedded dominant narratives of oppressors (Ibid.). It is apparent that such an education is not based on interaction — in other words is passive — neither does it encourage questioning. Inevitably, such a practice can only disseminate a naïve understanding of the world, while learners remain uncritical receptors of facts about the world (Ibid.), as well as it is less possible that educators and learners can develop any type of interaction or solidary relationship.

Instead, democratic education is an “education of question” (Freire, 1997: 14). A process that engages learners into a *problem-posing* way of learning in order to develop their critical ability. In fact, democratic learning is initiated by the force of *curiosity* and knowledge is facilitated as a *process* of co-production that is *interactive* and *intersubjective* (Freire, 1997; 1996; 1998). This means that learning instead of being a one-sided deposition of knowledge, invites both learners and educators to interact, participate and produce together new knowledge. This means that learning (how to liberate the mind) as also said earlier in the text, implies also a process of knowledge co-production and cooperation, similar to what Mohanty also highlights through her notion of cooperative networks for transforming established knowledge.

Also, the co-produced knowledge and learning, since being interactive processes, imply that they are *open-accessed* for participants to engage, question and change the outcome, which is therefore *open-ended* (Freire, 1998; 1996). Subsequently, it allows learners to be active and develop their capacity of critical thinking, questioning and challenging what is given to them, all crucial in becoming independent thinkers and potentially active citizens. More importantly, learners’ role is not undermined into just fulfilling tasks and sustaining order but instead, learners are encouraged to discover their political nature and role, that is, *being in the world in order to change it* (Ibid.). For this, it requires pedagogues to nurture solidarity with the learners based on respect, faith and trust on both learners’ knowledge and ability to change (Freire, 1996).

Differently, becoming a critical being signifies the struggle to change the way their existence, significance and role in society is objectified and reduced to mere beings/ objects of economy's reproduction, for which uncritical education just aims for the learners to develop technical skills, essential only for fitting to the capitalist economy later on (Freire, 1996).

More importantly, Freire's belief that change is possible, and more specifically that transformation of the mind is possible lies in his view of *knowledge as a process* and belief that knowledge has historicity. That "[i]t (knowledge) never is, it is always in the process of being" (Freire, 1997:2) therefore, always in-the-making. The continuity of this process in time, gives knowledge its own historicity, while also its potentiality and openness to be transformed and re-shaped (Ibid.). What is to be introduced as new knowledge today already constitutes (re)informed knowledge and is going to be re-informed again, subject to the reality's constant changes — whether change means more accuracy on the previous facts, or additions which makes knowledge new in content (Ibid.). Therefore, what has been written is already history which is there to be re-written, rather than to be reproduced as fixed and static.

Likewise, humans and their decisions are shaped in time, and therefore, human beings can never be assumed as fixed or "determined" but are all always in-the-making or "conditioned beings" (Freire, 1997:7). We humans are always in the process of *becoming*, and are boundless possibilities of ourselves, and, according to Freire, we should always remain eternal seekers as well as we are capable of making a difference in changing the world.

Moving on from understanding the principles of a critical practice, it is relevant to deepen the discussion on how such a practice can transform one's consciousness in order to become a critical thinker. This lies on Freire's broader perspective that change is possible, both of the oppressed and reality: an informed consciousness can lead to taking a different course of action and finally changing an oppressed reality into a more just and democratic one (1997).

The transformation of consciousness in the context of adult learning is what Freire describes as the practice of *conscientization*, or *conscientização* in Portuguese where learners reveal and exchange personal experiences to finally shape a new perception (and knowledge) about their own reality, towards "a pedagogy...forged *with*, not *for*, the oppressed" (1996:30).

Conscientization then implies a simultaneous process of awareness and knowledge co/production. That is done through moving between subjectivity and objectivity, that is, according to Freire to be able to distinguish between the “ ‘I’ ” that can think, speak and act and the “ ‘not-I’ ” (Freire, 2000:24). It is also a practice of “critical reflection” through which learners develop the ability of critical thinking and of assessing their own situation (Ibid.:21). It signifies the fact that learners are facilitated to stand and see themselves and their reality from a distance, and think about their own existence in a critical way. At the same time, it constitutes a *reading of the world*, the specific context conditions surrounding the learners, based on their personal experiences; what Freire refers to as “geographic point of reference” and “personal point of reference” that both shape one’s own ‘I’ (1997:7).

In fact, critical reflection is a practice during which “people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves*” (Freire, 1996: 64). Drawing on his own life as an example, Freire describes how he himself keeps a safe distance, thinks critically and this has determined the way he perceives, dreams about and decides to intervene in his own world, his homeland, in order to change it (Ibid.).

For the facilitators to initiate critical reflection, a number of interactive tools are deployed. Specifically, critical pedagogy is a “*co-intentional*” process (Freire, 1996: 30) during which both learners and educators as “*co-investigators*” (Ibid.: 87) participate actively through *dialogue* in order to learn from each other’s experiences or co-produce knowledge, as well as they practise empathy and understanding of each other’s situation.

*Dialogue* can ensure active participation and interaction between learners and educators, as well as their inter-subjective relationship in the co-production of knowledge (Freire, 1996). That is knowledge revealed through analysis of facts of a reality that both learners and educators experience as subjects (Ibid.). The aim is for learners to talk about their own subjective experiences, and understand the reality of their surroundings and its complexities, that is, their world, and indeed to become aware of the way their surrounding world *defines their own experiences* (Ibid.). In fact, the dialogical method of learning to read the world and one’s position in it, means that one names the oppressions that dominate his/her reality in order to be able to see them from a distance (Ibid.). That is, to practice critical reflection and therefore, to see his/her oppressions as a problem that needs solution or “a

new *naming*" of the world (Ibid.: 69). This new world itself constitutes an action taken for the problem posed. It indicates a moment of cognitive change and of conscientization; that is, *thinking* and of *voicing* the world *differently* and from a subjective position.

*Repetitive naming* of the world can potentially stimulate learners' *hope* in change and generate their will to take real actions, to *do* something about it. Likewise, the *repetitive* doing can create a *new quality* in their life, a transformed life and their liberation. To this end, it is important that before moving from one action to the other, there is a consistent practice of the thinking (before) doing again, what is named as a *praxis*; the circular process from thinking (theory) to doing (action), then to reflection (upon the action) before moving into a new action (Freire, 1996). In other words, it is the interchangeable and inseparable relation between theory-practice-reflection implying that theory and practice continually inform each other and thus are continually changing (Freire, 1996; 1997; 2000). Subsequently, the circular process of praxis, is imperative for the politicization of a learner so as to ensure that the *world* will *not* remain as a mere "‘*verbalism*’...an empty world" (Freire, 1996: 68), a promise and a desire that are never to be actualized. And that an action will be (re)taken and carry out the commitment to finally bring a change (Ibid.).

Freire's ideas help to understand what it means for a practice to be transformative in thinking also solidarity pedagogy as one: a process of empowerment through *learning to think differently*, so as to potentially take a different course of actions and change the oppressed reality. Learning to think differently means to think critically, which can be achieved through the simultaneous cooperative processes of critical reflection and knowledge co-production. This links to both Mohanty's and Stavrides belief where collective reflection within a group plays an important role for shaping both inclusive communities and knowledge by sustaining their openness. That knowledge and communities, as well as relationships, are there to be questioned and re-shaped, which helps to conceptualize solidarity pedagogy as transformative practice.

- ***Critical - Spatial Practice: Transforming consciousness, knowledge and social norms through space***

Building on the aforementioned, the discussion moves on with understanding solidarity pedagogy also as a *spatial practice*. I contend that Freire's proposition of

*conscientization* is practised through acting in space, and that embedded structures of thought, knowledge and social norms imposed by oppressions (be they based on gender, class, or other factors) can be transformed through critical and repetitive spatial practices. This helps to think of ways solidarity pedagogy can be practised in space, so as to change relational norms imposed by the division and the border of Cyprus.

Ideas are presented firstly by Henry Lefebvre, a French philosopher and sociologist, influenced by Marx, who supports the interconnected relation of the spatial-social and the dynamic nature both space and social processes, to critique absolute views about them both, resulting in de-politicizing knowledge.

Similarly, and adding to this, Jane Rendell, a contemporary writer who works between architecture, art, feminism, history and psychoanalysis, influenced by Lefebvre, supports the interrelation between space, time and the social processes. She argues for 'a place between' (2006) to highlight the need to escape binary theories that tend to separate mental from physical space; the body from the mind. Instead, Rendell emphasizes the *between* and interconnectedness that is entailed when embodying the space. That social processes are interrelated and inseparable from space (Ibid.).

Finally, Judith Butler, a contemporary American philosopher and gender theorist, following Lefebvre's theorization of the social-spatial inseparability and his proposition for critical spatial thinking, analyses the genealogy of power. She is doing this so to decode the way sovereign phallogocentric structures of knowledge-power are produced and re-produced. It is what Butler calls the 'performativity' of a dominant power-knowledge, re-produced through its norms and discourses (1999). Based on that, she supports that phallogocentric gender norms can be deconstructed through the repetitive appearance of subjectivities in space as one body that performs gender norms differently.

These ideas enhance the understanding that the different or conscious use of space can generate change, and become a transformative spatial practice; one that can alter established consciousness, knowledge, social norms, perceptions and potentially relations. Akin to what the thesis argues, a different acting on space can produce new experiences, new meanings, and therefore new knowledge about cultural-spatial processes.

## Space - Knowledge

The discussion on ways to transform through space begins with Lefebvre's critical spatial theory, which helps to understand links between social processes and space. Its theory supports that space is produced through social processes, implying that it is socially produced, as well as it highlights the *dynamic* nature of both space and the embodied social experiences of subjectivities.

In his book *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) famously draws on the analysis of social processes of economy's production in order to argue that space is socially produced, thus, a social product. He argues that the understanding of space as an object inevitably reproduces a Cartesian understanding of our existence as mere objects, and of space as static. For Lefebvre this is a destructive "reductionism" (Ibid.: 296) of the dynamic of space, as Cartesian understanding of space obscures social practices that are produced in and through space, that is, the social spaces. Specifically, knowledge about space is reduced into logico-mathematical translations between taxonomical spatial definitions that only explain designed uses and operations. Therefore, space remains an unquestioned flat and given materiality observed from distance. This results in the embeddedness of a "common-sense" space (Ibid.:25) that presents an illusionary image of reality and flat views of space that obscure social life or the *content* of those logico-mathematical entities within which social life is produced. This directly vanishes, conceals and silences the meanings that social processes produce with space.

Instead, space should not be represented as fixed, and which time does not affect, but rather, it should be perceived as dynamic, produced by social relations. Following this, and in order then to subvert such concreteness of space, Lefebvre creates what he calls "a science of space", that is, a critical theory of space that does not aim "to produce a (or *the*) discourse on space, but rather to expose the actual production of space" (1991: 16). Through analyzing the way space is used, what is revealed is the political use of knowledge including forces and social relations of production, ideologies and utopias and therefore, the regimes of power that control this knowledge. Simultaneously, the political use of space that is only an object "a means of control, and hence of domination, of power" (Ibid.:26).

For this, he creates a critical tool of reading spatial dynamics that can escape absolutist views that silence the lived space, the spatial politics of subjectivities,

and instead re-present space through re-articulating social processes. That is a new knowledge about both space and social life. What is important that Lefebvre turns toward to, is the coexistence and inseparable view of the social-spatial, that inevitably requires new approaches of representations that reveal the dynamic processes, social-spatial processes. That is an integrated theorization between the *social* and the *spatial* aspect, or as Lefebvre would prefer, between the “logico-epistemological space, the space of the social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias” (1991: 11-12).

Specifically, as a critique to the existing understanding on space, Lefebvre develops a way to “decode” or “read” the production of space by analyzing the embodied practice of subjects when “interacting” with “their space and surroundings” (1991:18). He calls this a “supercode” meaning “not of a replacement for the dominant tendency...but a reversal of that tendency” (Ibid.:26). Lefebvre’s supercode constitutes an otherwise reading of space that reverses the “illusion of transparent, ‘pure’ and neutral space” (Ibid.:292). It is constituted by a triad of concepts : ‘spatial practice’, ‘representations of space’ and ‘representational space’ (Ibid.:33), to illustrate the interconnected relation between the *perceived*, *conceptual* and *lived space*, posed in a dialectical relationship with each other.

Lefebvre’s critical theory, subsequently, empowers the human existence by highlighting the interactions and relations between humans and space, and therefore, social processes/experiences in the physical space. That is the knowledge about the content of space meaning not just the knowledge about operations of taxonomies but also knowledge that the social experiences produce about the living space (Lefebvre, 1991). In other words, it encourages an empowering epistemology about the subject as agent of the social processes, a producer, creator and actant. Thus, against objectified and fixed views of the *user*, as merely a reproducer of norms who is subjected to the order of things. Therefore, Lefebvre’s theory helps to think of subjectivities and space as temporal and dynamic *processes*, and so as social relations, against knowledge that tends to fix and predict human behaviour.

### **Critical and Spatial Practice**

As seen earlier, Lefebvre argues that a new knowledge on space is produced through looking and analysing its content, that is, the social processes that take place within. Building on this, the discussion continues with Jane Rendell’s ideas,



whose concept of 'Critical Spatial Practices' helps to understand from a feminist viewpoint that knowledge (and consciousness) can be transformed through space, that is, through producing *differentiated* acts on space or *critical spatial practices*. Based on the links she makes between knowledge and consciousness transformation with space, I contend that Rendell's concept, takes further what Freire describes as the *conscientization* and *politicization* of the oppressed. That the conscious embodiment of space can change one's embedded structures of thoughts, that itself constitutes already a different or *critical* action taken on an existing space/reality, towards change.

*Critical Spatial Practices* are contextualized in discussions about places that emerge between theory and practice and between the fields of art and architecture, as well as everyday and creative practices that resist (Rendell, 2018; 2011a; 2011b; 2006). These are theoretical and practical places of *creativity* and of *struggle* against oppressions caused by economic and social norms that reduce, control and restrict social life (Rendell, 2018; 2011a; 2011b; 2006), as well as architectural and artistic outcomes in the name of "function" and "purposefulness" (Rendell, 2006:3).

Against this, Rendell explores how art-based critical practices can inform and extend the political role and the field of architecture, towards a more critical and inclusive practice, which is informed by the aspect of gender and embraces crossings across disciplines — that is, interdisciplinarity' (2018; 2011b; 2006). Specifically, to shift from being a field that reproduces effects of capitalism, patriarchy, colonization and normative attitudes of acting according to what is proper, into a field that critiques and fights for social change, as well as empowers the oppressed voices — by gender, class, race et cetera (Rendell, 2006). That is an architectural practice that should not aim to control subjectivities and social life through over-programming spaces, restricting its social production and creative use (Ibid.). Instead, it should aim for shaping flexible spaces that allow subjectivities to appropriate them in unexpected ways (Ibid.).

Rendell's positions are embedded in what she defines as critical spatial practices which are believed to have a transformative effect. Specifically, Rendell supports that dominant places of everyday life such as consumption areas are possible to be transformed through a conscious or *critical* (and not passive) use of spaces prescribed by dominant taxonomies and economy (2006). Such critical use of space can transform meanings attached to these places therefore, to produce new knowledge

about the spatial-social. That a different or *critical* acting on an existing space, it is as if “replacing existing histories of sites with alternative understanding, transforming present realities and so providing glimpses of new future possibilities” (Ibid.: 83).

To support how critical spatial practices, operate also as transformative practices, Rendell draws on the artistic practice of site-specific performance that characterizes as ‘critical interventions’ (2006: 143). Critical interventions are open-accessed, open-ended and participatory processes that engage participants (or learners) in the process of *knowledge production*, by de-constructing what is known or “what-has-been” said about the specific site of the artistic work in the past and until now, in order to re-articulate it again (Ibid.: 121). This is achieved by inviting the public to bodily engage, intervene consciously and affect the outcome. Participants engage into a process of producing new, thus *different* “insertions onto existing locations in order to interrupt their dominant meanings” (Ibid.:103). More importantly, critical interventions then help to think critical spatial practices as an inclusive process of knowledge production as they allow the participation of new “‘voices’ that have been marginalized” (Ibid.:83).

Also, performance practices in space engage participants in *critical reflection*. Specifically, participants are allowed “to act as critics and to engage in a slower time, a different thinking” (Rendell, 2006: 143). That describes the active engagement of mind-body in space or simply, the *embodiment* of space, where participants are “experienced emotionally and physically, as well as intellectually, over time and through space, prompting critical reflection alongside a more subjective engagement” (Ibid.:120). More importantly, critical spatial practices through exploring critical interventions help to think that although temporary, they can however develop one’s critical thinking as they provide a place between past and present to creatively use space.

Rendell’s ideas point towards the fact that critical spatial practices are transformative. Interestingly, they invite conscious acting on space that can develop one’s critical thinking. It is a process of critical reflection which coexists with the process of re/deconstruction of knowledge about an existing space. Both processes are experienced in space, therefore, are embodied processes. Hence, ideas of both Freire and Mohanty are taken further to argue that consciousness and knowledge transformation can be achieved through space, or through the embodiment of space. Also, to argue that critical spatial practices as *facilitators* can as well promote

learners' politicization by inviting them to actively engage in a process of taking conscious bodily acts upon an existing space/reality, guided by critical reflection.

In the context of Cyprus, critical spatial practices help to think of solidarity pedagogy as a tangible transformative practice that invites the communities of Cyprus to actively engage in changing the divisive norm of the border, the imposed use of space as well as the imposed knowledge and potentially relationships with each other. That means practices that utilize the opportunity that the border is a partly accessible porous border, and is possible to facilitate connections of communities, reconstructing a narrative of a border that connects.

### **Repetitive and Temporal Spatial Practice: Transforming (gender) norms through space**

As seen through Rendell, knowledge and consciousness can be transformed through taking *differentiated* acts on space conceptualized as *critical spatial practices*. The discussion moves on with Butler's theory on gender 'performativity' that can transform engendered oppressions and norms. Through her concept the dimension of time is highlighted and adds to the understanding of critical spatial practice. Specifically, that *repetitive* spatial practices can achieve change over time that implies they are *temporary*, important in sustaining a flexible and always-in-the-making knowledge, consciousness and social relations. This, I contend takes further earlier discussions about the role of repetition in producing *difference*, that is, transformation and (self)empowerment suggested by Freire, Mohanty and Rendell.

A transformative aspect in Butler's critical theory is the element of *repetition* (that Freire also refers to) that can eventually change imposed norms. Butler contextualizes this in discussions about engendered oppressions, where she argues that 'reiterative and citational practice' can transform or deconstruct and reconstruct established gender norms that reproduce fixed ways to think about gender identity (1993:2). According to Butler, norms are the "restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality" (1999:179), which predefine gender identity to which one has to fit and therefore, imprison individuals into a set of behaviours to prove the assigned sex to them. Instead, Butler argues that gender should not be considered as fixed, as a "model of identity" to fit in, but rather as "a constituted social temporality" (ibid.:179). That gender is "constituted in time" therefore is

a *process* of becoming a gender, performative and cultural (Ibid.: 179). To put it simply, nobody is a gender with birth.

To explain how reiterative and citational practices can transform norms, Butler analyses the way dominant *power performativity* accumulates and reproduces its power so as to argue about the performative power of the subjects meaning their capacity to subvert the dominant one. In Rendell's view this means that embodied practices of subjectivities can produce new *insertions* in space, which through repetitive practice in time, can finally subvert associations of biological sex with gender identity. Specifically, Butler writes that "[t]here is no power that acts, but only a reiterated acting that is power in its persistence and instability" (1993: xviii). Therefore, although persistent, a dominant power's instability is the potentiality to be disrupted, through a different reiteration of its norms and discourse. The unpredictability that is hidden in reiteration lies on the very "failure of the performative" to reproduce itself in the exact same way (Ibid.:82).

In order to understand what *reiterative practice* implies, I borrow what Lefebvre writes in his book *Rhythmanalysis: space, time and everyday life*, where he explains that there can be no absolute repetition in the relation  $A=A$  (A equals A): "the second A differs from the first by the fact that it is second" (2004: 17). This also implies that the second A indicates a reference of the first A, thus it cites the first A in its constitution but it is *different* at the same time.

What is important to keep from the idea of repetition through this mathematical relation is that "[n]ot only does repetition not exclude differences, it also gives birth to them" (Lefebvre, 2004: 17). Therefore, the possibility to transform or destabilize a fixed norm, lies on the ability of subjects, during the reproduction of norms, to produce "always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference" (Ibid.:16). As others also refer to Butlerian ideas, reproduction constitutes "a repetition of the same, but always a new production" (Kaiser, 2014:122). Consequently, the possibility to transform (gender) norms lies on this very *unpredictable* different outcome called also the unpredictable "ruptures" (Ibid.) or the "subversion, disruption and critical re-working of power through practice" (Gregson & Rose, 2014: 52). Or finally, according to Butler, as the "slippage" that occurs in the repetitive and citational practices that represent the power of subjectivities to produce change, and destabilize the imposed norms of fixity (1993: 82).

Therefore, for consciousness, norms and knowledge to be transformed it requires repetitive spatial practices that follow the conscious desire of subjectivities to *repetitively* perform norms in a *different* way against what they prescribe for subjectivities to behave. As Butler characteristically describes: “The resignification of the norms is thus a function of their *inefficacy*, and so the question of subversion, of *working the weakness in the norm*, becomes a matter of inhabiting practices of its re-articulation” (1993: 181).

Both Rendell and Butler help to conceptualize transformative spatial practices. Their ideas contribute in thinking the facilitation of spatiotemporal practices that engage and encourage participants into utilizing space differently, that is, critically as Rendell suggests. Whereas doing that repetitively, according to Butler, can eventually destabilize fixed norms and re-articulate imposed narratives, signifying the power/ability of subjectivities to transform or produce difference over time.

Taking that into the context of Cyprus, I support that the concept of critical-spatial practices helps to form a position that informs the following sections and chapters. The concept helps to imagine that solidarity pedagogy can be practised in space utilizing the norm of living-here-and-temporarily-there (that the porous border of Cyprus imposes) as opportunity. This means to initiate repetitive spatial practices that invite the two communities to cross, meet and co-produce. Such a spatial practice constitutes a critical act taken in space in order to change the oppressed reality of division, which can potentially be achieved if these connections are repeated over time. The new shared experiences will produce new meanings about the divisive border as a porous border that connects. Potentially, practising solidarity and transforming the norm of the border will change perceptions of the other, and more importantly, shape new relational ties with each other and empower communities to re-define themselves how to build their desired peace.

## **A Joyful and Critical Spatial Practice: practising togetherness through creating-together**

### **• Acting-differently as acting-together**

The discussion concludes with defining what thinking-acting differently that is supported in the previous sections could mean in order to produce difference in the context of Cyprus. I argue that taking different actions towards building a culture of peace implies to act in space *together* which following Butler is even

more powerful when conditions of appearing together have been dismantled, such as the conditions of division in Cyprus.

This is taken further to support that togetherness can be achieved through creating together. This is presented through the perspective of networks that connect people through the process of making, which I contend takes further Freire's argument that self-empowerment means to allow learners to develop their own creativity/creative thinking/imagination.

Likewise, for communities of Cyprus to be empowered so as to define themselves their own building of peace, requires that they can *create together*, as acting-together for peace, taking further Butler's ideas as well as imagining inter-border connections not only as meeting with each other, but also building something together. Finally, these ideas point towards approaching the physical porous border as an opportunity to shape relational ties between the communities, through practising solidarity and connections in space. It is possible then, to imagine spatial practices and shared space of solidarity pedagogy that can be developed through the border, therefore, are inter-border, and which I call *Interplaces*.

To begin with, as already discussed earlier, Butler through describing repetitive practices argues about the performative power of subjectivities to produce *difference*, to transform fixed norms. Picking up on this, Judith Butler writes with Athena Athanasiou (2013) about collective critical practices where bodies in alliance, assembled together constitute at the same time their *performative force* and *political power*, inseparable from space. Space becomes the place in which bodies can perform their desires, a practice or "an exercise of the popular will, and a way of asserting it, in bodily form, one of the most basic pre-suppositions of democracy" (Ibid.:196).

In one of her recent works, *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), Butler argues that "it matters that bodies assemble" and that although do not necessarily produce new articulations "by discourse, whether written or vocalized" (Ibid.: 7-8), there are political meanings performed and demands signified even in silence, by just *gathering together*. Therefore, assemblies or what Butler calls "embodied and plural performativity" (Ibid.:8), constitute a collection of voices that are worthy to be heard, and a collection of knowledges that are worthy to participate in the co-production of knowledge about the social-spatial processes.

Butler's way of thinking enables a critical spatial reading of meanings, demands and desires performed and more importantly, co-produced as *acting-together* that cannot be easily traced because of the dismantled, precarious conditions within which they are performed (2015). *Gatherings*, subsequently, become lived sites of struggle that claim the right "to appear in a bodily form" (Ibid.:8) and together; as claiming their "freedom with others" (Ibid.: 27). Therefore, as Butler turns the attention to, collective embodiments do matter due to the fact that they are *forms of support and solidarity* that altogether express "another paradoxical condition of a form of social solidarity both mournful and joyful ...where the gathering itself signifies persistence and resistance" (Ibid.:23). More importantly, assemblies or gatherings shaped within dismantled conditions do not just express their desires *silently*, instead they express those "in excess" (Ibid.:8).

At the same time, Butler examines collective practices and their relation to space, that is, the material environment in which they appear, giving a better understanding of the meanings they co-produce. Specifically, Butler, in line with Rendell's ideas, argues that although material environments (pre)exist as structures of power, embodiments can challenge established terminologies of 'public sphere' and of the essentialized organization of material space in private and public (2015: 82). This is achieved due to the fact that collective embodiments produce new meanings and re-articulations through the trajectory that these assemblies take, that moves between places and disrupts the spatial taxonomy, re-collecting, thus, space differently (Ibid.).

What is emphasized here is the interwoven existence of spatial materiality and the produced meanings of groups: the produced meanings from their embodied practice "reconfigure the materiality of public space and...character of that material environment" (Butler, 2015:71). Conversely, the subjectivity of bodies is shaped through those material environments, which have their own role in the process as "support" (Ibid.: 71). That although assemblies of bodies have their own force that is produced and performed, they cannot exist if they are not supported by "non-human objects" (Ibid.:72), such as "environments, by nutrition, by work, by modes of sociality and belonging" (Ibid.: 84). Therefore, when assemblies are shaped, they co-produce meanings of persistence as well as claim their right to persist, and thus their right not to be excluded from support so that they are able to be seen, to appear and to assemble together in a bodily form.

Taking this to the context of Cyprus, leads to support that acting critically on space or a critical spatial practice towards transforming the divisive norm of the border, would mean to both *cross the border and initiate actions together in space*. The action itself will represent the desire of the collective — that is, the two communities of Cyprus together — “to persist and to assert together a right to the conditions of its persistence” (Butler, 2015: 19), which in this case is the complete removal of the border and the reunification of the island. A *collective critical practice* in Cyprus then, describes a practice that uses space to critique the uncertain way of living, separated from each other. Therefore, appearing together as *acting-together* would signify in *excess* the desire of communities to be able to live finally in a shared space, environment, a whole country, since the conditions of division deprive their right to have it.

- **Acting-together and connecting with others through Co-creation**

#### **On Creativity**

The discussion is taken further to support that *acting-together* or togetherness can be empowered and facilitated through creating (-things-) together. For this, the discussion turns firstly to critical pedagogy that highlights the role of creativity in empowering one’s self. Not only it helps to hope that change is possible, but also it helps to finally take a different course of action towards changing an oppressed reality.

Freire argues that a *democratic education* implies that it allows space to learners to develop their own *creativity* (1998). Specifically, he supports that democratic education aims to generate learners’ feelings of satisfaction and pleasure during learning activities, so that they can get inspired and thus be able to develop their own creativity — what Freire calls “joy” in the educative process (Ibid.:69).

In fact, to ensure a *joyful* educational process constitutes a solidary stance towards learners, as it shows caring about the learners’ well-being (Freire, 1998). This is crucial for the process of transformation due to the fact that it offers learners an environment, a space where they can develop their ability to think creatively and independently, that is, their creativity. In other words, a transformative pedagogy implies that it simultaneously generates feelings of happiness and seriousness (Ibid.). According to Freire, being serious about the educative process means being able to offer joyful and critical learning experiences; and these, are inseparable



(Ibid.). Otherwise, an educative process that lacks interaction, freedom to think independently and therefore develop creative thinking and generally learners' creativity, sentences them to being miserable and uncritical beings-depositories (Ibid.).

In understanding why creativity is important, a critical and joyful approach to pedagogy allows learners to develop the ability to not only learn to think, but to think without limits, and more importantly, to *imagine*. It is the ultimate aim of a transformative praxis, where liberating the mind does not only mean to become conscious of the world in which one lives, but also of becoming able to imagine it differently. In fact, Freire argues that utopian dreams are the creative force of the mind in moving forward (1998). By creating utopian images about a better future, one can subsequently generate feelings of *hope* and trust that this imaginary vision is possible (Ibid.). Besides, not losing hope is innate in human nature, despite the unfortunate conditions that might dismantle one's life (Freire, 1997; 1998).

Hope then, is an important force to empower in order to move from thinking differently, into acting differently. What Freire implies is that it is the utopia (and hope) that constitutes the driving force in finally engaging the struggle and realizing those (1998). More importantly, this reflects Freire's approach to transformative pedagogy, to liberation: it is perceived, approached and applied as a contribution as an action to achieve the political aim of liberation; also, conversely, the political aim of liberation in order to be achieved requires practice, a pedagogical process. In other words, Freire suggests that a social change requires viewing actions towards achieving it as both pedagogical and political (Freire, 1996), where consciousness and thinking are interconnected with *doing*.

Freire helps to think that a transformative practice should not only be concerned with one's cognitive change, but also with ways that learners can shift from critical thinkers into creative doers that can actualize the life they desire.

### **On Creating-together: a joyful-critical practice of togetherness**

The discussion builds on the aforementioned to show that creativity not only benefits one's own power to achieve a desired reality, *but that creating with others or co-creation* as I call it, empowers togetherness and ways to act collectively. In other words, that creating together becomes an action taken collectively towards change.

David Gauntlett, a British contemporary sociologist and *media theorist*, in his book *Making is Connecting* (2011) argues that co-creation in everyday life can facilitate affective bonding and connectedness. Interestingly, Gauntlett perceives collective creative practices “as a process, and a feeling” as well as political practices at the same time because “people have made a *choice* — to make something themselves rather than just consume what’s given by the big suppliers — that is significant” (Ibid.:19).

Gauntlett’s ideas point towards the fact that such practices suggest an alternative way of active *engagement*, that re-conceptualize politicization. He characteristically writes that:

Making things shows us that we are powerful, creative agents- people who can really *do* things, that other people can see, learn from, and enjoy... transforming materials into something new... it is also about transforming one’s own sense of self (Gauntlett, 2011: 245).

His ideas are drawn from online networks through which people connect and exchange knowledge on how to make things. Specifically, Gauntlett highlights “the power of making and connecting through creating” (2011: 1). The fact that people can learn from and with each other, therefore, shapes co-created *knowledge* and *things*, which simultaneously denotes the nurture of new relations, new ties: people come together in order to create something.

According to Gauntlett, *making* and *connecting* constitutes both a pedagogical and political process, that is both critical and joyful, in line with Freire. Making and connecting points towards establishing a new culture of “making and doing” to critique and encourage the fight against the culture of “sit back and be told” that characterizes western educational systems (Gauntlett, 2011: 1). Instead, he argues that for “a real political shift in how we deal with the world” through discovering “new enjoyable way of living” (Ibid.:19).

To support this, in the chapter Tools for change, Gauntlett links *creativity* with Ivan Illich’s concept of *conviviality*. Ivan Illich is a Croatian-Austrian philosopher who wrote about the need to re-invent and balance relations between people and materials, towards “a new consciousness about the nature of tools” and a more “*convivial society*” (1985: 12). His ideas offer a critique to the fact that tools should change from being single-use restricting their creative use and directing the outcome of work, to tools

that can be used flexibly enabling their creative and multiple use. It is what he calls the 're-tooling of society' to critique the over-materialistic lifestyle and social relations imposed by the post-industrial era and the educative institutions of modern Western culture (Ibid.:12). What Illich tries to draw the attention to, according to Gauntlett, is "the loss of joyfulness in everyday experience" that impacts also social relations (2011: 166-7). Therefore, re-discovering joy in everyday life would generate "a meaningful kind of communication and engagement between people" (Ibid.: 166-7).

For this, Gauntlett suggests that joy can be found in the process of *making* things with others that inevitably *connects*; or as he simply describes *making* is *connecting*. Specifically, *making* is seen as combining things to create something new, as development of social connection during the process of making, and as a practice that increases "engagement and connection with our social and physical environments" (Gauntlett, 2011: 2).

In other words, creating-together or *co-creation* constitutes a *joyful practice* through which we can shape new relational ties with each other, and simultaneously a *critical practice* that directly fights the individualistic-divisive lifestyle we experience in the everyday life.

#### • Transformative as *Joyful - Critical Practice*

This adds to the concept of solidarity pedagogy the idea that a transformative praxis is both a critical as well as a joyful process of change. Through the process of practising solidarity, one can learn to act collectively so as to challenge division in everyday life, by cooperating so as to create with others. This is a way therefore, to rediscover joy and togetherness in everyday life and take action towards happiness, self-empowerment and more importantly, a collective living.

In the context of Cyprus, the concept of co-creation or the process of creating-together as a way of acting *differently* suggests a critical approach to the separated way of living. A process that fights division, through bringing communities together, through connections in space. More importantly, *co-creating together* requires communities to connect through crossing the border, to not just meet, but to also do-something-together, to co-create.

Subsequently, following Freire and Gauntlett, *creativity* will not only empower individual abilities, but also the collective power of communities to self-define their own way to create relational ties and hope that peace is possible. In other

words, it will be possible for communities to discover themselves the peace they desire, as acting-together for peace. Creating-together, then, as acting-differently in Freire's and Gauntlett's words, can as well *politicize* or transform communities into actants and creative agents. Developing forms of critical and collective action, of cooperation, will potentially transform the divisive norm of the border and the effects it reproduces — established knowledge, norms, consciousness and perception about the other, and thus relations with others.

### 03.03 Towards (inter)places for Solidarity Pedagogy in Cyprus: an inter-border and transformative pedagogy

#### Co-creating through and across the border

Taking all the aforementioned ideas into space and the context of the porous physical border in Cyprus, my argument is that a transformative practice would be one that encourages *connections* so as to deconstruct embedded relational borders; connections are what I describe as *Interplaces*. Similar to Stavrides' threshold spaces, Interplaces are temporal and shared spaces that are created after communities and otherness purposefully connect through their porous periphery/border, so as to *create-together* shared experiences and potentially new relational ties, by voicing, acknowledging and accepting the individual and cultural differences as well as determining their shared beliefs. Likewise, encouraging *Interplaces* between the communities of Cyprus on a repetitive basis, can possibly help them to rediscover solidarity between them, cultivate relationships and more importantly, their power and hope that a change is possible; as doing something about *peace*. An Interplace therefore, suggests to approach the divisive relational border between the communities of Cyprus as if it is the physical one, that is, as if it is porous, and thus, to encourage connections through it.

In this research the intention is to investigate whether co-creation could be found in space, and more importantly, in cross-border practices. However, since co-creation entails a broad approach to connections between different social groups, I was open to explore it in other instances that did not require crossing of the border, but provided perspectives of it as a way of learning to connect with others.

This then is set as a framework to test in the research and explore ways the porous geopolitical border in Cyprus can create possibilities to connect and potentially shape relational ties between the communities, since now the physical border is

partly accessible and allows movement from one side to the other.

In addition, considering the fact that space and knowledge can change with a repetitive and critical acting on space, then, it is essential to experience more Interplaces, more shared spaces where communities in Cyprus can co-create, so as to empower themselves and togetherness. Achieving such a venture becomes even more powerful to be considered within a frozen conflict and a porous border that nevertheless has to be regulated in building a culture of solidarity even within such dismantled conditions.

Potentially, akin to Mohanty's aspiration for networks, Interplaces will multiply the effects of these connections and shape *networks of Interplaces* and ultimately, a practising of solidarity pedagogy through the geo-political border of Cyprus so as to perpetuate difference and otherness across.

In conclusion, *Interplaces* set both a critical and joyful content in imagining transformative spatial practices of solidarity pedagogy: a practice through which communities are facilitated to cross, meet and more importantly co-create, in order to practise a different way of living, even temporarily, that critiques division.

Also, the concept of solidarity pedagogy and its actualization through Interplaces, that combined a range of theories, set the foundations to think of *non-formal learning* practices that re-conceptualize *active engagement* as both a *pedagogical and activist* action towards change, as well as rediscovering of *peace* in Cyprus as a *collective, bottom-up* action.

The framework of solidarity pedagogy, reflects the need to escape acceptance of the status quo, the given narrative about division that is embedded especially into the youth's consciousness who by extension have learned to live with it. Therefore, there is decreased active engagement in changing it. Instead, solidarity pedagogy is thought of as a practice that aims to empower and reveal knowledge about the life of each community, in order to question what is *not* represented in the discourse, to re-articulate dominating narratives for division and discursive agency on knowledge. It is believed that taking advantage of the *in-between* movement that the border allows, that is, practising *Interplaces*, is a tangible way through which communities can nurture their relationship, perpetuate counter-narratives, and learn to act as a 'we' of Cypriots *without* borders.

The next chapter (4) moves from theory to practice to investigate a number

of influential instances that showed tangible ways to facilitate co-creation and connections in space, providing interesting elements-pointers to consider when selecting the case studies (Chapters 6 and 7).

## 04 Pointers to imagine spatial practices of Solidarity Pedagogy: an exploratory journey on activist and recreational practices in space

The research process, following the development of a framework and in line with the broad objective of the research, moves from theory to practice with an exploratory journey in Cyprus, shaped through exploring a number of spatial practices, as a learning experience, so as to collect knowledge about the context of Cyprus and reflect upon ideas on the concept of Solidarity Pedagogy.

Towards improving interaction and connection of the two sides and communities, the Greek Cypriots (GCs) and Turkish Cypriots (TCs), the chapter highlights a number of pointers that emerged through the most influential instances including activist and recreational spatial practices. Pointers are specific elements that I found important in encouraging interaction and connections during these instances. Pointers-elements are then linked to Solidarity Pedagogy, to show that together with challenges that the doubleness of the new condition creates, a frozen conflict and a porous border, there are also potentialities that should be used in order to transform the relational border between the communities, especially between the youths.

### 04.01 Introduction

As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, specific facts shape an overview of a rather complex reality in Cyprus: a conflict (and division) frozen in time, and a porous border which although it allows crossings towards the other side, there is low interaction between the two communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. This is related with the limited peace consciousness among the island's population, and especially among the youths, who have learned to live within a divided territory alongside the narratives of division. As local scholars support, it is apparent that the enduring division of Cyprus and its dismantled democratic system led “[m]ultiple generations [to] remain alienated from life on the other side of the divide”, affecting by extension “the cognitive and moral development of younger generations” (Till et al., 2013:58-9). At the same time “[t]he two communities are growing apart with fewer and fewer who can remember a period of coexistence” (Ker-Lindsay, 2019: 19). Subsequently, learning to live away from each other, the young generations of the two communities are highly likely to learn to not recognize the benefits of a future resolution to the conflict, and therefore, it is highly possible for the current

conditions of division with a flexible border to be acceptable.

In subverting such a possibility, in my thesis I take the stance that the reunification of Cyprus remains not only possible, but also desirable; and that to work towards reunification requires new ways of nurturing both communities' awareness of its benefits, and of overcoming established relations with and perceptions of the "other". To this end, the framework of *Solidarity Pedagogy*, presented in Chapter 3, provides a way to think about borders as opportunities. Through the lens of Freire (1996; 1997), solidarity can be learned by practising cognitive crossings, as a way to develop social relationships with the other through support and understanding. Additionally, while Mohanty (2003) supports that solidarity can be learned through the crossing of political borders as well as relational ones, as a way to form international relationships. Both perspectives point to the idea that practising solidarity constitutes an *act of connection* — the forming of a relational tie that can be cultivated between the communities of Cyprus. The thesis takes this notion further through the work of Stavrides (2016; 2007) who by referring to relational borders between communities and differences, encourages to think of them as 'porous borders' that allow connections across them. Drawing on these links, the physical, partially-accessible border of Cyprus, or its porous border, can be thought of as an opportunity for transforming the relational border of communities.

In line with ideas underpinning the concept of solidarity pedagogy, studies in Cyprus show that in order to resolve the conflict, the reciprocal engagement of the two communities is imperative. This means to enhance connections and interactions through physical contact and cooperation (Ersözler, 2019; Ker-Lindsay, 2019; Ioannou & Sonan, 2019; Tselika, 2019). Specifically, according to a study carried out with a group of young and older GCs and TCs, the key in generating trust and eliminating prejudice among communities living in conditions of "total segregation" like in Cyprus is human contact (Psaltis & Yucel, cited in Aygin, 2018: para. 12). For this to be achieved therefore, "frequency and quality of contact of all groups in population" must be enhanced (Ibid.). Contacts, should be enhanced especially among the youth, so as to challenge hostile perceptions of the other; this is in line with Butler's notion that repeating the occurrence of practices that perform the norm *otherwise* (in this case connections instead of separation) can potentially destabilize a normality and generate change (1993).

On a positive note, the same study shows that TC and GC young participants shared



almost the same percentages in expressing “willingness to live together” with a prevailing initial reaction in youth contacts, according to one of the researchers, Charis Psaltis, that “they are just like us!” (cited in Aygin, 2018: para. 4).

Akin to these indications, policy recommendations found in recent reports of GC and TC scholars, highlight the need for measures to be taken so as to encourage connections and interactions, as only operating check-points is not effective enough to establish meaningful relationships (Ersözer, 2019; Ker-Lindsay, 2019; Ioannou & Sonan, 2019; Tselika, 2019). That communities should be encouraged to cultivate a “culture of engagement” and peace meaning to create opportunities for them “to interact with one another” (Ker-Lindsay, 2019: 5). In this way, it is possible to reduce the prejudice that prevents many from crossing the border, and thus contributes to reproducing segregation (Ersözer, 2019). To reverse this, inter-communal interactions should be encouraged through increasing opportunities of cooperation at different levels across the divide — such as between the educational institutions, artistic and cultural establishments as well as local economies — as it is believed to be contributive in strengthening relationships between the two communities (Ioannou & Sonan, 2019; Tselika, 2019; Ersözer, 2019).

From the above and in line with Rendell (2006), as well as Freire, in my thesis I support that consciousness and relationships can be transformed through fostering *embodied* connections, and thus, through space. Therefore, while acknowledging the multiple challenges that define the complex reality of Cyprus, I contend that until a resolution comes the porosity of the border can be re-imagined as an opportunity to increase the frequency and quality of crossings and connections between the two sides of the island, and learn ways to strengthen social relations between the two communities.

Towards this, in this chapter I explore how the concept of solidarity pedagogy might relates to practice, so as to combine the definitions of learning discussed in Chapter 3, with experiential knowledge on different forms of learning that exist within the everyday life of Cyprus. For this, I moved from theory to practice, so to conduct a series of field visits to Cyprus, when I collected insights about the everyday experience of a frozen conflict and a porous border through either participating to or observing a diverse range of spatial practices. This series of visits was completed in two phases: an initial exploratory journey focused on a diverse range of practices in Cyprus, two of which I selected as case studies for further research; and a second

phase of focused field work to engage with and analyse the two main cases.

This chapter gives an overview of the exploratory journey, and outlines learnings from the most influential practices that I engaged with, including activist and recreational events that helped me to put into focus how solidarity pedagogy can be developed in space, and therefore, as a spatial practice. This then reinforces my position in the thesis that there is need to establish ways of *learning to connect with others*.

## 04.02 Activist and Recreational spatial practices

Guided by the argument that it is important to enhance inter-communal interactions alongside ideas embedded in the conceptual framework of solidarity pedagogy, I moved on from theory to test some of these ideas in practice. I did this by carrying out an initial, exploratory journey so as to complement insights from theory with empirical ones. This journey reconnoitered a range of initiatives, each fostering a different way of learning about the 'other' by engaging with Cyprus in spatial ways.

The context within which I developed my exploratory journey was shaped by the fact that after the removal of the barricades in 2003 and the entering of the Republic of Cyprus into the European Union in 2004, different civil society initiatives emerged, which changed the dynamics within the public space and across the border. As mentioned earlier in the thesis (Chapter 2), crossings have not been significant in number. However, I contend that such initiatives can provide *pointers* towards the conceptualization of solidarity pedagogy as a spatial practice, and subsequently, advance the efforts of peacebuilding in space and through the border.

In the exploratory journey I investigated a series of such initiatives that I traced through the everyday public life and urban space, during different moments in 2017, and at different locations in Northern and Southern Cyprus. These would be different forms of bi-communal as well as other practices, mainly coming from cultural/art activism and political activism. The instances were approached as mini-case studies, meaning that there has been a level of analysis and evaluation, in response to the investigation line of my journey; to review the context of Cyprus in relation to learning and interaction possibilities that could be found in its social processes, practices and space.

The most influential initiatives in relation to this investigation line, are mentioned in the following sections, including a combination of *activist and recreational spatial practices*, organized by either the two communities as a way to promote peace

Spatial Practices					
No.	Event Title	Producers	Type	Place, City	Date
1	Demilitarized Reunited Cyprus March	Bi-communal movement 'Demilitarized Nicosia'	March	Nicosia	March, 2017
2	Go for Peace	GC and TC movements/organizations (POGO- women's movement with PEO-women's labour office and TCEP-gender equality platform)	March	Nicosia	March, 2017
3	Mobilization for Peace and Reunification	Bi-communal NGO 'Peace Generation United by hope'	Demonstration	Nicosia, buffer zone	February, 2017
4	Trip to Paphos	PEO-workers' trade union (GC) with CTOS-workers' trade union (TC)	Guided crossing trip	Nicosia/Paphos	February, 2017
5	Unite Cyprus Now	GC and TC citizens	Protest	Nicosia, Ledra street within the buffer zone	June, 2017
6	Education for a culture of peace	Post-Research Institute	Conference	Nicosia, Buffer zone	February, 2017
7	Education in Cyprus	Youth NGO 'Youth for Exchange and Understanding Cyprus' (GC)	Structured dialogue under the Program "Our Voice"	Nicosia	March, 2017
8	Intercommunal Dialogue as a tool for Peace	NGO 'Aequitas Human Rights' with the University of Cyprus	Roundtable	Nicosia	March, 2017
9	One billion rising. Solidarity against the exploitation of women	NGO 'Women's lobby' (GC)	Demonstration	Nicosia	February, 2017
10	Protest against the continuation of partition	Bi-communal Teachers' platform "United Cyprus"	Protest	Nicosia	February, 2017
11	Trip to Morphou	POGO-women's movement (GC)	Guided crossing trip	Nicosia/Morphou	February, 2017
12	The missing	Satiriko Theatre (GC) and Municipality Theatre (TC)	Theatre play	Nicosia	January, 2017

Figure 4.1 Pashia, E. (2019). List of spatial practices-instances engaged including the most influential ones and referenced in the chapter (1-5), as well as the rest of the ones explored (6-12).

and reunification of Cyprus, or by other civil organizations as a way to promote connectedness among the public broadly. The figure 4.1 below presents the full list of practices I engaged with during the exploration.

The *topic* of some of the instances was related to peace and reunification, either as spontaneous responses to Cyprus talks (such as demonstrations), or as annual traditions (such as marches) to express the desire for the reunification of Cyprus, but also practices of organizations, institutions and initiatives in promoting bi-communal relations (such as guided trips). Also, other practices would have a different content but aimed to generally promote social connectedness between different individuals and groups (such as music/cultural festivals). In addition to this, I engaged in specific social places of Nicosia, especially in the core of its walled city, on both sites, where groups from different communities of Cyprus meet daily (such as coffee shops).

*Activist* spatial practices shared a common content related to promoting and expressing desires for peace and reunification of Cyprus. They were different forms of *protesting*, that is, political acts either as instant responses to the Cyprus talks or as recurrent practices. Those spatial practises were organized by TC and GC groups, including civil organizations and movements at that time (2016-2018), which took place in the public space of Nicosia city, developed within and even moving across the borderland.

*Recreational* spatial practices represent the expansion of the research at that time into practices of a different content, where connections were facilitated through recreational activities. Some targeted a bi-communal audience and others were open to different individuals and groups from Cyprus that shared other common interests such as music. They were forms of *escaping* from everyday life, that is, leisure activities such as a trip or a music event, some organized either only by TC and GC organizations and some from groups working on culture. Those spatial practices took place in the districts of Nicosia, Paphos and Larnaca away from the border and in both the northern and southern area of Cyprus.

## **Critical and Joyful practices**

Interestingly, the investigation revealed pointers that link to ideas embedded in the concept of solidarity pedagogy and offer a hopeful perspective that there can be ways to transform the relation border between the TCs and GCs, and especially between the youths.

Pointers refer to the previous discussion on critique and joyfulness discussed in Chapter 3. Solidarity pedagogy supports that processes/practices of transforming established consciousness and relations can be both critical and joyful.

*Critical practices* refer to pedagogical practices developed in space through which one learns to use space consciously and differently, that is, critically, as Rendell (2006) would have it. Doing that repetitively, according to Butler (1993), can eventually destabilize established structures of thought that define ways of using the space. The different use of space, then, constitutes a critique towards its established way of using it.

*Joyful practices* refer to pedagogical practices that, according to Freire (1998), aim to bring about one's cognitive change and for which joy plays an important role. That is a joyful process of change that aims to generate feelings of satisfaction and pleasure through providing the space to think creatively and independently. *Creativity* can also develop one's ability to think about the future creatively, that is, to imagine and believe that a better future is possible, important for shifting from the position of a mere critical *thinker* into a creative doer and take actions to materialize the desired life. At the same time, Gauntlett (2011) describes the joyful process of *creating-with-others* which subsequently, encourages togetherness, collecting action towards change and cultivation of relationships.

These ideas have been a way to guide the exploration of both activist and recreational spatial practices. Interestingly, the pointers that were revealed from the exploration were the fact that joyful moments could be found in forms of activist practices, as well as moments of critique in forms of entertainment. Critique and joyfulness combined, constituted ways to bring different individuals and groups together so as to *learn together* and *interact creatively*.

## • Research design

These activist and recreational practices were a part of an expanded investigation of practices during my exploratory journey. The journey began by myself being open enough so as to allow a trajectory of work among diverse spatial practices that were related with forms of learning, and sites across the divide. The trajectory of my journey was shaped by following the course of events, based on the events that occurred in response to political developments, and based on suggestions from my personal network.

Two elements defined the selection of the instances I engaged with:

- *topic*: related with the promotion of peace and reunification of Cyprus and/or bi-communal relations
- *access*: open to the public

The diversity of practices created a trajectory between different fields and forms, indicated below, to give an overview of the exploration. The field refers to the organizers' profession or the profession of key persons related to practices while the form indicates the techniques the organizers utilized to engage the public and address the topic of their activity.

Fields of activities:

- peace activism/awareness
- education
- arts/culture/recreation

Form of activities:

- Interactive-participatory: mobilization, demonstrations, marches, guided trips on the other side, music/cultural festivals, social everyday spaces
- Non-interactive: theatre plays, conferences, roundtables, structured dialogue

The diverse practices I explored were reviewed through the lens of pedagogy and thus, categorized into *interactive* and *non-interactive* events. *Interactive* events meant that I could engage as a *participant* in the processes of events, and interact with other participants and/or the facilitators. These were mostly instances that occurred in political and leisure everyday life, related to promoting peace and reunification of Cyprus such as mobilizations, demonstrations and everyday protesting as spontaneous responses to Cyprus talks, or marches as annual traditions, that expressed the desire for the reunification of Cyprus. Also, the practices I explored included actions of organizations, institutions and initiatives on promoting bi-communal relations such as guided trips on the "other" side. Although the exploration was guided by the aspect of open access and relation to promoting peace and reunification of Cyprus, my journey led me to go after other practices that would offer opportunities for learning and interaction targeting the

general public and thus, would approach social connectedness between individuals and groups in a broad sense (and not exclusively to GCs and TCs) such as music/cultural festivals.

Moreover, I engaged in specific social places of Nicosia, for instance in traditional coffee shops, especially in the core of its walled city, on both sites, where groups from different communities of Cyprus use to meet in their leisure time.

*Non-interactive* events meant that I could engage as an *attendant*. These were mostly informational events, also related to peace and reunification of Cyprus, such as a peace and conflict summer school, conferences, round table discussions and presentations related to peace and reunification, as well as artistic acts like theatre plays.

In relation to the *location*, interactive practices were mainly developed in the public space of different districts in Cyprus, while non-interactive practices were mostly developed in pre-booked private spaces, reflecting also the form of activities.

Being open in relation to the form or field of practice, allowed flexibility to discover opportunities for learning and interaction in the least expected practices, such as in the festivals or trips. Also, I was more able to shape criteria that would narrow the expanded review, and lead to the following stage, the selection of four of them for a thorough investigation.

## • Data collection

A way towards collecting insights from these spatial practices (about processes of their production and their impact on the public) was through approaching them as mini-case studies and directly through observing and participating in their production, thus engaging as both participant and observer; also, through a series of semi-structured interviews with key persons; and through chance discussions with other participants during the events. Contributive to a better understanding of these practices were (self-)reflection methods that I combined including writing, reflective chance discussions and conceptual diagramming, that alongside literature would be informing the framing of solidarity pedagogy. Conversely, assessing the spatial practices at this stage of the research meant there has been a level of analysis and evaluation, done through the lens of solidarity pedagogy. My journey was not only important in refining the framework of solidarity pedagogy, but also the research questions and development of methodology for conducting further

research.

The key persons I interviewed were related to spatial practices or social places. These were professional leaders, staff, supporters and facilitators related to activist and volunteering practices of organizations and initiatives, including youth non-governmental organizations, political parties, trade unions, social movements and initiatives; as well as leaders of artistic-cultural and recreational practices such as theatre directors and actors, festival organizers; and finally, members of academic institutions such as lecturers among others in sociology and peace pedagogy. Also, key persons would be loyal customers gathered at the social places. Whether they participated through interviews or chance discussions, research participants were a mixture of females and males, mainly including GCs and TCs, along with Armenians and Maronites.

### **Joyfulness in critical practices**

My journey began with my engagement in activist instances, that took place in Northern and Southern Nicosia district, and were produced in the public space of Cyprus, and more importantly, within the borderland, constituting what I perceive as *critical practices*, explained earlier in the chapter.

The most influential instances were events where organizations and movements from across the divide would invite communities to cross the check-points and meet at the border in order to collectively reclaim their right to appear together and to practise connectedness, even symbolically. What I found significant was that I and others (individuals and groups from both the communities) were able to share our common desire for reunification, to connect at a common place, so to co-produce *a new insertion* into the existing norm — in Rendell's words (2006). A new insertion would mean to perform the norm of the border *differently* so as to also produce a different or re-articulated narrative about its role.

Performing the border differently, meant that bodies coming from both sides of Cyprus would cross and meet, that is, connect at a common site within the borderland, so as to represent one body, a collective or a *we* of Cypriots. As a collective of Cypriots, then, we performed *differently* the norm of the physical border which normally is to impose and represent separation, to divide, by transforming it into a shared place (and opportunity) that even temporarily relates and allows



communities to connect. Acting together under such dismantled conditions of living voices in excess — in Butler’s words (2015) — our collective desire to reunify, live and appear together again and that reunification still matters for the TCs and GCs.

Therefore, based on the above, what mattered was to convey messages by an assembly of bodies gathered together to symbolize connectedness temporarily, rather than to interact with others substantially, even more with the other community, and towards building relationships. However, during these events there have been instances that showed how joyful moments were opportunities for individuals to interact so as to co-create, rather than just to meet at a common site. This links to Freire (1998) and Gauntlett’s (2011) ideas about the importance of joy and co-creation, both in learning and everyday life creations, so as to give more space for individuals to develop their own creativity, discover their self-power and cultivate relationships.

For instance, when *the Bi-communal Mobilization for Peace and Reunification of Cyprus* (figures 4.2-3) took place, what mattered the most was for organizations from across the divide to openly invite individuals and groups to come together in the buffer zone (at Centikaya football field) so that at “this crucial moment of negotiation the voice of logic, reunification, peace and hope can be heard loud and

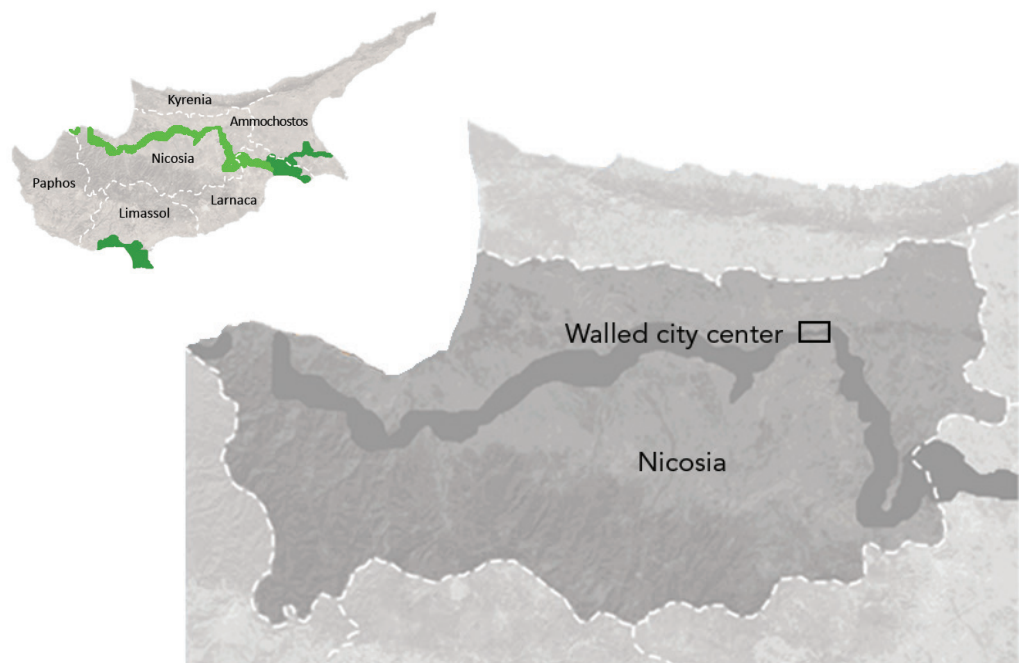


Figure 4.2. Pashia, E. (2019). Situating the walled city centre of Nicosia within its greater area, where activist spatial practices occurred.



Figure 4.3. Pashia, E. (2017). The crowd was gathered within the Cetinkaya field while the common declaration was read by the two actors (stage on the right).

clear” (Peace Generation-United by hope, 2017: para.5); also, to collectively and with just our presence, express our support to the negotiations that were taking place on that day of January 2017; and, to highlight at the same time our common demand that the leaders should return with a solution.<sup>1</sup>

A stage at the front hosted the activities included in the official program. It started with the reading out of the joint declaration by a TC and a GC artist, while at the same time different slogans emphasized the concerns expressed in the common declaration signed by the participant organizations. Different groups would shout out loudly slogans such as “Cyprus belongs to its people”, “United Federal Cyprus”, and “Cyprus’ Turks are not our enemies, they are our brothers”.

In discussions I had with GC and TC friends and comrades, I could sense their disappointment due to the especially low participation, particularly of TCs, attributed to the mistrust and disappointment spread amongst them as a result of the unsuccessful last meeting between the leaders in November 2016.

However, a special moment was the cultural program inspired by the common culture of communities, that included also artistic interventions such as poem reading and a music concert, produced by the voluntary participation and support of TC and GC actors, singers and bands, culminating with us, the rally supporters, holding hands with each other and dancing together in circles to Cypriot traditional songs — a cultural ritual that both communities share.

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<sup>1</sup> The organizers were a group of 130 organizations and bodies, based in the north and south of Cyprus and from all the communities of Cyprus, named as the Peace Generation-United by hope initiative. This would include political parties, trade unions, youth and women’s organizations, bi-communal groups and platforms, employers and professional organizations, agencies and organized groups (Cyprus Mail, 2017).

What I found interesting was the fact that the rally was a critical practice that aimed as one body of Cypriots to highlight that it was an important milestone for the conflict transformation, if leaders were to achieve agreement for a resolution, while at the same time, the cultural elements based on our shared culture created a joyful atmosphere, and possibly the only moment we could connect and interact with others more creatively, rather than during watching the formal part of the event.

I experienced similar joyful moments during the everyday gatherings-protesting (at the Ledra street check-point) organized by the civil bi-communal movement called *Unite Cyprus Now (UCN)*.<sup>2</sup> The movement was formed after the general atmosphere of disappointment, resentment, feeling of betrayal and anger that the suspension of negotiations in February 2017 brought about, after yet another failure of the two leaders to reach an agreement; and after the Cypriot communities' silence on such an important setback.

What I found interesting was the fact we, GC and TC followers, could not only attend the daily events by just standing there, we could also participate actively, engage in and alter the outcome of gatherings. Also, that the formal program combined joyful elements alongside the critical positions they would express in their public statements in relation to negotiation process.

For instance, organizers would provide us different props, such as whistles and drums, to use freely so to start the protesting by literally making noise as a symbolic act, that is, making a noise for the fact that we desire resolution of the conflict. Also, after the formal part of the program (usually someone from the group would make a short speech) it was open for followers to add their contribution by spontaneous acts, by for instance singing a song. Additionally, the formal program especially during weekends would include activities and opportunities for the public to cooperate and co-create. For instance, in one of the gatherings, we would stand next to each other holding crossed hands, so to create a human chain within the buffer zone, or on another day we would gather for crochet-making, women and men together, so to cover a tree within the buffer zone with our creations, and on another day, organizers invited also

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<sup>2</sup> The UCN initiative was defined as non-partisan and that it did not belong to any political group or trade union. Instead, "we are ordinary Cypriots, who are concerned about our children's future. This is our common concern" (Aygin, 2017). However, there was a political position in regards to resolution. The initiative aimed to create reunification awareness for not just any kind of resolution but for what is called Bi-zonal, Bi-communal Federation, the same that was put on the table of negotiations between the two leaders of communities (Ibid.).



Figure 4.4 Pashia, E. (2017). An instance from the human-chain event that took place in the buffer zone at Ledra street, in the Nicosia walled centre.



Figure 4.5 Pashia, E. (2017). An instance from the traditional children's games event that took place in the buffer zone at Ledra street, in the Nicosia walled centre.



Figure 4.6. Pashia, E. (2017). Protestors using different props such as whistles, drums, flags and placards.



Figure 4.7. Pashia, E. (2017). Speeches by supporters-representatives of different organizations.



Figure 4.8. Pashia, E. (2017). Props would also include hand-written slogans.

children to play traditional street games (figures 4.4-8).

What I gained from the daily gatherings, was that despite the critical statement they intended to achieve in relation to reunification, was that it became clearer to myself that frequent contact, even short-lasting, as well as joyful moments of co-creation can be effective in building connections between the two communities. Until today, I feel grateful for the fact that I managed to get to know more people from the TC community, that I can now recognize them at other events or in the streets of Nicosia. This feeling that I have connections with the north side of the island, with which I share common desires, is rewarding. Also, I found that other people would share the same realization with me, some of who confessed that for many years were refusing to cross the border, which changed, after coming to the everyday gatherings, through which they felt more encouraged to finally make the decision to cross to the “other” side.

The second important realization was that special moments of bonding, which I experienced, would happen during activities that invited us to co-create with each other, material or immaterial things; this would be either the joyful moment of co-creating pieces of crochet to cover a tree as a symbolic act that we can achieve peace; or when we would hold hands with each other to create a human chain; and even discussions during the events when we were taking the time to introduce ourselves to each other, transforming the gathering and buffer zone to a kind of a social everyday space.

Another instance of joyfulness in my journey emerged during the *Demilitarized Reunited Cyprus March*, an annual event organized by GC and TC organizations, which usually takes place in March (at the Nicosia walled centre).<sup>3</sup> After the suspension of negotiations in February, the march in 2017 was even more important to invite groups to meet at a common place, cross the border together, march across the divide together, and finally occupy it together, even temporarily.

What I felt was an important element of the critical practice was the fact that the trajectory of the march was drawn as an inter-border route, an embodied form of critique towards division by co-producing symbolisms of connection in space and registering in consciousness that we passed through the border together. The

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<sup>3</sup> The event was organized by the bi-communal movement called Demilitarised Nicosia (Askersiz Lefkoşa in Turkish, Αποστρατιωτικοποιημένη Λευκωσία in Greek).



Figure 4.9. Pashia, E. (2017). In a circle marchers shared their thoughts.



Figure 4.10. Pashia, E. (2017). Activities took place under the supervision of UN forces.



Figure 4.11. Pashia, E. (2017). Marchers were gathered around banners that laid on the floor.

trajectory was marked by a number of acts in the public space and in both sides, including speeches from organizers and artistic interventions from street dance groups.

Another interesting element was the fact that we, GC and TC followers, communicated our desire for reunification also through joyful moments when occupying the border and during which we could spend time together. These, for example, were the music that was playing while others would fly a kite, or even affective gestures like hugging each other (figures 4.9-11), culminating in a sitting circle to share our instant feelings and thoughts. Also, what left me with glimpses of hope, was the fact that most of us were young people from both communities, who shared the desire for peace in our country.

### Critique in joyful practices

Based on my interest in the element of joyfulness, my journey eventually was led to recreational practices that took place in Northern and Southern Cyprus, and were produced in different sites of Cyprus's space, constituting what I perceive as *joyful practices*, explained earlier in the chapter.

The most influential instances were events where organizers would invite groups



to escape from their everyday life and gather together for an event, elsewhere from home, and where they were able to freely spend their leisure time. What I found interesting was the fact that groups and individuals were encouraged to interact, through activities that allowed them to engage in the process and shape the outcome of the events.

Interestingly, during these leisure events there were instances of learning and knowledge exchange reflecting the fact that I and others, would not only meet just to spend our free time together, we were given the opportunity to interact, co-create and learn together, within a joyful atmosphere.

For instance, a *guided trip to Paphos city*, organized by the GC trade union PEO (south-based), with its sister TC workers' trade union CTOS (north-based), in February 2017, aimed to simultaneously raise awareness about our common history and culture and to connect with each other through practising our shared cultural rituals (figure 4.12). Specifically, the program of the day included visits to historical sites, a traditional meal at the tavern based on a shared cuisine and taste during which we could learn about each other's reality and share views on conflict negotiations.

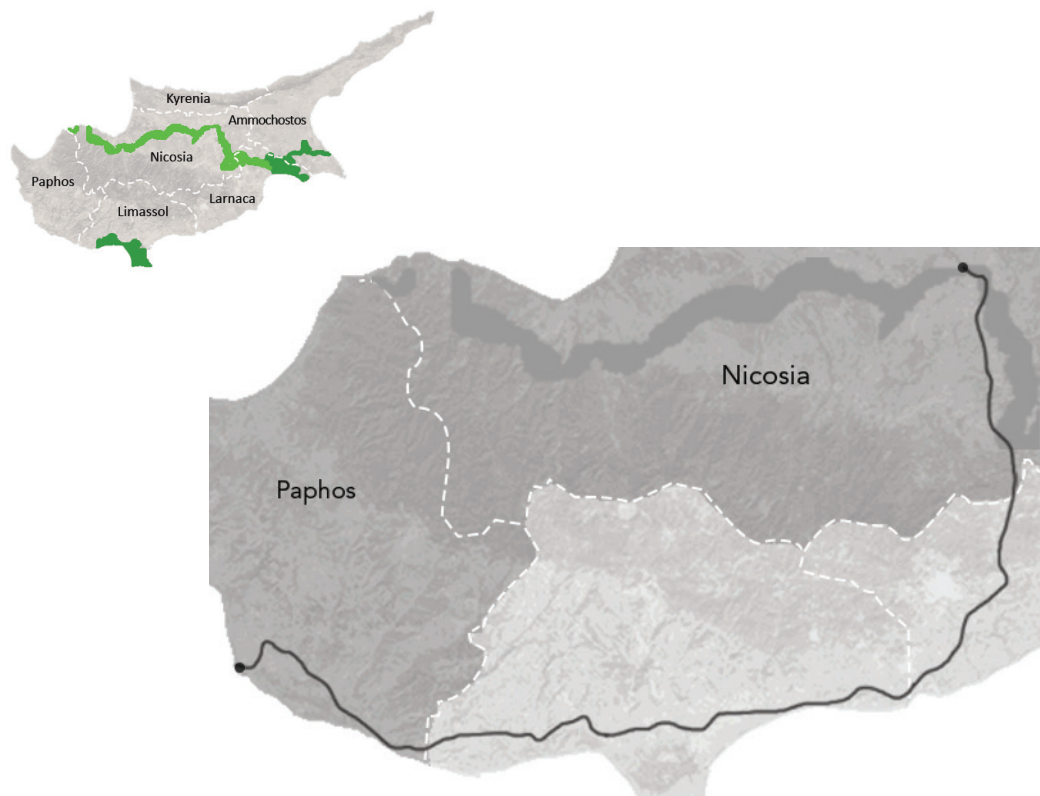


Figure 4.12. Pashia, E. (2019). The trip trajectory from Nicosia to Paphos.



Figure 4.13. Pashia, E. (2017). The visit at the “PEO historical museum of labour”.



Figure 4.14 Pashia, E. (2017). Our first stop at “Aphrodite’s Rock”.



Figure 4.15. Pashia, E. (2017). Our second stop at the “Archaeological Park of Kato Paphos”.



Figure 4.16. Pashia, E. (2017). Our last stop for a meal at a traditional tavern in the old harbour area.

Our participation in the trip not only was a joyful leisure activity, but also an embodied form of critique, a critical practice. The act of gathering together itself critiqued our separated way of living, distant from each other, and expressed our desire for reunification, by just gathering together. Additionally, what also was effective in connecting with each other meaningfully were activities that aimed to raise awareness about our shared past. These were the learning instances about shared history, mythology and sites, in this case for the city of Paphos. Also, the traditional meal at the tavern was coming from a shared cuisine and taste.

I felt that one of the most significant moments in the trip was the opportunity to eat together, strengthening my realizations from previous instances in my journey. That indeed, practising together shared cultural rituals, such as eating together, constitutes an effective way to connect, exchange affection, understanding, and thus, strengthen relational ties with each other (figures 4.13-15). This became apparent to me when, although it was the first time that I would meet with co-travellers, I was able to connect with different people easily. Interestingly, during the meal I could look among the smiley faces, and I was not able to distinguish who was Turkish or Greek Cypriot. I was reassured that we share more commonalities that unite us rather than differences that separate us. And, during the meal, I had the opportunity to discuss with different people and share concerns about peace in Cyprus, feeling that the desire for reunification was shared, even among the young participants on the trip. For instance, one of them shared his desire to become an officer in peacebuilding bodies along with his consideration for applying for relevant studies.

After this experience, my understanding of what could help our shared culture to not vanish, prejudices to be eliminated, and relationships to not be completely dismantled, was reinforced; that all we need are opportunities to connect during the everyday life.

Similar instances of critique I experienced at trans-local music festivals taking place in different districts of Cyprus, such as the *Afrobanana festival*(figures 4.17-22) that in 2017 took place at the Kornos forest within Larnaca district and *Fengaros festival* that in 2017 took place at the Kato Drys village within Larnaca district, both annual



Figure 4.17. Pashia, E. (2019). Situating Kornos forest and Kato Drys village within the Larnaca district, where the Afrobanana festival and Fengaros festival took place.

events organized during the summer in Southern Cyprus (figures 4.23-26).<sup>4 5</sup>

What I found interesting about these festivals was the fact that although leisure activities, they as well offered learning opportunities, awareness about social issues, and more importantly, opportunities to connect with others through culture, while they would manage to attract mostly young visitors. Specifically, both the festivals included dwelling at camping sites among nature for a few days, where groups had time to learn about each other, learn about music and sustainable environmental practices through participatory workshops or the festivals' internal practices of recycle-reuse.

Interestingly, based on participants' statements the festive atmosphere can encourage more quality interactions, related to the fact that it offers an escape from everyday social and physical environments, people, places, activities at a festival allowing thus, time to spend with others, either friends or strangers either with their own friends or others, and thus, escape isolation from each other that characterizes their lifestyle. A visitor at the Afrobanana festival shares how the festival contributes to connecting people:

<sup>4</sup> The Afrobanana festival is organized by a non-profit organization named ABR-Alternative Brains Rule, which through the festival, aims to bring together and promote young Cypriots from different professions related to arts and thus, "to develop the Cypriot creative alternative scene" (Afrobanana, 2017: para.1).

<sup>5</sup> The Fengaros festival is organized by Louvana Records, a Cypriot record company based in the south. The aim of the festival is to bring together for the public "fresh and original live music from around the world" with "more than 35 acts from Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Kuwait, Niger, Israel, Australia, England and the USA" (Louvana Records, 2017: para. 1).



Figure 4.18. Pashia, E. (2017). Daytime live music act.



Figure 4.19. Pashia, E. (2017). Night-time live music act.



Figure 4.20. Pashia, E. (2017). Token exchange and festival souvenirs selling point.



Figure 4.21. Pashia, E. (2017). Chance discussions/interviews with visitors at the food court. Vendors at the back.



Figure 4.22. Pashia, E. (2017). Chance discussions/interviews with visitors at the camping site.



Figure 4.23. Pashia, E. (2017). Daytime live music act. Food and drink court at the back.



Figure 4.24. Pashia, E. (2017). Night-time live music act. Food and drink court on the left.



Figure 4.25. Pashia, E. (2017). Chance discussions/interviews with visitors at the village's coffee shop.



Figure 4.26. Pashia, E. (2017). Chance discussions/interviews with visitors at the camping site.



*“Coming at the festival you can recover a bit from the agoraphobia that the city causes, because you are obliged to work for many hours, every day, every week, then in your free time to go to the gym and thus no time to meet those you want...Therefore, if you spend a long time without meeting any people you get used to it, you like it; you do not want to see anybody. I think that this festival achieves the opposite” (male 1, group 4, visitor).*

Another explains this specifically:

*“...it’s like you are restricted in this place and bound to live with people for some days. Inevitably, you “should” live with them, to connect, to discuss new things” (female 6, group 5, visitor).*

In adding to this, another says:

*“There is not a schedule you have to follow. You do as you please...You just sit and discuss anything, playing the guitar without having the pressure of normal life” (female 3, group 2, visitor).*

Similarly, at the Fengaros festival one explains:

*“Rhythms here are different. In the city there is higher more intense routine. While here you escape...You can relax” (male 1, group 4, visitor).*

And a different visitor complements that:

*“...conditions here are different. The rhythm of life is slower, you do not have your phone, wifi, you do not even care for checking your phone...Also, you might feel a bit committed for not doing specific things in order to do other things; that is, to stay and talk with my friends” (female 1, group 4, visitor).*

Although these were joyful activities, the fact that they managed to connect different individuals from across Cyprus, itself critiques this lifestyle, where the desire for an alternative one was expressed silently by just gathering together at the festivals.

### **04.03 Imagining spatial practices of Solidarity Pedagogy**

From my experiences in the journey I collected insights that helped in starting to imagine how the strengthening connections between the TCs and GCs can be possible, leading to a number of pointers which became the aspects to focus on in the following stage of field work, the in-depth research on two selected case studies. Also, my journey provided a new knowledge or narrative about the context

of Cyprus, utilizing insights from the spatial practices. In addition, in line with the second objective of the research — to propose a concept/methodology — the instances have been helpful in reflecting and refining my conceptualization about the concept of solidarity pedagogy.

Significant elements that I discovered through this journey were:

- The ways critique and joyfulness could be combined so as to engage individuals and groups in forms of recreation and learning, and therefore, they would not just meet for the purposes of the event, but also, they would actively participate and interact creatively with each other.
- Interestingly, this would be achieved mainly through activities that also *combined learning with shared culture and rituals* where facilitators would invite the audience to engage, co-create with each other and shape the outcome of the event.

In regards to the activist instances, joyfulness was found in critical practices when using cultural rituals such as dancing to Cypriot traditional music, that the two communities share. In regards to the recreational instances, critique was found in joyful practices as cultural rituals or learning opportunities and knowledge exchange, such as eating together during a trip or learning about common history. Especially the recreational activities, showed ways that joyfulness could coexist with learning and shape encouraging conditions for co-creation and connection with others.

This is in line with the argument from local scholars discussed earlier who highlight that it's not enough to open check-points but that more opportunities continue to arise for communities to cross and more importantly, to interact. It leads, therefore, to suspect that the transformation of the divisive norm of the border could as well be achieved through moments of joy, which at the same time critique its divisive role. That is, they connect the two communities and sides, even temporarily, and offer opportunities to nurture consciousness and awareness, as well as build relationships.

In addition, these practices constituted opportunities for the different individuals and groups to meet as a common ground, or put differently, for co-producing a *shared space* — whether this was within the borderland or a place elsewhere. In the case of activist practices, individuals temporarily dislocated from their everyday routine, met each other at a common site within the borderland where they could

perform together their desire that this connection should become their reality. Likewise, in the case of leisure practices, individuals temporarily dislocated from their real and everyday environments, moved elsewhere and met with others where their desire to spend their time with others was expressed by just gathering together. The shared spaces that would be produced signified and highlighted the act of connection between individuals and groups who would meet as well as interact, connect and learn together.

Most importantly, though, the spatial practices situated in everyday life have been important due to the fact that they provided different forms of learning and knowledge exchange in a joyful way, and therefore they have been insightful in imagining ways of learning-to-connect-with-others in space, pointing towards solidarity pedagogy as a pedagogical spatial practice. In the context of Cyprus, extending the impact that such spatial practices in everyday life possibly have, can potentially provide ways forward in filling the gap in the youth's consciousness in regards to the importance of reunification, interaction with the other community, and more importantly, engagement in this way in the peace process. Solidarity pedagogy then, can be thought of as becoming a form of non-formal learning and active engagement at the same time, where communities meet and engage together in modalities of joyful learning and co-creation.

Collecting these interesting points from the journey helped me to think of *Interplaces* as practices that can encourage communities to cross and meet on the other side. This has been important not only for imagining an inter-border embodied methodology, developed through the porous geopolitical border, that is addressed specifically to the GCs and TCs so as to nurture relations between them; but also, for imagining that *Interplaces* can eventually be practised between the different social groups or communities that exist on the island, so as to cultivate diversity beyond the border and across Cyprus.

This supports my position that although I acknowledge the many challenges, contained within the doubleness of the new reality in Cyprus, for the future of its communities, at the same time I recognize that opportunities might arise as well that should be used in order to transform the relational border between the communities, and especially between the youths. Drawing from this, in line with learnings from the instances on existing practices and considering the porous border, through my thesis I point to the fact that it is imperative to regulate the

procrastination of finding a resolution to the conflict and its impact on consciousness and relations of the two communities, by reinforcing connectedness across the divide. That is to provide opportunities of co-producing spaces, even temporarily, so as to allow communities to learn to connect, co-create, and to rediscover solidarity and peace together.

## **From the exploratory journey to a further research on cases**

In the context of research, towards discovering tangible ways to regulate the challenges that arise for communities in Cyprus, pointers from my journey helped to direct the selection and in-depth investigation on two selected case studies, two recurrent festivals, namely the EDON and Xarkis festivals, presented in chapters 6 and 7. The Afrobanana and Fengaros festivals mentioned earlier in the text, were traced and investigated as individual case studies as well, but they were only considered as supportive instances during my exploratory journey.

My journey was developed as an inter-border trajectory also as a way to utilize solidarity as a mode of working through the border, and subsequently select cases that were situated on both sides of Cyprus. However, following my journey, I decided that it was important to choose spatial practices to investigate thoroughly, from which I could specifically draw techniques to facilitate connections, either between the Turkish and Greek communities, or between other social groups, and with either having or not to cross the border.

Although all instances mentioned earlier provided useful insights, festivals attracted my interest the most. Learnings from the exploratory journey helped to think three important elements (and reasons) that guided my choice to explore them further:

- Firstly, in relation to *activities*, during the exploratory journey I discovered that combinations of elements could increase interaction between individuals and groups. These were the combination of critique and joyfulness, as well as recreation and learning that both festivals seemed the most promising practices to include these elements and thus, from the perspective of this research, promising techniques for promoting interactions and connections between individuals and groups.
- Secondly, and related to the above, the *content* of activities played an important role, which was instilled from the local context of Cyprus, that is, context-specific. Likewise, both festivals included promising hybrids of

joyfulness and critique, as well as recreational and learning activities adapted to the *shared culture and rituals*, and *reality* of Cyprus such as traditional music or information about the latest socio-political developments. Also:

- For the case of the EDON festival specifically, an additional element was the incorporation of activities specifically targeting bi-communal relations
- For the case of the Xarkis festival, an additional element was the fact that activities were based on participatory artistic creation and learning
- Thirdly, in relation to the audience, it was important that during the activist and recreational practices some of them managed to attract members of the younger generation, that sparked a glimpse of hope. Thus, I found it important also that both festivals managed to attract young audiences as well.

The following chapter (5) presents in detail the methodological approach that was adopted for the whole research, as well as the specific methods that were used for the thorough investigation of the two festivals. The analysis of the two cases responds to the second objective of the research to propose a new theory of action that will inform spatial practice with guidelines *on learning to connect with others through the border*, which constitutes the basis for responding to the third objective of the research; to recommend steps for future practice to practitioners active in community building and conflict transformation (Chapters 8 and 9).



## 05 On Research Design and Methods

### 05.01 Introduction

The thesis collects insights about the everyday experience of navigating a frozen conflict and a porous border through a diverse range of spatial practices; as well as about practice-based theories that can ground and frame such practices that encourage processes of *learning how to connect with others*. This is based on the research problematization that was presented in Chapter 2 and highlights the need to enhance peace consciousness and transform relations between the two communities of Cyprus, especially in the youth, so to eventually cultivate peace culture in Cyprus.

As a result, the broader research objective set was to explore different definitions and forms of *learning* through both critical theories and (existing) practices in the space of Cyprus, so as to gain relevant knowledge. This is channelled into two objectives:

- Firstly, to utilize insights from theory and practice to propose a new theory of transformative action — namely the concept of solidarity pedagogy — to inform spatial practice with guidelines on learning how to connect with others, and with the ability to encourage connections between communities across the geopolitical border in Cyprus.
- Secondly, to use knowledge gained from the research to inform future practice and suggest policy recommendations.

The concept of solidarity pedagogy, presented in Chapter 3, was also informed by an initial field study described in Chapter 4. This was an exploratory journey focused on a series of instances, activist and recreational practices, the results of which show that combinations of *critique and joyfulness*, with forms of *learning and recreation in space constitute* ways to enhance interaction, connection and co-creation between individuals and groups.

To address the broad objective of the research, the exploratory journey has been a useful moment to focus on two lines of investigation:

- a) To gather knowledge about the context of Cyprus, reflect and reposition on the concept of solidarity pedagogy, through an exploratory journey among a range of spatial practices

b) To narrow down the exploratory journey and select cases for in-depth investigation, based on techniques that promoted connections between different individuals and groups that are worthy of thorough investigation.

Although all instances provided useful insights, festivals as a form of spatial practice, seemed to attract my interest the most for further research. Specifically, I focused on two promising cultural festivals for in-depth research, the EDON and Xarkis festivals, presented later in the thesis, in Chapters 6 and 7.

This chapter explains the methodological approach that was adopted for the whole research, as well as the specific methods that were used for the thorough investigation of the two selected case studies, the EDON and Xarkis festivals.

## 05.02 Research approach

### Empirical Qualitative research

Following the research objectives, the design required to be structured in such a way so that theoretical investigation is weaved with empirical insights. In my research this implies that the research process is designed as *a qualitative approach of empirical social science research*, including a direct observation of a range of live spatial practices that are situated in the everyday life and urban space of Cyprus. This provides the opportunity to understand the production of spatial practices within their context, as well as understand the personal experiences of the public.

The research approach was drawn from the theoretical grounds of solidarity pedagogy, which itself takes a critical stance to knowledge production politics that agree with the empirical approach of qualitative research and other scholars working on critical schools of thought including feminism and cultural studies (Bhattacharya, 2012). Specifically, the objective for the empirical investigation was for me to participate in and observe live practices so as to trace possible learning and interaction techniques utilized within each practice and understand the level of their impact on the participants-learners. This was carried out through the documentation and interpretive analysis of the motivation and experiences of the public participants in the different live practices as well as of the spatial production of the practices.



- **Knowledge politics: co-production and participation, embodiment and reflexivity**

Guided by the framework of solidarity pedagogy that is influenced by ideas of critical pedagogy, feminist thinking and relations of space and knowledge, the research politics of knowledge is characterized by *co-production* and *participation*, *embodiment* and *reflexivity*.

### **Co-production and participation**

To begin with, solidarity pedagogy argues for the transformation of internal and relational borders through knowledge co-production that implies the participation and connection of diverse agents of subjective (marginalized) knowledges, from whichever position in the world. Based on these principles, the work in the field of this research followed the advantages that empirical research provides including the overarching aim to produce understanding of situations within their contexts and through participants' voice and experiences (Schensul, 2012), shaping thus a more inclusive and horizontal process of knowledge production.

In my research, co-production not only means a *bottom-up* approach but also that knowledge is co-produced *with* research participants and myself, as a meaningful way to understand in-depth the socio-spatial production of spatial practices. It was important to focus on the participants' experiences and aim to collect diverse views (and data), but also to experience together the live events and interact with them, for a more thorough understanding of their experiences, and the spatial practices, agreeing with the feminist position that knowledge about social processes is important to be examined through the personal experiences (Hundleby, 2012; Brooks, 2007). In other words, according to the ethics of solidarity pedagogy, the co-production allowed the research to be experienced as *a shared space* between participants and myself and thus, for co-creation or "co-construction" of meaning" (Hesse-Biber, 2007: 16). Participation, therefore, coexists with the co-construction/co-production which in pedagogical-feminist thinking is a way of honouring marginalized, oppressed, and thus, concealed knowledges by voicing their subjective experiences/knowledge.

In the research, this meant that both the participants' and my personal experiences mattered and constituted primary sources and a direct way to decode the processes within a spatial practice. To interpret them through the meanings that participants

ascribed to their own experiences but also through the way they impacted my personal consciousness and interactions with others. Also, it provided a better understanding of the broader impact of each practice in terms of meaningful interactions between individuals and groups.

### **Embodiment and reflexivity**

As seen through the review of critical theories (Chapter 3), solidarity pedagogy was examined also in space. Specifically, through Lefebvre (1991) it was highlighted that production of knowledge and social processes are correlated to space, while he argues for the social production of space to support that both social processes and space are dynamic, rather than flat or fixed as normative imposed logico-mathematical knowledge about space reproduction, which consequently obscures and thus disempowers lives, cultures and differences, and knowledge about them. In feminist thinking as seen earlier through Butler (1999; 1993) and Rendell (2006), a critical way of analysing and understanding social processes, is also associated with the interconnection of knowledge and space. Specifically, in the knowledge-space interrelation, feminist thinking highlights that the view from the subjective position matters, meaning the way that space is embodied and lived by individuals and groups.

In my research, the understanding of spatial practices and the experiences of individuals and groups was carried out through me examining first-hand the processes within, in their natural setting, during their production and together with the research participants. This contributed in a more in-depth understanding both of the production of practices in a contextualized approach, and likewise of the experiences of the public.

In addition, a practice that constituted an important element in the research politics of knowledge production was that of reflection, which constitutes also an important pedagogical principle that is embedded in solidarity pedagogy. Specifically, reflection informed the research design, the development of the empirical work and personal consciousness. I have been continually re-visiting the process and stages of the research including the research questions and the field work, so to ensure that my approach is committed to research as praxis — as Freire would have it (1996) — and thus movement from theory to action, the field study, and through reflection to another action-field study. In feminist thinking on research, this is named as 'reflexive methodology' (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012: 8). It is described as the circular

*process* where theory and practice inform each other through reflection, and thus both are constantly transformed (Ibid.). For my research, practising adaptability was essential for every stage of the research, where unpredictable changes or re-planning of actions were able to consider them also as part of the research process. Also, reflexivity was a way to practise self-criticism or self-reflection, as an essential distance that is important, according also to Freire (2000), in understanding and collecting knowledge about living experiences.

## **Multi-sited ethnography and ethnographic case study**

For the collection of data, I used a combination of methodological approaches including ethnography and case study, while data analysis methods included the interpretive approach of content analysis of visual and verbal material. The combination of methodological approaches was important on addressing specificities of live spatial practices, including short duration, multiple sites, and multiple activities within, that necessitated for myself to be adaptable enough to unpredicted circumstances.

### **• Multi-sited ethnography**

Based on the methodological objective to investigate and understand the production of spatial practices and subjective experiences of groups and individuals, I decided that ethnography was the most appropriate approach, constituting one of the most applied among the social sciences. This provided the opportunity to respond appropriately and adapt to the exploratory nature of the research, meaning accessing the field with “an open mind”, following the course of events and thus developing the content of the empirical research during its process (Fetterman, 2012: 2).

Also, it provided the opportunity to practise a contextualized development of understanding through my personal engagement in live spatial practices that led into a sensitized and critical reading of the socio-spatial production. This meant gaining “experiential” knowledge (Hundleby, 2012: 3) through the public’s experience and multiple views, but also through the personal impact I had from the events, balancing the danger to produce ‘artificial’ understandings about socio-spatial processes (Fetterman, 2012).

In addition, although doing ethnography might connote an open process, at the same time, it entails a design to follow that helps to create a guided exploration. In my research, and as ethnographic process usually includes, I adopted an inductive approach. This began with the research problematization followed by the initial

development of a theory or a concept, a series of fieldworks that were the main component of the research design and opportunities to test whether data collection methods chosen were appropriate for the research. These steps, as in ethnography, were followed by the data analysis, writing of the results and repositioning of the theory.

Doing ethnography connotes a long-term interaction and consistent engagement of the researcher with people and sites so as to gain an in-depth understanding and “thick description” of examined phenomena (Geertz cited in Falzon, 2009: 7). These phenomena are usually situated within one local site that is viewed as a “container of a particular set of social relations, which could be studied and possibly compared with the contents of other containers elsewhere.” (Falzon, 2009: 1).

However, my research draws from Lefebvrian ideas where relations between space and culture (and their nature) are perceived as dynamic, therefore they cannot be confined (and examined) within a single site. Based on that, I engaged and explored multiple sites and practices in order to produce knowledge about the context of Cyprus, as well as different learning forms that can be found across spatial practices that occur in different sites of its urban space. This less conventional approach of ethnography that escapes the single site exploration is named ‘multi-sited ethnography’ which suggests the research/researcher moves across different places within a field in order to “follow people, connections, associations, and relationships across space” (Falzon, 2009: 1-2). The approach provided a way to address the temporary nature of spatial practices lasting between a few hours to three days as well as to enrich the spectrum of practices I would identify in the exploration, forming a trajectory of fieldwork across multiple sites in Northern and Southern Cyprus. Although there have been discussions on the fact that such an approach possibly cannot provide the necessary depth, for this research it has been a way to understand better bottom-up processes that arise in the urban space, by making a “thicker” engagement during their development (Ibid.). Also, following Mohanty’s ideas (2003) on inclusive knowledge that is produced through networks that connect subjective knowledges, similarly in my research I utilized multi-sited ethnography to collect a diverse range of voices across Cyprus and contexts of practice, contributing in the general knowledge that the research is based on.

#### • **Ethnographic Case study**

Using the multi-sited ethnography implies that it has been important to understand

different live spatial practices within their different contexts, how they are developed within space and generally understand the complexity entailed. For this, I chose the method of case study as a way to study the practices within their situated locations, a popular way to study a field and a phenomenon in depth (Blatter, 2012). As explained earlier, the exploratory nature of the research allowed the investigation of multiple spatial practices, thus case studies. The investigation was focused to understand techniques used in the different practices that were able to connect individuals and groups, and more specifically, to identify forms of learning in space.

The method of case study allowed studying the live development of spatial practices in their real-life context. Specifically, I was able to focus on the particularity of each case/spatial practice including the unique qualities and elements that were important in relation to the research problem (Stake, 2000; Blatter, 2012). In combination with multi-sited ethnography and therefore the selection of a series of cases, the approach allowed collecting diverse data from multiple sources, increasing triangulation, validity and general quality of the research, a set of elements that is considered as the advantages when adopting the case study method (Blatter, 2012). For my research, each case study was chosen by following my personal 'intrinsic' interest, always in relation to the research objectives, which allowed to focus on understanding the case rather than producing generalized results (Johansson, 2003). To this, the analysis and generalizations followed an 'inductive' mode meaning that theory and concepts were produced through the cases (ibid.). Multiple sources and types of data were produced through a combination of methods including participant observation supported by semi-structured interviews and chance discussions, as well as in-depth interviews with the key persons involved in the production of spatial practices, and personal participation.

## 05.03 Research design

### Research steps

The research questions and objectives were addressed in three main steps as follows, including firstly, the development of a framework and a pilot study, secondly, the conduct of multi-sited ethnography on instances and individual cases, and thirdly, the outcomes together with repositioning of theory and recommendations.

#### a) Framework development and a pilot case study

Following the broad objective of the research — to collect insights from theory and

practice — the first step includes the initial literature review and a pilot study in the field, both of which helped me to define objectives, questions and criteria for guiding the following exploratory journey in the field. The pilot study was selected based on my personal experience several times in the past as a volunteer at a festival, the EDON festival. The investigation of the festival was guided by the fact that the festival included activities that were focused on promoting the bi-communal character of the Cypriot culture. At the same time, through the investigation, I was able to discover criteria for selecting future instances to investigate, as part of my exploratory journey that would lead to the selection of two case studies for in-depth research. Also, the investigation was a way to reflect and define research objectives, refine research design and test selected qualitative methods.

## **b) Multi-sited ethnography on instances and individual case studies**

The first objective of the research together with the theoretical investigation on different forms and concepts of learning, was addressed also through work in the field. The exploratory nature of the research, and the approach of the multi-sited ethnography, allowed me to investigate an expanded range of instances, that is, spatial practices, moving between sites, practices and people, which was regulated through reflexivity, leading into the selection of two individual case studies for a thorough investigation.

In fact, reflexive methodology was expressed through the way I organized the organic development of the empirical work, that is, into cycles of documentation and reflection, with two main phases. Firstly, the ‘exploratory journey’ including a range of instances/spatial practices, and secondly, the ‘in-depth research’ that focused on two selected individual case studies.

The diagram below (figure 5.1) illustrates the two phases of the empirical work, where I carried out an expanded ‘review of instances’, which was preceded by the pilot study on the EDON festival, and followed by a focused research on four ‘individual case studies’. The pilot study was integrated later on as one of the case studies. The whole work in the field was carried out in four field visits between 2016-2018. I will be using the ‘exploratory journey’ and ‘in-depth research’ interchangeably with the ‘instances’ and ‘individual case studies’ respectively.

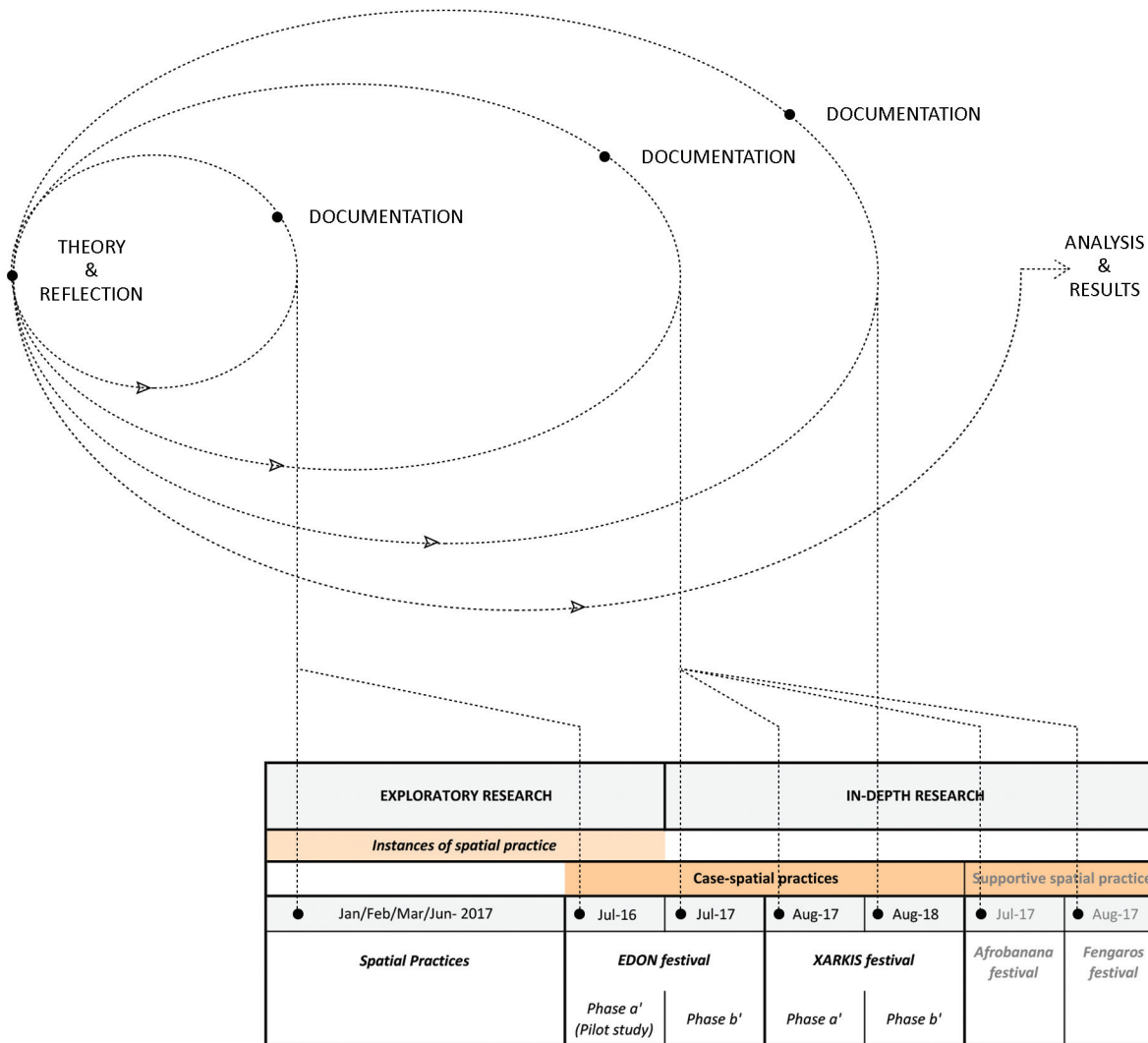


Figure 5.1. Pashia, E. (2019). Overview of the research phases illustrating the reflective mode of the research work between theory and practice/ field visits. Field visits were completed in three rounds between 2016 and 2017; the exploratory research over the first round, and the in-depth research on the second and third rounds.

### Review of instances-practices: an exploratory journey

I addressed the first objective and question of the research by exploring different forms and concepts of learning through an interdisciplinary resource of both critical theories and practices. This process began with an initial cycle moving from theory to practice — including literature review, a pilot study and reflection — that led to another cycle, namely the *exploratory journey* that was developed at different moments in 2017, between January and March, and in June (figure 5.2).

My journey was an inter-border field work, where I reviewed and engaged with a range of instances, that is, spatial practices that occurred in different locations across Northern and Southern Cyprus. It has been a way to explore solidarity as a mode of working through the border, and multi-sited ethnography as its methodological

		EXPLORATORY RESEARCH		IN-DEPTH RESEARCH				
		Instances of spatial practice						
		Case-spatial practices				Supportive spatial practices		
		Jan/Feb/Mar/Jun- 2017	Jul-16	Jul-17	Aug-17	Aug-18	Jul-17	Aug-17
		Spatial Practices	EDON festival		XARKIS festival		Afrobanana festival	Fengaros festival
			Phase a' (Pilot study)	Phase b'	Phase a'	Phase b'		
DOCUMENTATION & REFLECTION	OBSERVATIONS	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	INTERVIEWS	•	•	•	•		•	•
	CHANCE DISCUSSIONS	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	REFLECTIVE WRITING	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
ANALYSIS & RESULTS	VISUAL & TEXTUAL ANALYSIS		•	•	•	•		
PARTICIPANTS		KEY-PERSONS professional leaders, staff, supporters, facilitators	a) facilitators of activities: festival volunteers, representatives of invited organizations (national/international)		a) festival visitors: individuals/groups of newcomers visitors (to village) and local visitors (residents of village)		a) festival visitors: groups	a) festival visitors: groups
		SPATIAL PRACTICES - activist/volunteering practices of organizations and initiatives: non-governmental organizations, political parties, trade unions, social movements/initiatives - artistic/cultural and recreational practices: theatre, festivals - educative practices: academic institutions	c) festival visitors: individuals/groups of loyal-recurrent visitors d) leaders of EDON organization		b) facilitators of activities: artists and practitioners c) artistic director of XARKIS organization		b) organizer of festival	b) local residents c) director of festival
		SOCIAL PLACES - everyday consumption places: coffee shops						
PARTICIPANT NUMBERS	OVERALL: 112	31	25		16		21	19
CATEGORIES OF PARTICIPANTS	FEMALES: 71	22	13		10		15	11
	MALES: 41	9	12		6		6	8
	GREEK-CYPRLOTS: 96	20	22		14		21	19
	TURKISH-CYPRLOTS: 12	10	2					
	ARMENIANS/MARONITES: 4	3						
	OTHER COUNTRIES: 4		2: Portugal, Brazil		2: Spain, Canada			

Figure 5.2. Pashia, E. (2019). Outline of the exploratory and in-depth research illustrating the methods and details about participants that engaged the research in each field visit.



approach. The *elements* that defined the selection of the instances I engaged with, as well as the *form* of practices and the related *field* they were situated in, are provided in Chapter 4 (section 04.02, *Activist and Recreational spatial practices*). The chapter also provides a selection of the most insightful spatial practices initiated from the fields of activism and recreation. Insights were related to interesting techniques that managed to facilitate interaction between different individuals and groups. The exploratory journey was a useful experience through which I could choose two festivals for further research.

### **Individual case-studies: an in-depth research**

After feeling that the journey provided an important amount of insights, a reflective practice followed to regulate the fact that during the exploration I would follow the course of events and move between different practices, but it was also important in trusting at the same time my intrinsic interest and reframing the research questions narrowing down the broad exploration. This led to the final cycle of the field work, namely the *in-depth research* that was developed at different moments in 2017 and 2018 (figure 5.2).

My journey was narrowed down by selecting two spatial practices to investigate them as individual case studies: two cultural festivals, namely the *EDON festival and the Xarkis festival*. The study on the two cases was guided by the investigation line to specifically explore the techniques that the festivals utilized to not only bring people together at a shared space, but also to facilitate meaningful interactions with each other — between individuals and groups.

As explained in the previous section, my journey was initiated with the intention to develop an inter-border trajectory of work in the field. However, the fact that for the in-depth research I decided to focus specifically on techniques that could encourage interactions between different individuals and groups, allowed me to be open and turn to practices that are not specifically focused only on promoting bi-communal interactions, but promoting connectedness across difference and culture among diverse individuals and groups. Subsequently, being focused on exploring interesting techniques, resulted in two festivals that I found in Southern Cyprus, and so the in-depth research was developed only in this area. The EDON festival was organized at the city centre of the capital city Nicosia, within a park area, and the Xarkis festival at Koilani Village, located in Limassol district.

The first individual case was the EDON festival, a recurrent political-cultural festival that usually takes place every year at the beginning of July and for which I have been volunteering as a member of the organization since my teenage years. Its exploration was completed in two phases and over the course of two festivals (2016-2017). I approached the EDON festival initially as a pilot study (2016) to test qualitative methods of data collection and explore specifically whether it offered opportunities for meaningful interactions between the TC and GC communities. Methods were finally adopted and re-used for the subsequent empirical work. In terms of position, I have been studying the festival as being both a researcher-member of the public but also from “within” as researcher-volunteer of the festival.

The second individual case study was the Xarkis festival, a recurrent cultural-artistic festival that usually takes place in August that I also approached in two phases, both in-depth studies, and over the course of two festivals (2017-2018). I approached the festival initially as an in-depth study (2017) to specifically explore the opportunities it offered for meaningful interaction between the different groups of visitors, mainly elders and youngsters. In the second phase (2018) I specifically focused on my personal experience and complementary observations. In terms of position, I have been studying the festival as researcher and member of the public.

As discussed in chapter 4, reflections and evaluations on the most insightful instances during the exploratory journey coming from activist and recreational spatial practices, led to a number of interesting points that helped me in choosing the two festivals for further research, summarized as follows (also explained in detail in Chapter 4, section 04.03 *Imagining spatial practices of Solidarity Pedagogy*):

- *Activities*: both festivals offered interesting combinations of elements, that is, critique and joyfulness, as well as recreation with learning
- *Content of activities*: both festivals included context-specific approaches, meaning they were adapted to the shared culture and rituals, and reality of Cyprus such as traditional music or information about the latest socio-political developments
  - For the case of EDON additionally: it included activities with content that aimed to promote bi-communal relations
  - For the case of Xarkis festival additionally: it included activities with content that aimed to promote participatory artistic creation and learning
- *Audience*: both festivals managed to attract young audiences

For the case of EDON, elements of interest were traced also through my personal experiences as a member of the EDON youth organization and a volunteer at the festival several times in the past, which also allowed me an easy access. For the case of Xarkis, the decision was made (and access was given) after a preliminary discussion with the organizers of the festival.

The two individual case studies are presented in detail in the following chapters 6 and 7. The ethics approvals for the fieldworks can be found in appendix 3.

### **c) Outcomes, Repositioning of theory and Recommendations towards cultivating a culture of peace**

Findings from both the case studies were analyzed, based on the theory initially developed at step a'. These were structured further according to categories that emerged from the analysis and in relation to learning modalities: depositions, exchanges, co-creations. The detailed outcomes from each case are presented in chapters 6 and 7.

Following the first objective of the research, the aim for the step c' was that findings from the fieldwork, and specifically the techniques drawn from the festivals, could contribute to reposition theorization made in chapter 3, and finally, propose the new theory of action, namely the framework of solidarity pedagogy. This is consolidated in Chapter 8, where techniques from both cases are brought into discussion to finally suggest a number of guidelines to actualize solidarity pedagogy in space, which can be used to imagine future practice.

Following the second objective of the research, the last Chapter (9) uses key findings and gained knowledge, that is, the proposed guidelines, to articulate a number of recommendations to practice, policy and further research.

### **Role of Researcher**

In this research, following the theoretical grounds and methodological approaches my role was important to be transitional, that is, to study the cases by interchangeably being an observer and participant, what is called the "the insider-outsider phenomenon" (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012: 13). In both phases of empirical research my interchangeable position between observer and participant was important to address the main challenge of limited duration of each spatial practice as well as multiple sites and activities within each case study. Also, through interchangeably

being participant and observer I managed to *experience with and be in distance from* the research participants, that is, a “simultaneous emotional involvement and objective detachment” (Tedlock, 2000: 465). Although a challenging positionality when transitioning, it provided me with the advantage to understand the level of connection one could develop within a spatial practice, also through empirical knowledge.

Also, following the ethics that solidarity pedagogy puts forward, working with research participants required also for myself to cross internal borders and be open to interact with different people not only as being a researcher but a human experiencing the same event. This implied a practice of “affective solidarity...[that is] the importance of feeling for others as a way of transforming ourselves and the world” (Hemmings, 2012: 148). In my research, this was translated as keeping a solidary posture towards co-creators (research participants) by acknowledging and empathizing with their feelings and ideas as well as sharing with them my personal feelings and ideas, as people participating in the same events.

#### 05.04 Data collection process

As explained earlier in the chapter, my work in the field was focused on exploring a series of spatial practices, completed in two phases, namely the exploratory journey as a review of instances, and the in-depth study as a focused research on the two selected case studies, the festivals. The result was to collect diverse types of data from multiple sources including verbal and visual, related to the spatial practices (figure 5.3). In this section I describe the methods I utilized to study the two festivals, for materializing the knowledge politics set for my research (co-production, participation, embodiment, reflexivity), and addressing the research objectives and questions.

Collection of material at the EDON festival site was carried out in July 2016 and July 2017, whereas for the Xarkis festival in August 2017 and August 2018.

Method	Page	Materials	Details
Participant and non-participant observations	p.115	Photos Videos	<p>Aim: to create a “visual narrative” (Harper, 2000) including large views of the general public engaging in spatial practices, as well as close-up views at the level of pedestrians.</p> <p>Consent: it was initially given by the organizers of the festival. Where consent could not be obtained by the public due to the nature of open-public events, photos used in the thesis are blurred through a relevant image-editing program. Generally, I would try to be as discreet as possible, respecting any possible uneasiness.</p>
		Draft notes and journal entries	Draft notes from the observations would be translated where needed (from Greek to English) and kept in the field journal entries right after the events.
		Visual documents	<p>On-line visuals: Materials would include public invitation to events and photos found on organizers’ websites and social media accounts.</p> <p>Off-line visuals: Materials would include informational leaflets given during the events.</p>
Semi-structured interviews and chance discussions	p.117	Voice recordings Draft notes Transcriptions	<p>Interviews were conducted face-to-face, lasted approximately between 20-30 minutes, and recorded by a voice recording device if participants consented, otherwise I would take notes. After the process of collection and within a week, I would transcribe and translate where needed, all recordings and notes.</p> <p>Interview formats were designed according to the background of the interviewee. The format of the interview was prepared in consultation with the supervisor, as research practitioners would mainly be from disciplines and modes of practices outside the spatial studies.</p>
Reflective writing	p.120	Draft notes and journal entries	Draft reflective writing would be translated where needed (from Greek to English) and transferred in the field journal entries right after the events.

Figure 5.3. Pashia, E. (2019). Outline of the methods used during the in-depth research and type of material collected.

## Introduction

### • Lines of investigation and elements of interest

In view of the second research objective, that is, to utilize insights from literature and explorations in the field so as to create a new form of practice as a methodological proposition to facilitate connections through learning, the process moves from exploratory journey to a more thorough study in the field, focused on the study of two festivals. For this, my exploration is guided by the line of investigation to explore specifically the *techniques* that the festivals utilized in order to not only bring people together at a shared space, but also to facilitate more quality connections/interactions with each other, that is, based on learning opportunities offered in joyful ways.

### • Access

The process of studying each festival began with finding a way to access them. I managed to explore the two festivals after a preliminary contact with the organizers during the exploratory journey, so as to secure the permission to engage as a researcher.

In relation to the EDON festival, my personal involvement with the EDON youth organization and its action for many years was surely a positive factor in allowing access, for both visits over the pilot study and later during the in-depth research. I engaged myself in the EDON festival using my volunteer status, though there were times that I would engage only as researcher-member of the public. The approach was important in planning time wisely, considering the fact that the festival was attended by thousands of citizens and therefore required careful handling. This meant there should be moments of focused observations and of focused interviews, in specific activities.

Permission to access the Xarkis festival, which I have not been involved in prior to the research, was granted through the preliminary contact with the organizers and interview that took place during the exploratory research. I engaged in the festival as a researcher and member of the public, meaning I would use the time to focus on interviews, observations and also for participating in activities with other visitors. Additionally, due to the fact that the activities took place during the whole day, for practical reasons I decided to stay in the village where it was organized.

Engaging as a member of the public was important for a number of reasons. Being a

first-time visitor who had never attended the events before, allowed the practice to “affect” the research, in order to reveal its qualities and nature and thus understand it by just going with the flow of events, the interactions with others and the activities. In regard to the case of the EDON festival particularly, which is a familiar environment to myself, it allowed me to feel as a critical friend from the outside, in an attempt to assess it as a visitor and understand better its possible pedagogical impact and respond to the research question more accurately.

### • Participants’ profile

The participatory approach of my research meant that I managed to include different individuals and groups as participants and co-producers. Participants were a mixture of male and female citizens of Cyprus, including mainly GCs and TCs, alongside fewer Armenians and Maronites, as well as citizens from other countries, such as Portugal, Brazil, Spain and Canada.

At the EDON festival, research participants included festival volunteers and invited facilitators, the organizers, as well as individuals and groups of visitors (mainly loyal visitors of the festival, that is, recurrent visitors and affiliated to EDON). Visitors/participants were between ages 18-33, invited facilitators/participants were between the ages 20-50 and visitors between the ages 40-60.

As far as the Xarkis festival is concerned, research participants included mainly individuals and groups of visitors (local residents and newcomers to the village) alongside invited facilitators of activities and the organizer. Visitors/participants were between ages 20-30, invited facilitators/participants were between ages 30-50 and visitors between ages 40-60.

## Participant and non-participant observations

In order to investigate the festivals’ learning techniques, their impact together with the context within which each festival utilizes them, the personal experiences of individuals and mine were important. A way towards collecting these experiences was to *observe*, and to *participate* in the production of activities included in the festivals (figures 5.4-5). I did that with initially observing processes and interactions between members of the public during the different activities within a festival. For instance, this could be during their discussions with friends at social areas of the festivals, such as eating areas, where I would also be with my own company of friends.



Figure 5.4. Pashia, E. (2016). Participation and observations at the EDON festival.



Figure 5.5. Pashia, E. (2018). Participation and observations at the Xarkis festival.



Then, I would choose activities to participate in as being a festival visitor, also as a way to connect with future participants. This could be for instance in moments when participating in a visual-making workshop, where I had to cooperate with others, and with whom I would feel more familiar with to invite them for an interview. Therefore, non-participant observations would later on be combined with observations on recruited participants, individuals and groups, as a meaningful way to better understand the way they behave and interact within the living experiences (Tedlock, 2000).

## **Semi-structured interviews and chance discussions**

After gaining an overview of the socio-spatial production of the festivals, I wanted to understand more thoroughly my discoveries on the cases, as well as reflect on them, through the cooperation with diverse individuals and groups of friends that agreed to help in the research. I did that by combining interviews with chance discussions (figures 5.6-7). The combination helped to address the challenges entailed with the “informal” or “spontaneous” setting of a live festival (Fontana & Fray, 1991: 184, cited in Fontana & Fray, 2000: 653). Specifically, the festivals were short-lasting events, including multiple activities taking place in different sites within each festival, while future participants were enjoying their own leisure time with friends, when usually one would not like to be disturbed. More importantly, the combination of interviews and chance discussions was a way to regulate the power relations between myself as a researcher and the participants, ensuring, according to feminist views on empirical research, that research participants are agents of their narratives (DeVault & Gross, 2012). It thus strengthened both my own reliability but also, the voice of the research participants.

### **• Finding participants**

The interviews aimed to give the opportunity for a diverse selection of people to participate in the research, as well as both parts — myself and participants — as primary sources, to connect and then, co-produce knowledge on the festivals. For instance, during the visual-making workshop I mentioned earlier, while myself and members of the team were working on our shared task, we would also share details about our background and personal life. Then, at a later moment of the day we would develop this initial connection to a focused discussion on festivals, so as to allow then reveal meanings and reflections related to their own way of experiencing the festival. This could have the form of an individual interview, and as most of the



Figure 5.6. Pashia, E. (2017). Interviews and chance discussions at the EDON festival.



Figure 5.7. Pashia, E. (2017). Interviews and chance discussions at the Xarkis festival.

interviews during the festivals, the form of a group interview, meaning groups of friends, after a member of the group who I would meet in the festivals' activities, would introduce me further to her/his friends.

Exploiting, thus, opportunities for chance discussions so as to gradually familiarize myself with groups inherent in the nature of the festival, that is, to meet new people easily, has been mainly the way to invite visitors of the festivals to participate.

In my research, generally, there were not specific criteria in relation to who should participate, mainly to be positive to discuss openly, and include as much as possible equal number of females and males. At the same time, due to the particularly challenging conditions — for instance, a loud activity was approaching — decisions had to be made on the spot, quickly and decisively, so as to manage to take the number of interviews I was feeling were needed. Also, I used chance discussions wherever I felt that I needed more clarifications from the interviewees so to decrease the danger of omitting meanings, or when I was not able for instance to interview people due to loud noise from the music concerts within the festivals.

Regarding interviews with volunteers and facilitators at the festivals, it was important to take them during their work at the festival, while interviews with organizers had to take place after the course of the festivals, followed by complementary discussions for clarifications.

### • **Type and content of interview**

Following the steps of the feminist thinking when interviewing, I used the type of semi-structured, open-ended questioning as it constitutes a powerful direct exercise of giving voice to subjective experiences, and views of individuals and groups, as well as co-producing knowledge (DeVault & Gross, 2012). Group interviews in particular, provided more depth and diversity to responses, and a sense of co-production and connections, for the reason that I was able to encourage the participation of multiple interviewees, while the discussion could easily adapt to the issues that they would raise themselves (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

Interviews/discussions with *visitors* as well as *volunteers* of the festivals were semi-structured, open-ended, and focused to understanding both their subjective experiences and perspectives in relation to the production of the festival as a way to critically assess its content and pedagogical impact.

What was important to find out was reasons they decided to be present at the

festival and participate as volunteers or representatives or facilitators, possible things they gained from this experience, whether they managed to meet new people and specific places they could do that, whether space plays an important role in the festival, as well as whether specific activities promote interaction and dialogue more than others. In the case that it was not the first time for them that they visited the festivals, I was interested to know whether they noticed changes in the numbers of visitors generally and in the specific activities. Then I would move on with more general questions to know the way they perceived the aims of the festivals, the features they liked or did not like — generally in relation to the festival and specifically to activities within — leading the discussion on to achievements and weaknesses of the festivals. Then I would continue the discussions to explore their own interpretations, in terms of associated endogenous or exogenous factors that might be responsible for the limitations and strengths that they mentioned. Also, I was interested to collect their ideas on improving the festival.

The interviews with visitors and volunteers were followed by focused interviews with the festivals' *organizers*, so as to, firstly, clarify details on processes within the production (including stakeholders, challenges they face to carry out the festivals, ways they use to appropriate the site of the festivals); secondly, general information about the organization's identity and the festivals (including targeted audience, numbers of festival visitors, aims for the festival, historical facts about the festival, how decisions are made for the included activities, and whether there would follow processes of reflection and assessment); and thirdly, I would make sure that the discussion addressed issues and topics that were raised by visitors and volunteers as a way to critically engage organizers and expand on specific strengths and weaknesses identified, as well as their thoughts for ways to improve the festivals.

A sample of interview format is included in appendix 2.

## **Reflective writing**

My engagement with the field and from one festival to another shaped a mode of work switching between the position of an outsider and insider, or observer and participant. This necessitated to use a technique that could ensure transparency and rigor during the in-between moments of being close and distant. For this, during my presence in the field I used auto-ethnographic techniques, and specifically what is known as 'reflective writing' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), where one engages into the process of a constant questioning and self-reflexivity, ensuring that personal beliefs



and established structures of thought, that come with the researchers' background are moderated (Trahar, 2009).

For instance, between my visits to the festivals that would last for three consecutive days, reflective writing provided the ability to switch focus between the specific aspects and the wider perspective of the festivals (figures 5.8-9). By extension, this was contributive in developing critical understanding of my actions and experiences in the festivals, and become more adjustable and resourceful when faced with changes — for instance, there were moments when a chance discussion could be more effective than trying to identify the best conditions during the live event with multiple things happening at the same time, and so challenging to take an interview.

Therefore, reflexive writing and personal engagement have been complementary to each other during the whole empirical research. These would be either moments of a mere description of my experiences in the field, or retrospective impressions and emotions, while other times reflections would be combined to shape summaries from the interviews, all kept within the field journal. Therefore, collected data on the researched festivals was enriched with the reflective writing and experiences of the researcher, the “I”, that substantiated further the analysis and findings.

Indeed, reflective writing was a way to process feelings, and organize them into thoughts, before re-engaging from one festival to another and regulate the impact from my experiences in the festival. Thus, by practising reflexivity not only was I able to maintain an understanding of the way feelings and biases have been defining choices in research, but also the way the research has been a transformative experience for myself.

## 05.05 Qualitative analysis of data

Towards consolidating a methodological proposition, the second objective of the research, the material collected from the field work should be analysed and transformed to outcomes that respond to the objectives. One of the most challenging moments in the qualitative research is considered to be the stage of analysis and interpretation of results produced out of the empirical material. Not only is the process challenging due to the need to summarize materials so that they can become accessible to the reader, but also because in aiming to give voice to the different stories, there is a danger of “discursive colonization” (Mohanty, 1991, cited in DeVault & Gross, 2012: 7). This translates to a domination and reduction of stories where the different voices result in them being silenced, homogenized, made-up,

selectively presented and thus, misinterpreted and misrepresented (Mayring, 2005). Therefore, at this point both politics of knowledge should be advised iteratively to ensure that qualities are well presented. For this purpose, I aimed to establish rigor through an analytical method that reflects the situatedness and multiple qualities that characterize the socio-spatial production of each festival.

All materials collected from participant interviews and discussions, that is, transcriptions, as well as visuals from observations, have been processed through a qualitative content analysis approach combined with a system of coding tools and techniques.

Content analysis approach is described as a bottom-up, systematic and inductive method of summarizing data implying transformation of empirical data into a written text (Leavy, 2007; Mayring, 2005). It is a process that can ensure transparency and rigor due to its *“iterative”* character (Hesse-Biber, 2007: 30). This is the process where the researcher should constantly revisit and reflect on the processed data several times so as to cross-check their validity, together with revisiting and possibly reframing research questions in line also with the research aim (Mayring, 2005). In other words, this is a systematic strategy of content analysis that at the same time is characterized by *“adapted flexibility”* (Ibid.: 269). Finally, for content analysis, although it is required to keep a systematic way of processing data, the iterative process that entails, ensures that the researcher enables ideas to emerge, as allowing voices to be heard. This is done to reveal and keep visible the differences and qualities between ideas introduced and to pay attention to the language of stories (DeVault & Gross, 2012; Mayring, 2005).

## **The process of analysis**

The visual and textual analysis combined aimed to generate an understanding of the socio-spatial production of each festival, by focusing specifically on interactions between space and people. In relation to the visual analysis process, it began with familiarizing myself with the data, by organizing photographs according to activities represented and creating collages needed to form an initial overview of the socio-spatial process (figure 5.10). Then, through a photo-editing program I used a highlighting technique (colour, black-white) to distinguish between materials and people, repeated for all activities. These were printed to assign preliminary codes: I manually drew over the printed collages and subsequently named important

elements which participated in the production (figure 5.11). Codes were organized under categories of processes. Categories were the type of activity they represented (for example, performance or music act).

The process continued with the thematic analysis of interviews. It began with familiarizing myself with the data, by reading their transcriptions together with material collected in the field journal. Then preliminary codes were given as a summarizing technique, using participants' words as much as possible (figure 5.12). This was repeated with all data in the search for common themes among codes from different interviews. Codes then were combined under themes and sub-themes, together with extracts from transcriptions (figure 5.13).



Figure 5.10. Pashia, E. (2017). Highlighting technique used on pictures taken during Xarkis festival's music act.

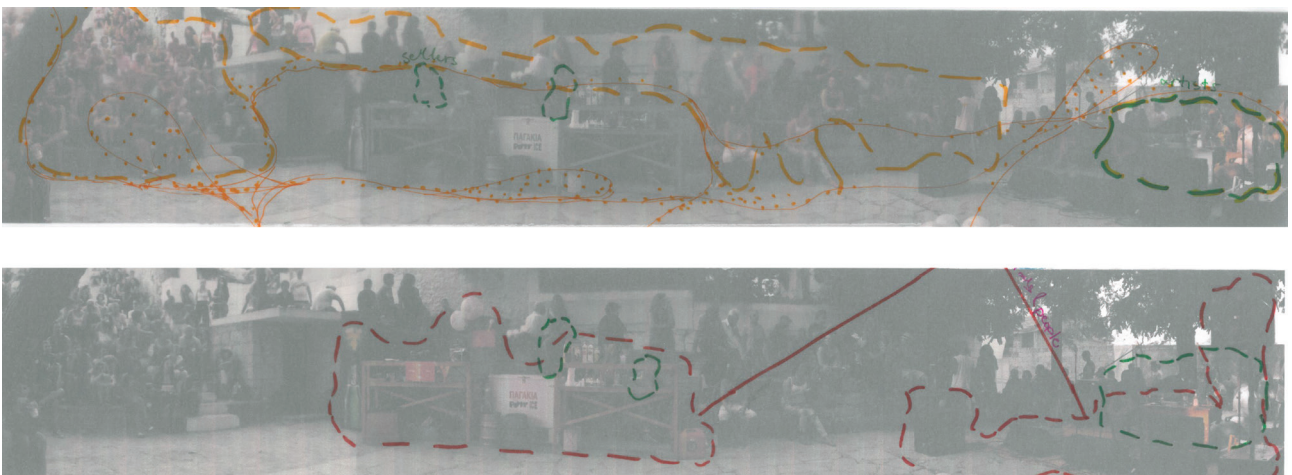


Figure 5.11. Pashia, E. (2017). Initial coding method used on the picture above (figure 5.10).



M12: I go around and... I see people, I see my friends and they have their friends, the meet us, they make us to meet each other. Also, being to international section to meet with the people that come from other countries as well.

R: By the end of the day what does this festival leaves to you? What this, a... let's say em... for your consciousness or for your personal experience what is that give to you?

M12: Em... for me the main reason why I attend to this festival to make, meet new people or to meet with old friends because em... a lot of friends they leave for example in Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and we don't get to see each other and these three days I know all of them will can come yea and we can drink together, chat, we can help each other on things, we can talk about things that we haven't talk.

R: ok.

M12: Em... My main reason that I attend to this festival every year is not to sell anything for my organization is just to meet with the people because we need this sort of organizations, we need this sort of events to meet with each other and blend in together.. We get to know each other very well in this sort of events.

T/C  
relations.

R: Alright.

M12: It needs to have fun together.

R: So, do you think that it's important for other organizations even the Turkish-Cypriots organizations that they develop this kind of events?

M12: It is important, I believe. And they should, we should make this sort of festivals but I think money it's the main problem. That's why we are not making. Maybe like a... NGO's and the left parties can come together under one umbrella and make. We all for example we are making anti-militarist festival in every 14<sup>th</sup> of August and a lot of friends from EDON also participate as well but not Siberians for example they don't join these festivals. But we are comparing to this really small scale. Em... [...] We need to make more festivals like anti-militarist and maybe it doesn't have to be under one theme, it doesn't have to be anti-militarist. It can be... I don't know "Let's have fun together". And a lot of people for example the don't join for events just because it's under one party's name; maybe NGO's should take the initiative and start, and parties can support them from outside. Because a lot of people they we can say "well, I don't wanna be remembered with this party, I don't wanna be seen in this party's event". You it's such a small island and especially in North it's really difficult if they see you or [] of a party or a member of a party especially if you are in a private sector em... they can easily fire you. There is a reason for them.

cypriots trend  
party-oriented  
bias/rejection  
+  
strong division  
of parties  
↓  
impact on  
social life

R: Ooo...

M12: And for example if you are working on government, governmental job, you are a [...] or something again usually let's say if today it's UBP in the government and you have seen another parties organization, you have picture you basically they publish the pictures in

Figure 5.12. Pashia, E. (2017). Highlighting technique and initial coding used in one of the interviews taken during the EDON festival.

<b>Festival qualities &amp; opportunities</b>
<i>Bringing people together</i>
<p><b>opportunity to communicate, a meeting place</b></p> <p>“...to make new friends or to meet with the old ones because with a lot of friends that live for example in Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos, it’s not easy to get to see each other in the everyday. And I know that these days they will be here and that we can drink together, chat, help each other on things, we can talk about things that we haven’t talk about before (invited facilitator).</p> <p>“...because we (communities) need this sort of events, to meet each other and blend together, as through them can know each other better” (invited facilitator).</p> <p>“we need to have fun together” (invited facilitator).</p>
<b>Trends of attendance</b>
<i>Possible causes &amp; suggested changes</i>
<p><b>interactivity</b></p> <p>“Maybe more talks can be arranged where people can interactively participate, rather than someone is giving a speech” (invited facilitator)</p>
<b>Activities/places</b>
<i>Tavern/folkloric stage</i>
<p><b>content</b></p> <p><i>Cypriot culture oriented</i></p> <p>“eating, drinking together, dance...There, I see more people coming closer to each other” (invited facilitator).</p>
<b>T/C presence &amp; bi-communal place</b>
<p><b>to create consciousness, communication &amp; do-something-together</b></p> <p>“...I think it’s really important and I mean I would like to use multi-communal as well. When you say bicomunal I think the only think represents is Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots; multi-communalism includes all other minorities as well” (invited facilitator).</p> <p>“This sort of space is a kind of space at which someone can interact with Greek-Cypriots. And you know, you can drink coffee and even bring your food here and eat together” (invited facilitator).</p>
<p><b>an informal environment</b></p> <p>“When I come here, I don’t feel I am coming here to, you know, interact with them (members of EDON); I already know them. It’s just like a gathering space for me” (invited facilitator).</p>

Figure 5.13. Pashia, E. (2017). Codes organized under themes alongside extracts from the same interview in figure 5.12.

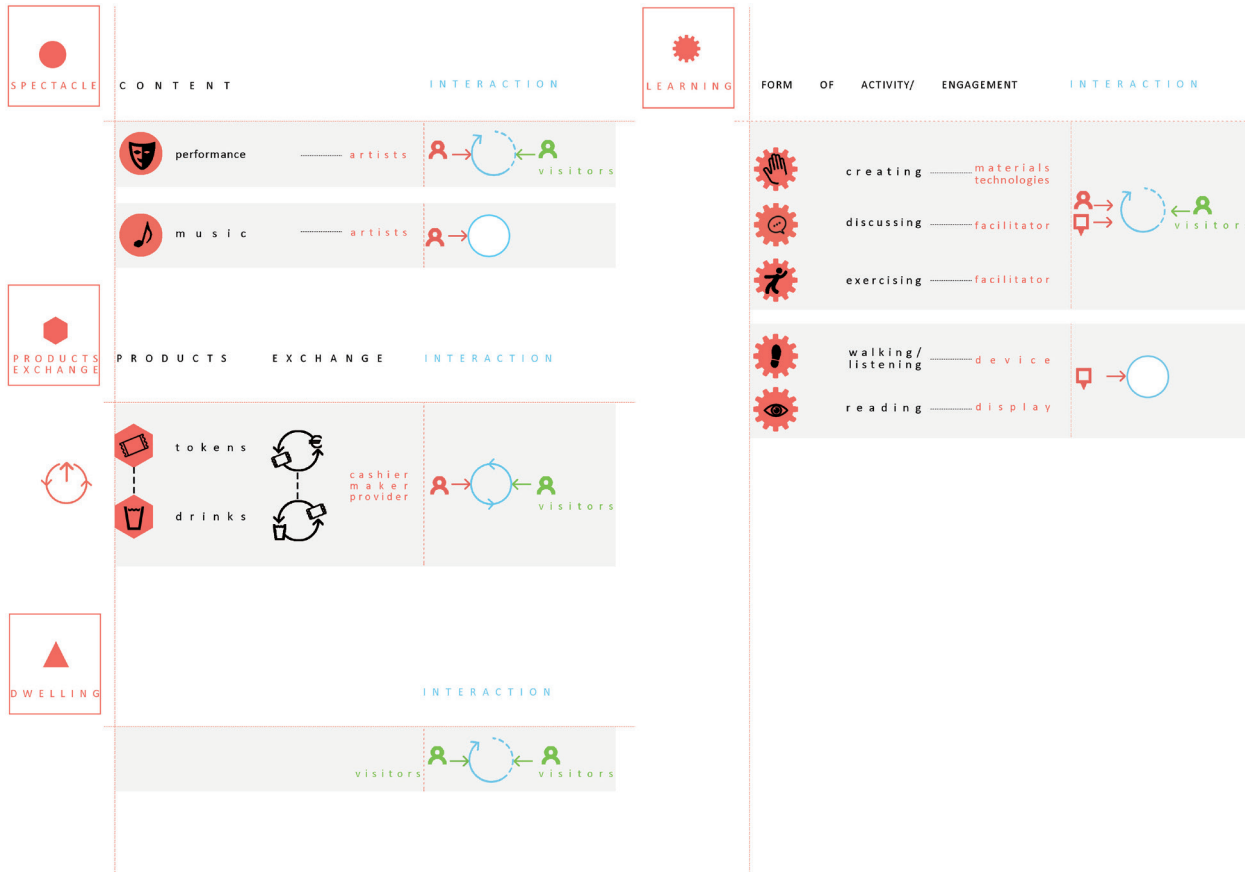


Figure 5.14. Pashia, E. (2017). Initial categories and coding system using icons. The icons are then used to inform the diagram and the legend of the diagram.

Subsequently, a review of visual and textual analysis was followed iteratively and by informing each other so to revisit, compare or reject codes and quotes and ensure that textual themes and visual categories correlate to each other. This led into devising a coding system with icons that represented each category/activity, and which informed situated diagrams of activities (figure 5.14). From that moment onwards, repetitive reflection both of the textual and visual material would continually inform categories of productions and the icon language.

## **Results as categories of socio-spatial production**

The iterative review process of the material resulted in refining categories of socio-spatial production, informed also by the theoretical framework of the research. The activities of the festivals were reassembled into three categories according to whether their production was based on interaction or non-interaction. The three categories I will be referring to in the analysis of outcomes from each case (chapter 6 and 7) are: depositions, exchanges and co-creations.

*Depositions* refer to the fact that the activities included in the category were based on non-interaction, and thus non-participation: participants were only able to attend activities as receivers or depositories of the outcome (such as attending a concert). This relates to what Freire (1997) describes (in Chapter 3) as banking education implying that knowledge is a given that learners receive, and thus, less possible for facilitators and visitors to develop any type of interaction as well as it does not allow access to participate in the process and outcome of production.

*Exchanges* refer to the fact that the activities included in the category were based on exchange: participants were able to engage in the activity through a give and receive relationship with facilitators, which in the case of the specific festivals refers to economic exchanges only.

*Co-creations* represent the fact that the activities included in the category were based on interaction: participants were able to engage in the activity through a give and receive relationship with facilitators and/or other participants, which in the case of the specific festivals indicates the fact that parties could create something together. This relates to what Freire (1996) describes as democratic education or education of question implying that it is based on problem-posing mode of learning, it allows space then, for learners to develop their own *creativity*, creative and critical thinking and thus generates feelings of joy in the educative process. Gauntlett (2011) takes

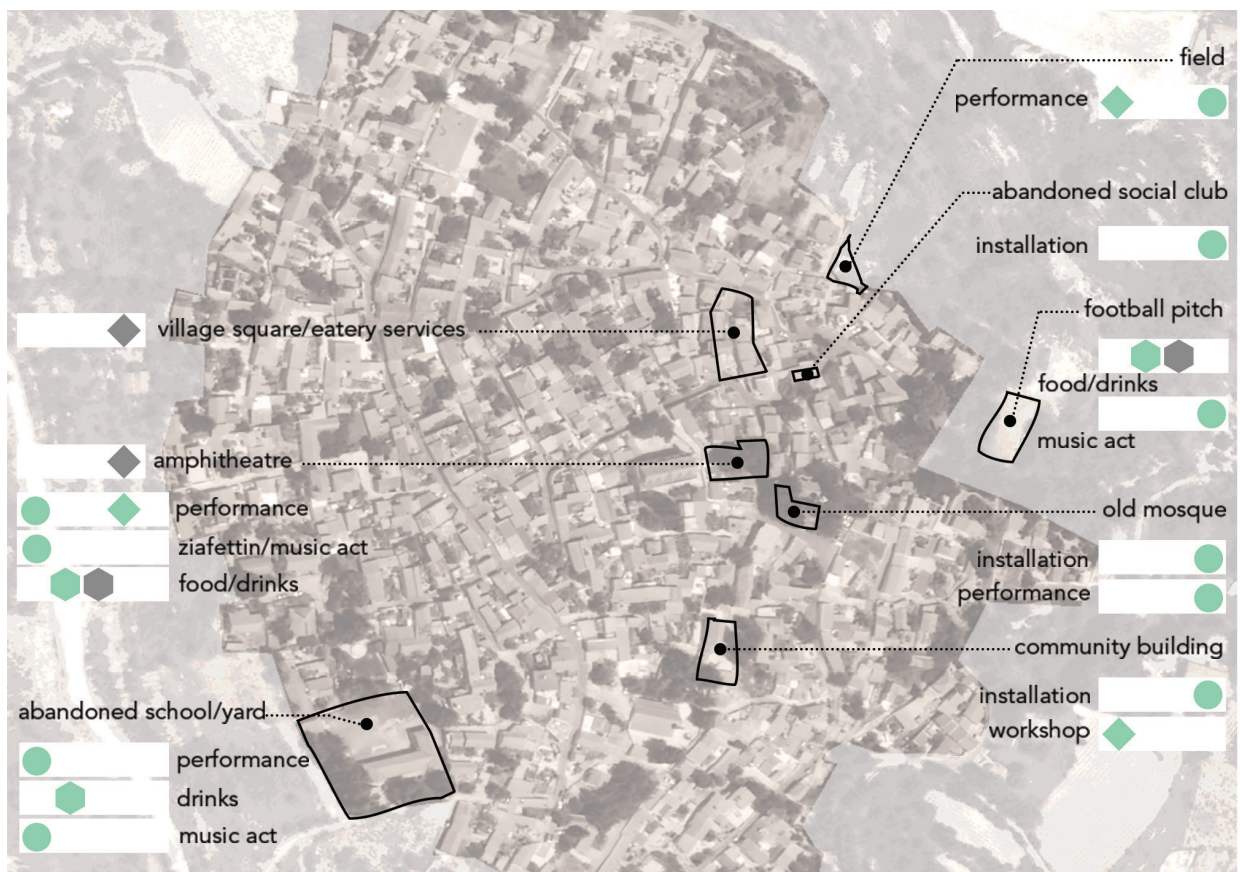


Figure 5.15. Pashia, E. (2019). The refined icon language represents the three categories of social interaction, that is, depositions, exchanges, co-creations. The icons inform the diagram and its legend below it.

this further to argue about the importance of creating with others or co-creation in empowering togetherness. Co-creation suggests that knowledge is produced through a process of co-production where facilitators and learners interact and participate in the process, and exchange their own experiences and knowledge. It is thus, an interactive process, and open allowing participating and its outcome to be changed.

## **Reading of the categories of socio-spatial production: an icon language as qualitative codes**

Following the categories, the icon language was refined to finally create a situated diagram where all categories and the places to which these productions occurred, are represented with their qualities communicated through the icon language shaping the overview of the festivals' socio-spatial production (figure 5.15). The diagram is accompanied by a legend? in which three columns represent each category. Each column explains interactions and non-interactions: who could engage and where it would take place. Each category is described in detail within each case, chapter 7 and 8, which make up an overview of the content and associated meanings that the organizations aimed to convey through them.

## **Presentation of socio-spatial production**

The presentation of each category within each case in chapter 6, follows the situated diagram, located in the second section of each chapter titled "Interactions/non-interactions and techniques". The section describes in detail the activities included in each category, accompanied with supportive coded images and collages to give a sense of the experience (figures 5.16).

## **Assessment of socio-spatial production**

Themes that emerged from the textual material including observations and critical views of research participants are presented in the third section of each case, titled "Enabling/disabling factors for co-creations". It reflects the fact that the section focuses specifically on the category of Co-creations, which explores through subjective experiences the level to which specific activities (and the festivals in general) managed to facilitate meaningful interactions between groups. This reveals specific enabling or disabling elements that allowed or did not allow co-creations. The section is supported by quotes from participants and extracts from personal field notes.



Figures 5.16. Pashia, E. (2019). The icon language informs the visual narrative that presents each case.

## Outcomes, critical reflections and informed theorization

Both the second and the third sections of outcomes are brought together to draw out key learnings in the fourth section of each case, titled “Principles towards tangible Interplaces or spatial practices of Solidarity Pedagogy”. Key learnings are related to the *pedagogical* approach of the festival and highlight ways that interaction and co-creation was possible to emerge. Also, the section based on the limitations and strengths of each case specifies whether they have been insightful cases in addressing the research aim, as well as it concludes with a theoretical discussion that informs the concept of Interplaces.

In terms of interpretation of results, following the feminist views of empirical research and the idea to “share or negotiate interpretive authority with research participants” (DeVault & Gross, 2012:41), during the follow-up discussions with the organizers of the cases I would share results such as the diagrams of supporters, and ask further clarifications for details that I was not able to capture during the fieldworks (for example, on stakeholders or on activities).

Both the studies were significant opportunities to test qualitative research methods

during a live event, including data collection and analysis, that therefore led to the development of research skills: carrying out interviews, observations, engaging individuals and groups of participants during their attendance at a live event or their work, as well as learning to critically reflect and develop my own qualitative analytical techniques and tools. Also, the analysis process gave the opportunity to increase the capacity of paying attention to subjective experiences and the meanings that people ascribe to them.

The outcomes from both the case studies are merged, compared and brought into a cross-case discussion, in chapter 9, where learnings from both theory and practice are put together to reposition the initial conceptualization of solidarity pedagogy. This has been a way to address the overarching questions and objectives of the research, and finally propose a methodology of learning-to-connect-with-others in space, pointing towards solidarity pedagogy as a pedagogical spatial practice that can be developed across the divide and through the geopolitical border, and through which it is possible to deconstruct established and embedded dividing borders between individuals, groups, cultures and difference.

The research process ends with a response to the third objective of the research, to use gained knowledge from research to inform future practice and policy recommendations, included in the thesis conclusion (Chapter 9).

## 05.06 Challenges & limitations

The overall process of data collection included a number of limitations and challenges — some of which have already been mentioned earlier in the chapter — that are important to mention so as to offer a rounded image of the research that was conducted in such challenging conditions of a festival and therefore, the way these might have impacted the research findings.

Conducting a research on two live festivals had both advantages and challenges. Although the participatory research allowed for shared spaces of dialogue with the research participants, a potential limitation relates to the number of participants and depth of conversation. There has been a reasonable compromise in the duration and therefore depth that a conversation could go into due to the limited time of the events and the activities that people needed to attend within the festivals. Therefore, it was not easy to approach people or limited time was available to speak to them when approached. Subsequently, data collection followed mainly the program of the festivals, in activities and sites that were not always suitable environments for



conversations, thus time and methods had to be planned beforehand, divided and used appropriately. Although it could be challenging, this seemed a good strategy and a reasonable compromise as there had to be a balance between interviews, observations and reflection in gaining as much rounded knowledge as possible. Additional measures were taken to mitigate the weaknesses of collecting qualitative responses during the live event, which resulted in a great amount of group and individual discussions: a two-phase visit to the festivals in the course of two years, complementary interviews and follow up conversations with the organizers, reflective writing and note-taking.

One other potential limitation related to the number of participants, was the challenge to ensure a good response from the TC community during the festivals, which as expected, ended up being less in relation to the number of responses from the GC community. However, the fact alone is indicative of the way each of the festivals managed to attract the public from the TC community. Wherever possible and easily traceable, such as at the EDON festival, I would invite members of the community to participate in the research.

As far as the interview process is concerned, the fact that I would interview a number of known persons to me from organizations I am already involved in, could make someone suspect that, the familiarity and my personal engagement in the organization would create biases on my part and would not allow honest and transparent conversation or even that this could direct the participants' responses. For this reason, I would clarify the scope of my research beforehand and assert myself as a critical friend. With regards to the practices that I engaged in during the exploratory phase, there was a possibility I would end up following practices produced only by familiar networks and organizations. To avoid this, I intentionally aimed to get involved in unknown practices.

At the same time, in trying to counterbalance familiarity with a person as well as the dynamics in the case of group interviews/discussions in the overall research process, there was also a danger to over-control the discussion. To this end, I tried to facilitate discussions in such a way so that on the one hand I followed and repetitively consulted the agenda but at the same time I adapted it to responses, building up on the different topics that interviewees would introduce. I would also allow discussions between the interviewees in the group interview. In addition, specifically for the group interviews, good skills of active-receptive listening and responding to circumstances with respect and affection were required. I tried to ensure that all members responded to my questions and I would even repeat them to each and every person, which also regulated domineering voices, or excluded a specific

member from participating and a well-rounded coverage of their experiences. Before the discussion ended, I would make sure I covered all main points in the agenda.

It is also important to note that, contrary to the EDON festival which, as already mentioned, was a familiar setting and therefore easier to approach and interact with the people involved, what was challenging in the Xarkis festival, was the unfamiliarity of it that made it difficult to find and invite people to the research. For this reason, it was important that I would allow some time for meaningful interactions to arise. This was done directly, aided by the fact that I decided to engage as a visitor, dwell at Koilani village, participate together with others in activities and generally spend meaningful time with people before I introduced myself also as a researcher and invite them to the research. It allowed time for discussions, and to build empathy and trust through shared moments in the different activities that in many instances were more direct ways in understanding the impact of the festival, rather than trying to achieve a greater number of formal interviews. Similarly, getting in touch with the organizer months before the festival allowed time to build trust, which was maintained throughout the whole research, and to clarify my intentions as well.

On the other hand, the principles of empathy and affection in the case of EDON were founded on pre-existing relations with the members and groups. Therefore, since I was already a member of EDON, access to the festival and building trust were already established, which simultaneously entailed a significant danger of bias and direction of responses and results. On the other hand, for the purposes of the in-depth study, it proved to be useful, in terms of dedicating precious time for interviewing more visitors, which I intentionally aimed to be unknown persons (though affiliated to EDON) so that I ensure diversity of responses as much as possible while eliminating the danger of producing directed results. Additionally, I complemented the interviewing method with informal discussions during and after the festival which purposefully invited others as critical friends into reflective discussions (for example, with members of EDON who are also academics/researchers in fields of politics and sociology, or Turkish Cypriot activists).

Also, regarding the presentation of the case studies, follow-up discussions with the festival organizers gave the opportunity to share some of the processed material which enhanced trust. Specifically, over our informal discussions I would verbally describe how data is going to be represented while we would agree together on details with regards to the identity description of organizations and the stakeholders, in relation to the festivals.

In addition to the above, all interviews would be conducted either in Greek (Cypriot dialect) or the English language for speakers of a different language, since as explained earlier, research participants would be a mixture of people from Cypriot communities as well as from other countries. It was crucial that I am a native speaker of the Cypriot dialect so that I could understand not only verbal shades but also bodily gestures that carry meaning as well. However, it was challenging when interviews/discussions were conducted in the English language while the mother language of participants was different. For this reason, I would always carry a note-book with me to also write down my impressions during the interviews, while I would repeatedly listen to the recordings when transcribing, in the case of interviews.

The language barrier entailed the danger of power imbalances, since it could easily create misunderstandings between myself and the participants or direct the discussion only on parts that were understood and thus leave the subject only partially covered. As far as this was concerned, I would make sure I kept checking the agenda of questions as well as using personal cultural knowledge and skills to communicate; for example, with the use of common words with TCs or generally use of simple English. There were moments when it was possible for personal contacts with knowledge of other languages to offer their support.

Overall, I made sure that I acted with respect both towards the people contributing in any way to this research, and towards the University as a representative of it carrying out a research outside the university site. Also, I made sure I acted with accountability and solidarity to the people and the communities engaged in the research by paying sensitized attention to participants' own micro-cosmos and micro-resistances, so as to "write for, rather than about" them (DeVault & Gross, 2012: 43-44).

The following Chapters 6 and 7 offer a detailed analysis of two selected festival case studies. Both cases follow the same documentation layout:

- Context
- Interactions/non-interactions and techniques
- Enabling/disabling factors for co-creations
- Principles towards tangible Interplaces or spatial practices of Solidarity Pedagogy



## 06 The EDON festival

Following the broader objective of the research, the process continues with work in the field so to strengthen the theoretical insights with empirical ones. As explained in earlier chapters (4 and 5), I decided to explicitly investigate in depth two festivals, mainly due to the fact that they provided interesting combinations of elements, including hybrids of joyfulness with critique, as well as of recreation with learning activities.

On that note, I decided that the EDON festival was a significant case to investigate further due to the fact that within the context of a festival, a south-based and leisure-based event organizing activities that specifically aimed to engage Turkish Cypriots (TCs) and raise awareness about the importance of bi-communal relations and of being solidary to each other, it also managed to attract thousands of young people, both unique features that cannot be found among other festivals in Cyprus (a complete list of elements that led in choosing the EDON festival can be found in Chapter 5, section 05.03 *Research Design*). Interestingly, the organizers have reported that the festival attracts annually approximately 20,000 visitors during the course of the three nights, with people mainly coming from Southern Cyprus (Larnaca, Ammochostos, Paphos, Limassol), and in smaller numbers, from Northern Cyprus. For this, EDON organises coaches for the public to travel to the festival from across the island.

Based on these features, the EDON festival has been promising for providing effective practical insights to learn from so as to inform spatial practice with guidelines on learning how to connect with others. In other words, exploring the festival has been insightful in imagining tangible ways to develop solidarity pedagogy in space, that is, tangible Interplaces.

This chapter following general information about the festival in section 06.01, presents a socio-spatial analysis of the festival, aiming to understand to what extent forms of social interaction developed during the festival are linked to solidarity pedagogy.

Specifically, section 06.02 looks closely at the three types of *social interactions* identified and the places/activities that they could be found making distinctions between interactions that may lead to learning solidarity and to connect with others, namely *co-creations*, highlighting associated *techniques* that supported this learning and interactions, as well as other interactions found, namely *depositions and exchanges*.

Section 06.03 from a critical distance identifies *factors* that managed to *enable* participation of specific groups at the festival and the specific places associated to the emergence of co-creations. In offering a rounded critical evaluation, the section also includes factors that *disabled* further participation of specific groups.

Section 06.04 draws from findings in the previous sections especially the techniques and factors that enabled the participation and emergence of interactions and co-creations, to arrive to pedagogical *principles* that can be used in learning solidarity and connecting with others meaningfully. Principles draw not only from the strengths of the festival but also from critical reflections that look at its *limitations*, resulting into placing it as a less effective festival and thus, moving on with further research on the Xarkis festival.

## 06.01 Context

The first case study of the empirical research is the political-cultural festival *The Pancyprian festival of youth and students, EDON*, organized by the EDON youth political organization, as part of their annual cultural events. The festival lasts for three consecutive evenings and takes place in Southern Cyprus, at the park of the Ammochostos gate within the Nicosia walled centre (figure 6.1). A ticket to the festival — whether in advance or at the doors gave access to all the activities included each day. These were the three main concerts of each night, and the simultaneous smaller recreational and informational activities spread out in the park area. The research on the festival was completed over the course of two festivals accessed between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of July in 2016, and between 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of July in 2017.

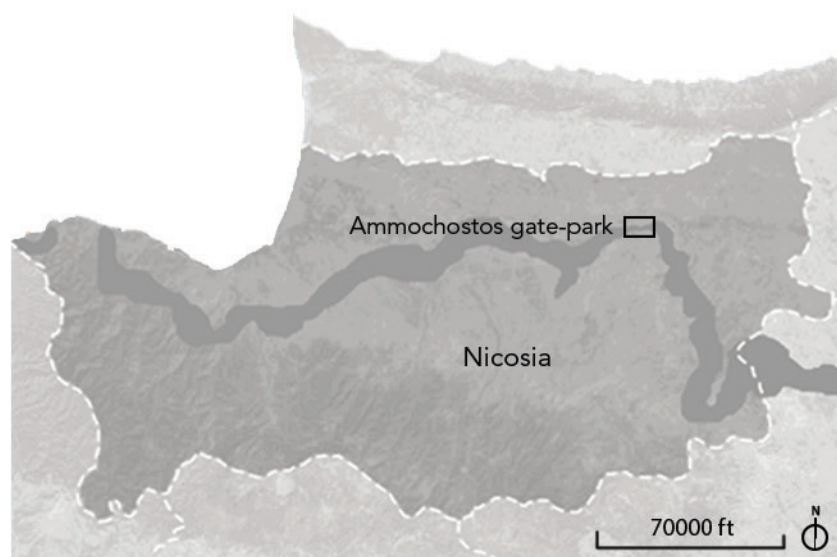


Figure 6.1. Pashia, E. (2019). The EDON festival site is located within the district of Nicosia.

## Aims

The festival constitutes an institutional event. EDON for 66 years now has managed to embed the festival in the hearts and minds of the youth, with selflessness, and keenness, but mostly with voluntary work. A festival full of humanity, dignity, and fighting spirit which offers an alternative proposition of entertainment but also a force of resistance, of struggle and a spearhead of fighting and claiming against the mass sub-culture and rotten cultural products (EDON, 2017a: para 2).

The EDON festival constitutes one of the organization's pancyprian annual actions. It constitutes a leisure as well as a political event, providing opportunities for both entertainment and critical thinking, as well as awareness about the Cyprus problem. More importantly, being a youth organization, the festival is built and addressed primarily to the young generation, aiming also to bring together youth from across Southern and Northern Cyprus.

Specifically, the festival aims:

- to promote its own alternative perspective of entertainment by offering opportunities to the public to engage in different kinds of activities that combine contemporary and traditional elements of the Cypriot culture;
- to expose the organization's identity, political positions and actions;
- to raise awareness and provoke critical thinking about the complexities that define the Cypriot and international conditions of living, by offering opportunities for the public to engage with Greek and Turkish Cypriot organizations, as well as other international youth organizations.

Each year the festival has a different theme, promoted through a slogan, and content of activities. In 2017, at the 29<sup>th</sup> EDON festival the slogan was "Looking to the future we are changing the present", while the promotional flyer given within the festival explains that the slogan is a call to the people and especially the young generation to engage in "organized struggle in order to change the present, claiming a federal solution of the Cyprus problem, freedom, and reunification of our motherland" (EDON, 2017a: para. 5).

## Site

- The Ammochostos gate or Nicosia’s municipal park-festival venue

In each field visit the festival took place at one of the bastions of the Venetian arrow shaped walls of Nicosia that surround its old centre (figures 6.2). The bastion is used as a park, a venue for festivals and other ceremonies, under the authority of Nicosia’s municipality (south). The bastion is also known as the “Ammochostos gate” due to the park’s connection with the Ammochostos medieval gate. Also, the park is near the check-points of Ledra street and Ledra Palace that makes the festival easily accessible from north Cyprus.

For the EDON festival purposes the park was transformed with supportive spatial structures that appropriated the space according to the requirements of each activity (figures 6.3-6).

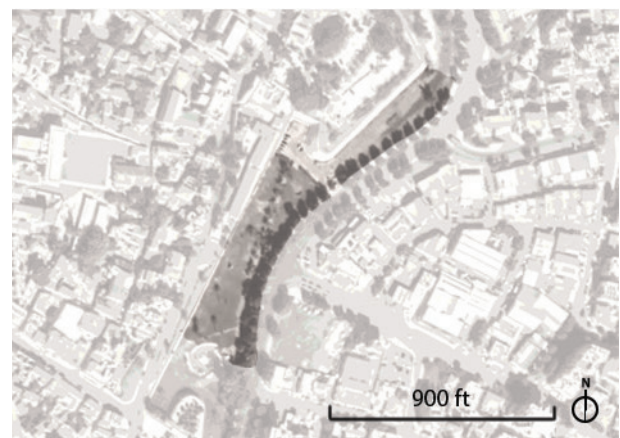
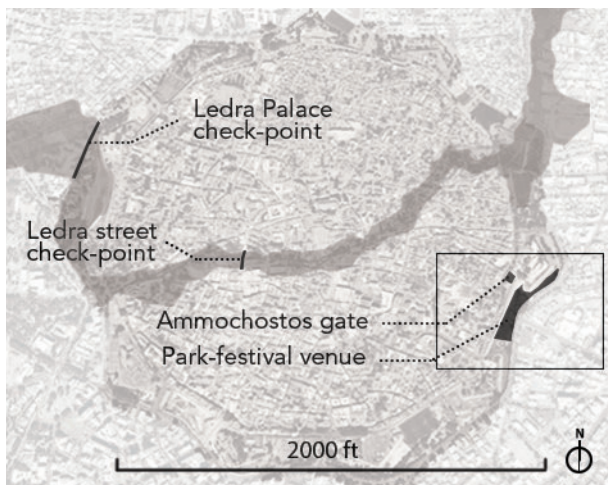


Figure 6.2. Pashia, E. (2019). The park-site of the festival in the walled centre of Nicosia.



Figure 6.3. The classic hotel. (2017). The festival’s site-park during a casual day.





Figure 6.4. Wikimedia commons. (2013). The festival's site-park during a casual day.



Figure 6.5 Festivalcy. (2013). The festival's site-park after it is appropriated for the purposes of the 26th EDON festival in 2013.



Figure 6.6 Festivalcy. (2014). The festival's site-park after it is appropriated for the purposes of the 27th EDON festival in 2014.

## Content

The festival map (figure 6.7) is indicative of the way the site was appropriated and occupied so as to host the different activities. Different recreational and informational activities combining concerts, informational exhibitions, information and artistic installations and products to buy were spread across the whole park area at specifically arranged places. Concerts took place by the two stages at the edges of the park (red and blue icons), whereas the rest of the activities were spread in-between (yellow and orange icons). The activities were facilitated by the festival volunteers as well as the invited facilitators such as the artists or representatives of organizations, music and dance groups. All activities took place for three consecutive days, starting in the evening and finishing in the early hours of the morning.

The content of activities aimed to accommodate different ages combining traditional and modern perspectives on culture, reflected in the way the activities were spread in the park.

The northern side of the festival's venue was addressed to mainly family and elders due to the folkloric stage situated there and the other cultural elements that surrounded it such as Cypriot food and drinks and kids' playground and stage, together with a large seating area with tables.

At the other end, the southern area of the festival aimed to accommodate mainly



Figure 6.7 EDON. (2017). The festival's map in Greek language, illustrating the different places across the park area. Part of the flyer given to the public at the EDON festival in 2017.

the youth and middle-aged groups due to the centre stage with alternative Greek music, also combined with food and drinks courts.

The activities in-between, due to their exhibitory character, generally aimed to serve as informational stations presenting particular social and political topics such as education, the economy and the Cyprus conflict, and therefore their content is changing and enriched from year to year according to the developments occurring in Cyprus and internationally. Also, there were different social places open for the public to sit with their friends and discuss with members of EDON, as well as they hosted different open topic discussions.

## Groups

The groups I will be referring to throughout the chapter are as follows:

- *organisers*: the EDON youth and political organization;
- *volunteers*: professional staff, members and friends of EDON who contributed to the day-to-day running of the festival and facilitated activities as part of the festival;
- *invited facilitators*: practitioners and representatives of organizations other than

EDON, who hosted and coordinated activities as part of the festival;

- *loyal visitors*: recurrent visitors of the festival, normally affiliated either to EDON or to the political party AKEL that supports EDON;
- *newcomer visitors*: the general public

### •Organizers

“The United Democratic Youth Organisation (EDON), is an independent, democratic, mass political and cultural youth organization ...[and] forms an integral part of the Cypriot Left Movement, thus maintaining close links with it” (EDON, 2017b: para.1).

EDON is a youth, political-cultural as well as south-based organization part of the Cypriot Left Movement. It aims “to educate the youth with the ideas of the left and socialism of peace, solidarity, democracy, equality, social justice and social progress, of humanism and internationalism” (EDON, 2019: 8); also, to fight for the promotion of youths’ rights and advancement of benefits at work and education, health and leisure, and generally of quality life, free from economic exploitation and social oppression. Its principles and actions are aligned with its strongly affiliated political party, called AKEL (Progressive Party of Working People), which states to be a Marxist–Leninist, communist political party in Cyprus. Both organizations strive for liberation and justice for all, arguing that for this to be secured, reunification of the island constitutes a primary factor. Specifically, EDON, supports the form of the Bi-zonal Bi-communal Federation as conflict resolution — what the formal negotiations have been based on. Linked to that, EDON supports “rapprochement, friendship and co-operation between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Youth” (EDON, 2019: 3), reflected also in the festival’s content with specific activities that aim to encourage bi-communal relations.

EDON’ s constitution is Greek-Cypriot based, including members from all free areas of Cyprus, between the ages of 14 and 33 and subsequently the children’s and the pupils’ departments, as well as the students’ and the youth workers’ departments.

### •Supporters

The production of every EDON festival is carried out mainly with voluntary work of mainly friends and members of EDON, coming from all cities of Southern Cyprus (Nicosia, Larnaca, Ammochostos, Paphos, Limassol).

Also, other supporters, whether present at the site or not, contribute to the outcome of the production. Drawing from the 2017 festival, supporters that were present (figure 6.8) included among others national and international invited facilitators of activities from different locations of Cyprus (north and south) and other countries (such as Greece, Spain, Brazil, Portugal etc.).

Supporters that were not present (figure 6.9) included national-based and global-based resources related to access to the site, funding and product supplies and to media promotion, from different governmental, semi-governmental and profit-oriented organizations.



Figure 6.8 Pashia, E. (2019). Diagram illustrating the supporters that were present at the festival site, including practitioners coming from different disciplines, countries and continents (EDON festival 2016).

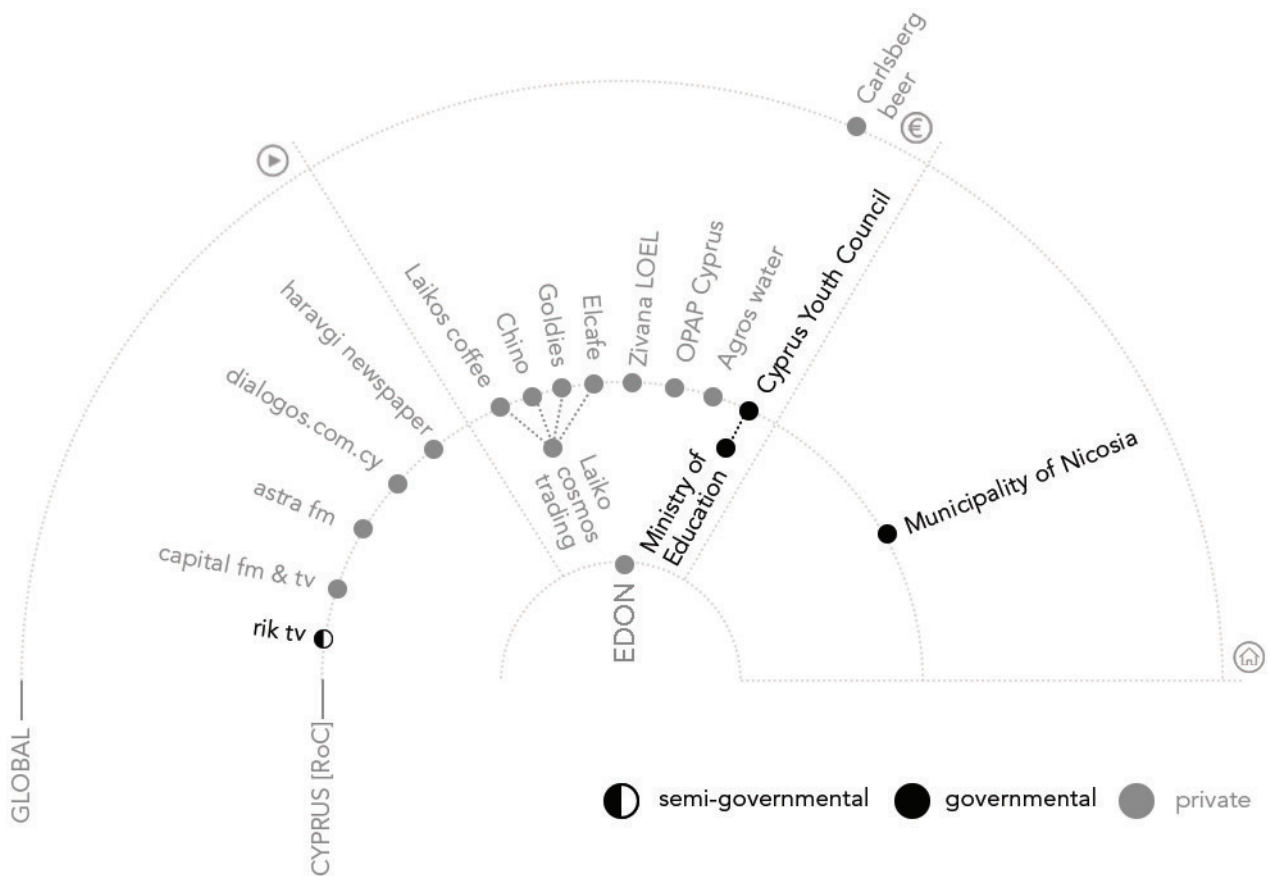


Figure 6.9 Pashia, E. (2019). Diagram illustrating the supporters that were not present at the festival site, including different national and global organizations that are part of the private, governmental and semi-governmental sectors (EDON festival 2016).

### •Collaborations and connections

It is interesting the fact that the festival manages to facilitate connections, either physical or collaborative. *Physical connections* were produced across individuals and groups coming from *within south Cyprus*, that is, visitors who travelled from different areas of Cyprus including Nicosia, Limassol, Paphos, Larnaca and Ammochostos, and moved to the festival site. Also, connections were formed between persons from *across the border*, that is, between Turkish Cypriot representatives-facilitators and visitors who travelled from different areas of north Cyprus and moved to the festival site, in south Cyprus. Interestingly, connections were formed with persons from other countries *beyond Cyprus*, that is, the international representatives-facilitators who travelled from other countries such as Brazil, Portugal, Israel and others, and moved to the festival site in south Cyprus.

*Collaborative connections* that were evident within the festival reflect the networking practice of EDON that achieved to facilitate connections and cooperation *over relational, geopolitical and disciplinary borders*, within and beyond its situatedness, across different individuals and groups.

Specifically, the festival managed to facilitate connections between *disciplines at a translocal level*. At the festival arrived local and international practitioners and amateurs from the fields of activism, volunteerism, art, culture and sports such as representatives of Cypriot national activistic organizations. Cypriot craft-makers, Cypriot artists, Cypriot EDON volunteers from south-based cities — Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, Ammochostos, Paphos — as well as international artists from other countries such as Greece, and activists from different countries (international city).

Also, the festival managed to initiate cooperation with Cypriot sectors that were not traced at the festival but supported its production, including the international private suppliers (Carlsberg beer), national private suppliers (services of Laiko cosmos trading and different media supporters), national governmental bodies (Cyprus Youth Council under the Ministry of Education and the municipality of Nicosia), and a semi-governmental body (RIK).

## 06.02 Interactions/non-interactions and techniques

The diagram below (figure 6.10) outlines the festival's socio-spatial production including activities and sites. The activities of the festival are reassembled into three categories — depositions, exchanges and co-creations — according to whether their production was based on interaction or non-interaction, that determined the ability of the visitors to engage (or not) in the production of each place.

The three categories emerged through the analysis of data from the festival and are based on the ideas of Freire (1997; 1996) and Gauntlett (2011) embedded in the framework of solidarity pedagogy (see detailed explanation of the three categories in Chapter 5, section 05.05 *Qualitative analysis of data*).

The categories and the places to which these productions occurred are marked with an icon language that is explained in the legend below the diagram. The three columns represent each category. Each column explains interactions and non-interactions: who could engage and where it would take place. Each category is described in detail within the following sub-sections that make up an overview of the content and associated meanings that the organization aims to convey through them.

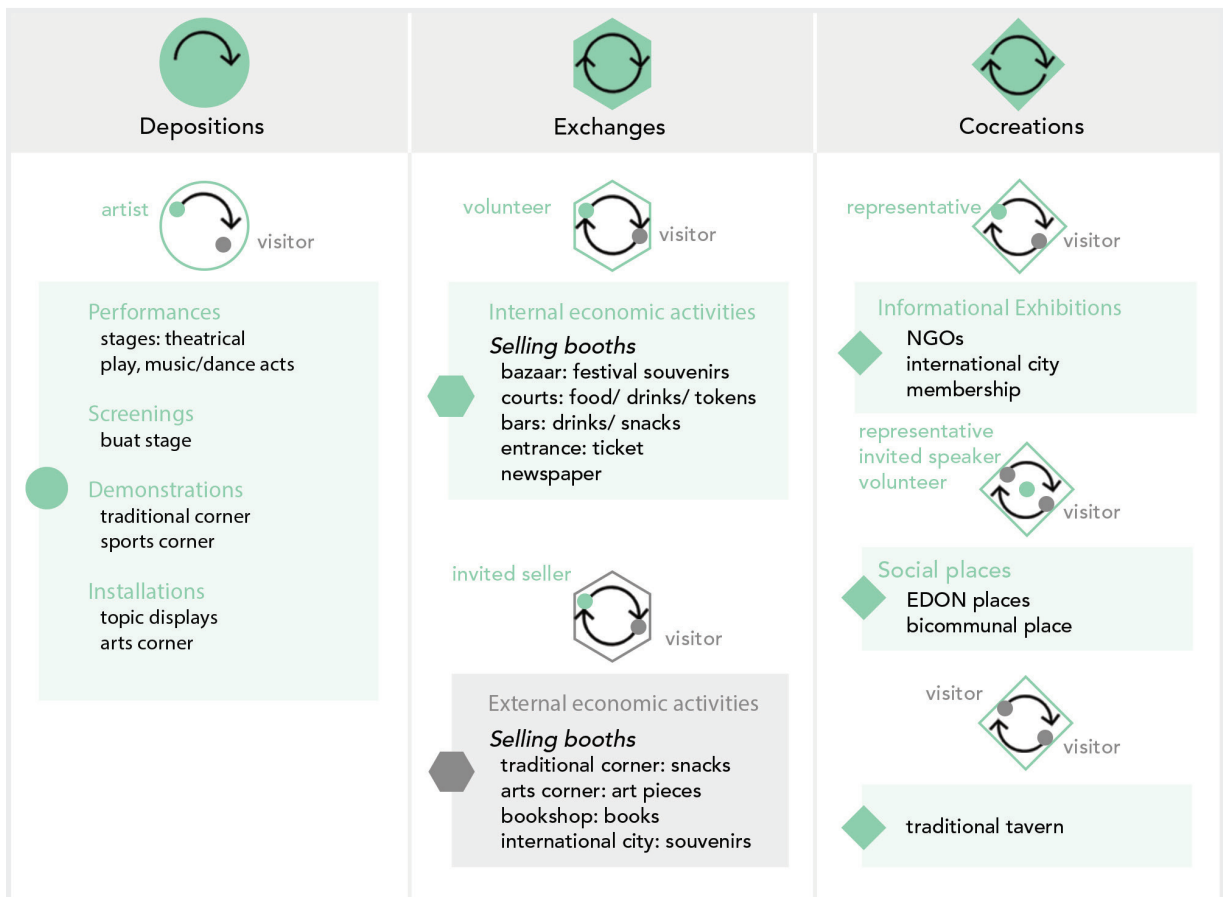
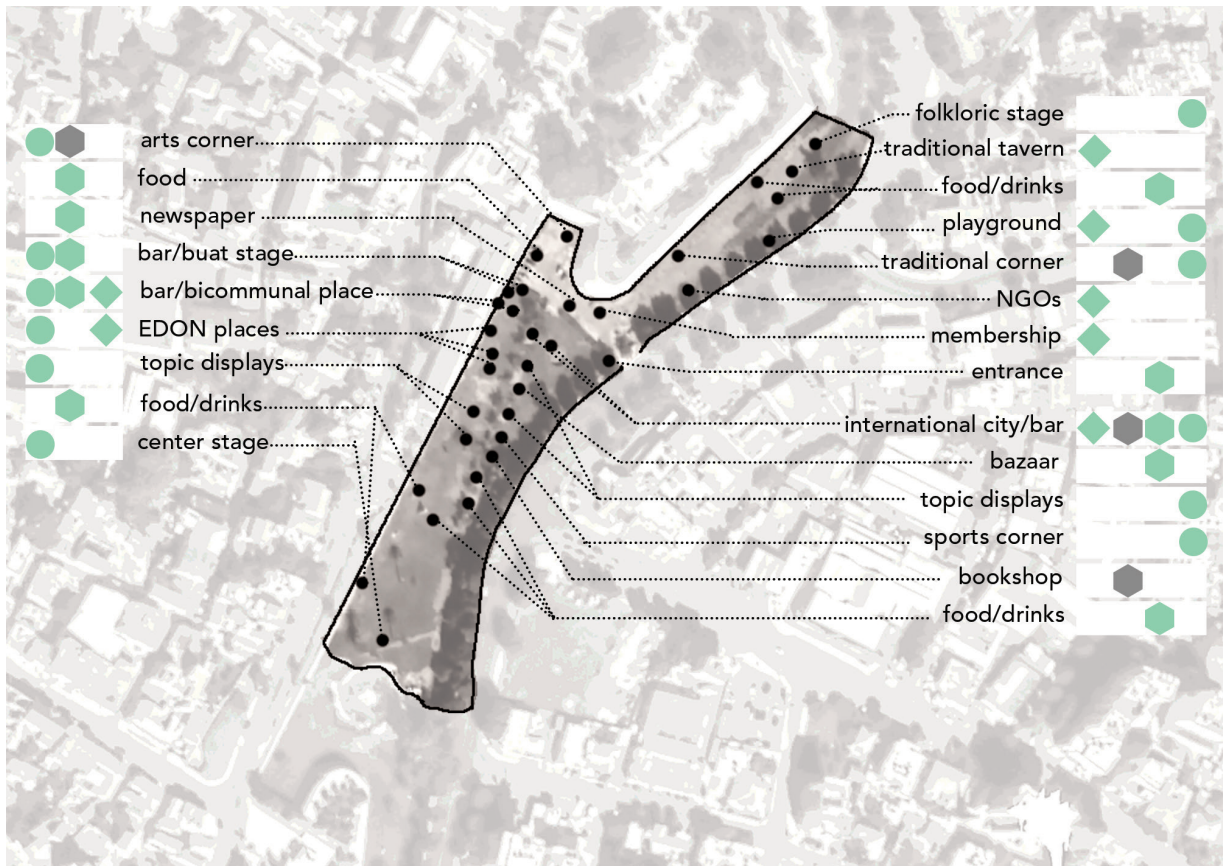


Figure 6.10 Pashia, E. (2019). Diagram illustrating the festival's places. The legend below the diagram shows the three categories of social interactions that were encouraged during the different festival's activities.



## **Depositions: performances, screenings, demonstrations, installations**

Depositions were *non-interactive, non-participatory acts*, found in *performances* such as music concerts, dance shows and theatrical interventions; also, screenings such as documentaries, *demonstrations* such as martial arts or traditional craft-making arts; and installations such as the informational installations that accompany most of the informational places or artistic installations. The public would mostly attend the performances, and less so the remaining activities, which would mostly be visited by loyal festival visitors, a fact that is discussed in detailed in the following section.

### **•Performances and screenings**

Performances took place at the four stages of the festival, facilitated by the invited artists, and seats were provided for the public. The two main stages, the centre stage (figures 6.11-2) and folkloric stage (figures 6.13-4) located at the northern and the southern edges of the park constituted the main attractions of the festival, with modern and traditional content. Specifically, the formal program at the centre stage included music acts from the alternative-contemporary music scene. Cypriot young performers opened the concert, followed by the main line-up from famous Greek performers. The formal program at the folkloric stage included dance performances by community dance groups including Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot, and bi-communal groups, as well as music performances by known professional singers and music bands including performers from Greece and Cyprus.

Also, performances took place at two smaller stages between the main ones at the boat and the playground that also included a stage. The former was a small performing stage that together with screenings would host amateur pupil and student bands and performers, including Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The latter hosted also craft-making activities and a playground area for children, as well as it hosted theatrical, music and dance performances by children's community groups and dance schools. Visitors could walk by and engage with the place.

### **•Demonstrations**

Demonstrations (figure 6.15) took place at the traditional corner and were facilitated by invited craft-makers of traditional professions and arts such as pottery-makers



Figure 6.11 Pashia E. (2019). A moment from the activity of music performances at the “centre stage”. The icon on the left implies that visitors could not participate in the process of this activity nor could interact with others; therefore it is allocated in the category of depositions as the outcome of the activity could only be a given production by the artists, rather than co-produced with the visitors. The subtle icon on the right implies the fact that the stage was accompanied with food/drinks booths located nearby where visitors could exchange from festival volunteers their cash into different products.



Figure 6.12 Pashia, E. (2019). A closer look at the “centre stage” during the performance of Greek artists.



Figure 6.13 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from the activity of music performances at the “folkloric stage”. The icon on the left, as in figure 6.11, implies the non-participatory and non-interactive character of the activity. The subtle icon on the right implies the fact that the stage was accompanied with a seating area, named as “traditional tavern” where visitors could interact with each other while eating/drinking together.



Figure 6.14 Pashia, E. (2019). A closer look at the “folkloric stage” during the performance of a Cypriot dance group.



Figure 6.15 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from the activity of demonstrations at the “traditional corner” where craft-makers could demonstrate the way they created clay-based objects. The icon on the left, as other activities included in the category of depositions, implies the non-participatory and non-interactive character of the activity. The subtle icon on the right implies that visitors could exchange from invited sellers their cash into hand-made products.

and bread bakers who would demonstrate live creations of their products. Visitors could walk by, watch and also buy their products. Demonstrations also took place at the sports corner and were facilitated by invited athletes to demonstrate athletic arts and to engage children through interactive games. Visitors could walk by, watch and engage in the interactivities.

#### • Informational and artistic installations

Installations (figures 6.16) were informational or artistic both as forms of exhibition. The informational installations were located at all informational places. They were either spatial artifacts that illustrated information and shaped the boundaries of the different informational places (EDON places, the Bi-communal place, the International city place) or places themselves that illustrated different topics (topic display places).

Visitors could just walk and stop by to read about the illustrated topics. Also, they could interact with facilitators — whether festival volunteers (at topic display, EDON places, bi-communal place, international city) or invited representatives of organizations (at exhibition places) — who all were responsible to explain, discuss



6.16a



6.16b



6.16c



6.16d

Figure 6.16 Pashia, E. (2019). Moments from the informational installations spread at different stations across the festival places/ activities such as the topic display places (6a, 6d), the EDON's places (6b), and the International city (6c). The icon on the left in each of these images implies that visitors could not participate in the process of creating the exhibited information nor could interact with the displays. The subtle icons on the right in images 6b and 6c, implies that fact that installations would accompany some of the interactive activities such as the facilitated topic discussions (6b) and informational exhibitions (6c) where visitors could interact with facilitators.

and answer visitors' questions. The use of informational installations showed that they constituted an important element-support for both the appropriation of the park and for the production of each place. Also, they constituted an important element for the EDON's communication strategy as through them visitors could learn about EDON's viewpoint on different topics related to the Cypriot and international social events and issues. Topics would include the Cyprus problem developments, internal governance, economy, education and labour matters as well as other events taking place in neighbouring countries. For instance, the themes presented at the festival in 2017 included "Our struggle today against the increase of neo-fascism and nationalism", "5 years of right-wing government were enough", "100 years since the great October Socialist revolution" and "The Cyprus problem developments and the struggle for reunification".

Finally, the artistic installations facilitated the arts corner by exhibiting art-pieces made by Cypriot visual artists. Visitors could walk and stop by the installations to observe them as well as to buy them.

## **Exchanges: economic activities**

Exchanges were *economy-based interactive acts* that were taking place during the festival. These were located at different booths spread across the park that were selling different types of *products*.

### **•Economic activities**

The facilitation of exchanges produced two forms of economic activity, the *internal* one where profit from the exchanges between visitors and festival volunteers would be directed to EDON, and the external ones where profit from exchanges between visitors and invited vendors would be directed to the vendors.

In terms of the internal economy (figures 6.17-18), visitors could buy the desired products in two ways; either exchanging cash into tokens from the cashier stations, and then using the tokens to buy products, for food and drinks, or exchanging directly cash for products, for the festival entrance ticket, the festival souvenirs at the bazaar, the drinks and snacks at bars, and the EDON's newspaper. In terms of the external economies (figures 6.19-20), visitors could buy the desired products directly through exchanging their cash from the invited sellers at specific stations. These were mainly the traditional corner that provided edible products made by locals such as traditional homemade snacks and non-edible products such as



Figure 6.17 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from internal economic activities at one of the food/drink courts coordinated by festival volunteers. The icon on the left implies that visitors could exchange from volunteers-sellers their cash into different products.



Figure 6.18 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from internal economic activities at the bazaar selling festival souvenirs coordinated by festival volunteers. The icon on the left implies that visitors could exchange from volunteers-sellers their cash into different products.





Figure 6.19 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from external economic activities at the bookshop coordinated by an invited book shopper. The icon on the left implies that visitors could exchange from the book-seller their cash into books.



Figure 6.20 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from external economic activities at the traditional corner coordinated by different invited vendors. The icon on the left implies the fact that visitors could exchange from the vendors-sellers their cash into different traditional products. The subtle icon on the right implies the fact that other activities found at the traditional corner would not allow interaction with or participation of the visitors (for example, demonstrations, see image 6.15).

handmade decorative objects. Also, the arts corner housed art pieces exhibited by Cypriot artists, and the bookshop where books were exhibited. Invited international organizations were also able to sell their own souvenirs at the international city.

## Co-creations: dialogues, discussions, cultural rituals

Co-creations were *interactive acts*, and thus are considered as the most relevant in regards to learning to connect with others. Co-creations could be found at *informational exhibitions* such as at the non-governmental and volunteering organizations, the International city and the EDON membership; also, social places such as the EDON places — pupils’ place, students’ place and young workers’ place — the Bi-communal place, and the traditional tavern. The activities and places related to co-creations were visited mostly by the loyal visitors and less so by the general public, a fact that is discussed in detail in the next section.

The table below (figure 6.21) outlines the places and activities that offered

Informational exhibitions		
Place/Activity	Groups	Techniques supporting Co-creations
International city place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>international organizations representatives- visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dialogues</li> </ul>
Non-governmental/ volunteering organizations place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organizations representatives- visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dialogues</li> </ul>
Social Places		
Place/Activity	Groups	Techniques supporting Co-creations
EDON social places (and EDON sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDON sectors representatives- visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dialogues</li> </ul>
Bi-communal social place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turkish Cypriot organizations representatives- visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dialogues</li> </ul>
During topic discussions across social places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>invited speakers- visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dialogues</li> <li>facilitated discussions</li> </ul>
Traditional Tavern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors- visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>practising Cypriot cultural rituals</li> </ul>

Figure 6.21 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of places and activities that different groups visited and engaged with and where co-creations were possible to emerge. These are accompanied with techniques that supported and allowed co-creations to emerge.

opportunities for interactions and co-creations to emerge, the groups that could interact, alongside the techniques that supported the processes of co-creation, all of which are presented in more detail within the following paragraphs. The techniques together with factors that enabled or disabled interactions and co-creation (presented in the following section 06.03), will lead to pedagogical principles that can be adopted for learning solidarity and connecting with others meaningfully (presented in the following section 06.04).

## •At the Informational exhibitions

### International city place

Festival visitors could walk by the exhibition place (figure 6.22) and talk with facilitators-representatives of international organizations who were located under their organization's booth accompanied with festival volunteers for translation purposes when needed. Also, representatives offered their own souvenirs for the visitors to buy. At the exhibition there was also a bar to provide drinks. The place was mostly visited by loyal visitors and less so by the general public.

The international city hosts representatives of international youth organizations such as the World Federation of Democratic Youth and other leftist youth organizations from countries around the world such as Brazil, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Palestine, Israel, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Nepal and others.

The international city represents EDON's fundamental ethics of praxis and strategic places of cooperation with international organizations; that of "knowledge exchange and expression of solidarity and support to sister organizations of other countries", according to Charalambous, one of the EDON leaders (2016).

Also, the place aims to encourage co-creations, meaning *dialogues* between the festival visitors and the international representatives. Co-creations — or dialogues — aimed for *knowledge exchange* and *awareness raising* about each other's context; "the reality of Cyprus and their own experiences and struggles" as Charalambous explains (2016). This is indicated in international representatives' statements. For instance, a Portuguese representative supported that it is important for the international city to be part of the festival as "it allows the local people and the international participants to come in contact with other cultures... I think it's important for me also; I've never been to Cyprus... I did not even know that Cyprus was a divided country until I was told that I am coming" (invited facilitator).



Figure 6.22 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from the activities at the “international city”, part of the informational exhibitions, facilitated by festival volunteers and invited representatives of international organizations. The icon on the left implies that visitors could participate in the process, interact and co-create with different representatives, meaning that the place encouraged dialogues between them. Therefore, in contrary to the category of depositions, the outcome of the activity could be co-produced. The subtle icons on the right imply that: a) the place included a bar coordinated by festival volunteers where visitors could exchange their cash into different drinks; b) visitors could also exchange their cash into different souvenirs sold by the different representatives; c) the place was accompanied with informational installations with exhibited information for the visitors to read.



Figure 6.23 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from the “non-governmental and volunteering organizations”, part of the informational exhibitions, facilitated by invited representatives of national organizations. The icon on the left, as in figure 6.22, implies the participatory and interactive character of the activity where visitors could co-create through dialogues with the representatives.

Similarly, another representative from Brazil describes that the international city station constitutes “a very good exercise because we can understand more from the Cypriot perspective and more from the Brazilian perspective” (invited facilitator).

In addition, as it is described by volunteers, dialogues are equally important to be produced internally between volunteers and the representatives. A festival volunteer describes that “I learn new things from them [representatives]...they explain the situation of their country and things that cannot be found from the media. And apart from that I can meet people” (volunteer). Therefore, the EDON festival “is not a festival that just hosts singing performances, but it sends some messages”, (Ibid.) that of internationalism which by extent promotes anti-nationalistic and anti-discriminatory mind-sets. That is according to another volunteer:

the idea of not being fanatical for our country but instead learning to accept every country on this planet and stop believing that it belongs to us only, matters above all, because if we are to analyse our DNA we will find out that we come from all around the world; that nobody is an original Cypriot (volunteer).

## **Non-governmental and volunteering organizations place**

Festival visitors could walk by the exhibition place (figure 6.23) and talk with facilitators-representatives of national organizations who were located under their organization’s booth. The place was visited mostly by loyal visitors and less so by the general public.

The non-governmental and volunteering organizations place, hosts representatives of national activist organizations such as the Cyprus Youth Council, the POGO Women’s movement, the Cyprus Anti-Drug Council, the research institute, Promitheas, the Pancyprian Federation of Environment Organizations, and others.

This place represents EDON’s strategic places of cooperation with national organizations. Specifically, the EDON leader Christofias (2016) describes that “we do have specific goals that we aim to carry out through social alliances...that is, the cooperation and interaction with NGOs that have to do with youth’s concerns primarily, as well as others”.

At the same time, the place aims to offer opportunities for co-creations, meaning *dialogues* between the festival visitors and the national representatives. Dialogues between them aim to promote volunteerism, active engagement and cooperation as well as to highlight the importance of symphiliosis. A volunteer supports that “[t]

he EDON's festival became an institution... so if they (NGOs) want to find a place to promote their own action and to talk with people, I think EDON's festival is the best place for them" (volunteer). One of the representatives from a Cypriot activist organization (south-based) adds that it is important so that "we can come closer with the people, and conversely for the people to come closer with something beneficial, useful, nice" (invited facilitator). Taking this further, she supports that "[t]hings for our Cyprus can be done in a better way if we cooperate" (Ibid.). Put in a different way, it is important that "the festival does not only promote culture but also the importance of symphiliosis, of peaceful co-existence not only between different ethnicities, but generally between humans" (Ibid.).

## •At the Social places

### EDON social places (and EDON sectors)

Festival visitors could walk in each social place (figure 6.24) — the pupils' place, students' place, and young workers' place — sit at the seating arrangement provided, at the tables, and interact with festival volunteers, EDON members and professional staff of EDON, who were located at distinct spots and easily seen when walking along the main corridor, as well as being spread out across the places.

The places also housed informational installations that subtly separated one place from another and presented different topics according to each age group. The places were mostly by loyal visitors and less so by the general public.

The places represent EDON's organizational structure targeting the youth and appropriated according to age. Therefore, the places were suitably staffed with EDON's members including pupils, students and new workers. As a volunteer explains "[e]ach of them as parts of the society, has its own needs, its own demands" and therefore, the stations altogether constitute "a representation of our action" (volunteer); that is "the way EDON responds and helps each part" (Ibid.). That the places constitute a direct action by EDON, through its members, to come close to the general public.

The EDON social places then aim to be opportunities for co-creation, meaning to encourage *dialogues*, between EDON and festival visitors — pupils, students and young workers. Specifically, according to a volunteer these places:

constitute a way to bring people closer and collect their ideas on how to act for specific issues. Because we obviously cannot know everything; we do need people to come and talk to us, to say that 'we have those issues' and thus to



Figure 6.24 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from the “EDON social places”, part of the social places, facilitated by EDON members and professional staff. The icon on the left, as other activities included in the category of co-creations, implies the participatory and interactive character of the activity where visitors could co-create through dialogues with other visitors and the EDON representatives. The subtle icon on the right implies the fact that the place was accompanied with informational installations with exhibited information for the visitors to read.



Figure 6.25 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from the “Bicommunal social place”, part of the social places, coordinated by representatives from invited Turkish Cypriot organizations, together with festival volunteers. The icon on the left implies the participatory and interactive character of the activity where visitors could co-create through dialogues with other visitors and the place’s coordinators. The subtle icons on the right imply that: a) the place was accompanied with informational installations with exhibited information for the visitors to read; b) the place included a bar coordinated by festival volunteers where visitors could exchange their cash into different Cypriot products, such as traditional coffee.

gather ideas on how to address them (volunteer).

At the same time, co-creations — or dialogues — at EDON social places aim to encourage active engagement in the Cypriot society:

to see what platforms do exist to engage in; to find somewhere they can share their concerns and discover possibilities of help they might need through the organization, and more importantly of how to act as members of the Cypriot society to face their own problems (volunteer).

Finally, what volunteers also highlight is that the context-specific approach of EDON social places is embedded in the topics that they present on their informational installations which constitute a way to generate dialogue with the visitors and to inform them about highlights in developments related to each age. For instance, a volunteer explains in detail:

We have prepared a thematic poster that is addressed to the rights of young workers. Visitors, here, can learn about their rights in case they do not know them...and can get informed about EDON's positions and actions to address young workers' concerns and to support and protect their rights (volunteer).

### **Bicommunal social place**

The Bi-communal place (figure 6.25) was located next to the EDON social places. Likewise, festival visitors could walk in the place, sit at the provided seating arrangement with tables and interact with representatives from Turkish Cypriot organizations, together with EDON members who were spread across. The place also housed a bar that among other beverages provided traditional Cypriot coffee. The place was mostly visited by loyal visitors and less by the general public.

The place represents EDON's position for the reunification of Cyprus. Specifically, a volunteer describes that the inclusion of the bi-communal place within the festival is "very reasonable and expected, and it is essential because first and foremost Cyprus has an ongoing national problem" (volunteer) and therefore it is important that this place "represents the significance of the rapprochement issue with the Turkish Cypriots" (volunteer). Put in another way, the bi-communal place itself becomes a place that aims "to create the appropriate consciousness and foundation to our youth's mind-set" about the importance of reunification, since "no other festival is doing this; it is exactly where our festival differs" as well as on the fact that "[w]e are of the few



(organizations) that have close relations with other Turkish Cypriot organizations” (volunteer). More importantly, since division is still ongoing and defines a separate social life of communities “discussions for the Cyprus problem or the rapprochement with our Turkish Cypriots compatriots are important to take place because we do not have a lot of opportunities to interact with each other in everyday life” (volunteer).

The place then aims to offer the opportunity for co-creation, meaning for *dialogues* between EDON and Turkish Cypriot organizations by the physical presence of their representatives at the festival, as well as between the festival visitors and the representatives. Dialogues — or co-creations — at this social place aim to promote communication between the two communities. Characteristically, according to Turkish Cypriot representatives from north-based organizations, including this at the festival can itself show to the general public that communication between the two communities is possible, even though it is usually people who know each other who gather at this place. One specifically says that “this corner provides a chance to bring people together, organizations to know each other, to communicate” while although “we know each other here...this is important to happen and to give message to others... who do not have any relations with Turkish Cypriots, to see that it is simple, possible, and that it is important to create these communications” (invited facilitator), as another way of developing solidarity between the communities. On discussion about the organization he represents called ‘Dayanisma’ which means solidarity in the Turkish language, he explains that solidarity is important “[b]ecause for what we believe and for what we are trying to change in the world, we need solidarity in order to come together, to connect our power, to become more powerful together” (Ibid.). Specifically, about the Cyprus division, “we need solidarity in order to work together — the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots — and to unify our island. So, that’s why solidarity is worthy, it’s meaningful for us (meaning the Dayanisma movement)” (Ibid.).

Volunteers reveal how the bi-communal place can constitute a place-opportunity for co-creations with the general public as the joyful atmosphere encourages meaningful dialogues and fulfils the need to not only discuss the Cyprus problem developments, but to share personal concerns and each other’s everyday life. Specifically, volunteers describe that the bi-communal place invites visitors to “go, sit and talk and really exchange views on serious concerns but in an informal environment, in a more relaxed way and in a friendly atmosphere” (volunteer). This

is also highlighted from a Turkish Cypriot's perspective who supports that "[t]his sort of space is a kind of space at which someone can interact with Greek Cypriots. And you know, you can drink coffee and even bring your food here and eat together" (invited facilitator). Also, another volunteer describes that it is an opportunity for visitors to "go and talk with and learn things from the Turkish Cypriots; their own problems and how they perceive the situation. Even how they perceive this festival and how they use it to convey their own messages" (volunteer).

### **During topic discussions across social places**

Topic discussions (figures 6.26-27) took place across different social places. They were open-accessed and visitors could just walk in the place and participate. Topic discussions constituted opportunities for co-creation, meaning *dialogues and facilitated discussions* between invited speakers and visitors, facilitated by EDON representatives. The activity was visited mostly by loyal visitors and volunteers and less so by the general public.

The co-creations — or discussions — aim to address topics related to the age groups that each place represents (pupils, students, young workers). For instance, at the EDON festival 2017, the bi-communal place hosted a discussion titled "Common Culture-Common Dialect" and the playground place a discussion titled "I learn my rights, I claim my future", while another topic at the international city place was about "The life, the action and the legacy of Ernesto Che Guevara".

### **Traditional Tavern**

The traditional tavern (figures 6.28-29) was the second most crowded stage during the festival due to the fact that it provides the main seating area of the folkloric stage and as described earlier at 'depositions' the folkloric stage hosted dance and music performances stemming mainly from the Cypriot culture including Greek and Turkish Cypriot artists.

The tavern was surrounded by other nearby stations related to tradition, arts and culture including the folkloric stage with performances from Greek and Turkish Cypriot artists, food and drinks booths with special Cypriot food and drinks and the playground which is also a facilitated place for children to play with each other, engage in artistic creations and topic discussions, as well as to watch performances at the playground stage. Visitors could just walk in the tavern, sit at the tables of the provided seating arrangement and at the same time watch the different acts on



Figure 6.26 Pashia, E (2019). A moment from one of the topic discussions, at the EDON social place, coordinated by invited speakers together with festival volunteers. The icon on the left implies the participatory and interactive character of the activity where visitors could co-create through dialogues and facilitated discussions with other visitors and the place's coordinators.



Figure 6.27 Pashia, E (2019). A moment from one of the topic discussions, at the Bi-communal social place, coordinated by invited speakers together with festival volunteers.



Figure 6.28 Pashia, E. (2019). A moment from the “traditional tavern”, part of the social places, including seats and tables for visitors. The icon on the left implies the participatory and interactive character of the activity where visitors could co-create through practising Cypriot cultural rituals such as eating/drinking together. The subtle icon on the right implies the fact that the place was accompanied with a stage that hosted different performances for the visitors to watch (see also caption in figure 6.13).



Figure 6.29 Pashia, E. (2019). Part of the traditional tavern was the kids’ “playground”, facilitated by festival volunteers. The icon on the left implies the fact that kids could participate, interact and co-create with each other during different arranged activities. The subtle icon on the right implies the fact that the place was accompanied with a stage that hosted performances for the kids to watch.

stage, while bringing in their own food and eating with others. The place was visited mostly by loyal visitors and less so by the general public.

The tavern place therefore constitutes a way that EDON offers opportunities for interaction and co-creation, meaning to *practise Cypriot cultural rituals* between visitors. Through co-creations — or cultural rituals — the tavern place aims to promote the Cypriot culture and communication. Specifically, according to volunteers it is another popular place within the festival where “people can sit, drink and eat, attracting pretty much the same number of people that the centre stage does” (volunteer). The centre stage is expected to attract a significant number of visitors as it offers a line-up with famous artists, but “the folkloric stage does as well, as the program is different” (volunteer). Specifically, a visitor and loyal supporter of EDON indicates the importance of the place and of visiting it as it is not just music acts that are offered but also “performances of our local dancing groups... And it is something that we must keep following, not only the popular names we see every year (at the centre stage)” (loyal visitor).

Also, the importance of the place is associated with the opportunity that visitors can have for co-creations, of coming together through shared culture and rituals, and meaningful dialogue. Specifically, a volunteer observes that generally “at the folklore stage it is easier to sit and talk, while at the centre stage it is more difficult” (volunteer). This is also confirmed by a Turkish Cypriot who observes and perceives the place as an opportunity for “eating, drinking together, dance...There, I see more people coming closer to each other” (invited facilitator). Also, another visitor’s statement indicates the need for meaningful contact that is associated with the tavern: “it is something different in our everyday life...that we — the three friends — are sitting here and eating together is important. It’s important that we are like-minded people and can do that” (loyal visitor).

## **Techniques to facilitate co-creations in learning solidarity**

Investigating all three types of social interaction, co-creations have been the most relevant in relation to learning to connect with others. Focusing on co-creations at the different places has been a way to reveal *techniques* that emerged from leisure-based and learning-based activities. It implies that these techniques managed to engage different individuals and groups in the process of creating-something-together, which could be dialogues, *facilitated discussions* or *practising shared*

*cultural rituals*, important in supporting ways to learn solidarity.

### 06.03 Enabling/disabling factors for co-creations

Whereas the previous section examined closely techniques that were used for the emergence of three types of social interaction, this section observes from a further distance factors — linked to the festival or other context-related reasons — that enabled participation (or *disabled*), and thus, the emergence of interactions between groups, at the specific places where *co-creations* were more possible to emerge, through the critical views of research participants.

One of the most important observations is that the festival has achieved a great participation, with collectives from different age-groups, from Cyprus and other countries. However, looking specifically on the way the participation is spread among places within the festival reveals that the newcomer visitors, although significant in numbers, their participation seems to be shared only between the two main performance stages. Subsequently, this reflects their decreased participation at the remaining ones, the informational and social places, where co-creations were mostly possible to emerge and where it was mostly loyal visitors that participated. Therefore, a critical evaluation would be that although the festival offers opportunities for meaningful and critical interactions, these are more likely to be produced amongst loyal visitors, and less with newcomers and even less so with TCs.

The process of data collection itself confirms this, as those who were easily identified at the informational and social places and therefore were invited to participate in the research were loyal visitors, while newcomer visitors' identification was almost not possible as they would be attending the concerts at the central stage where conditions for interactions are not encouraging — mainly due to the loud noise.

To add to this, volunteers likewise observe that “the majority of the people coming to the festival do so for the concerts at the different stages and for the famous artists” (volunteer) whereas “only a few are those who will visit the informational places” who are mainly loyal supporters and thus “are consciously coming to learn and visit them” (volunteer). Therefore, it is “a very specific audience...biased people who want to learn, to get influenced and to know more things” (volunteer).

This is also confirmed by the EDON general secretary who shares that especially “during the last years visitors would mostly come for entertainment reasons and less for political reasons” as Christofias says (2016). Whereas, he specifies that this is different from what would happen in previous decades when:

political reasons were the primary motivation and entertainment was of secondary importance. Because back then the festival would be another political action to communicate our anti-occupation fight, for ending occupation, for reunification of our island. It was one more political action of the visitors to the festival of expressing these desires through a cultural event (Christofias & Charalambous, 2016).

Despite these critical observations, at the same time the festival during the last years has managed to achieve up to 20,000 visitors which indicates both the fact that apart from the significant number of loyal visitors that it attracts every year, it also attracts other groups — not necessarily in line with EDON beliefs. Specifically, volunteers observe that:

It achieves massification of thousands of people. By coming here, it does not mean that you agree with EDON or AKEL or generally that you are part of the left wing, but it does mean that there is something you like about this festival (volunteer).

Also, another supports that:

I believe what it (the festival) does achieve is to bring together people with different ideologies; the EDON festival does not only bring together people of the left-wing, that is, its loyal supporters, but also a huge mass of different people, a fact that by itself is a success (volunteer).

The following paragraphs elaborate, to present factors that affect the participation of groups at activities and the festival in general, alongside a discussion on whether these factors have been *enabling* or *disabling* interactions between groups.

## **Newcomer visitors**

The enabling and disabling factors related to the participation of the general public, meaning the newcomer visitors are outlined as follows (figure 6.30), specifying whether each factor is related to the festival production or external factors related to the context of Cyprus.

Factors	Status	Linked to
Affordability/Access	Enabling/Disabling	Festival
Exhibition-based learning	Disabling	Festival
Selective dissemination	Disabling	Festival
Young people's limited political participation	Disabling	Context

Figure 6.30 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of factors that enabled or disabled the participation of the newcomer visitors, and therefore, interaction and co-creation with other groups.

### •Affordability/Access

One of the most important factors that enabled significant numbers of participation at the festival in general, is the *affordable price of the ticket*. It constitutes an attractive element for the public, as it gives access to all the activities included therein. This is important as it increases chances of inclusiveness and therefore, of more diverse groups of visitors to engage with the festival, which however, for some might be affordable but for others a reason to not attend. Specifically, a volunteer explains that “spending only twenty euros for the whole festival (three-day ticket) ... that does not only contain singing performances” (volunteer) is an affordable price that allows access to many other choices. That:

even a person that is not a great fan of, for example, Papaconstantinou (popular Greek singer, recurring performer at the festival) will come because there will be a place for his/her kids to play; there will be a place to drink and to eat; there will be convenient facilities like the toilets etc...And most importantly, if they do not like one stage that much, they will go to another like the traditional tavern and the boat (volunteer).

Upon this, a visitor observes that especially:

there at the centre stage... you can see people from the right wing that you will wonder how come they are here...Because with only 20 euros one can attend three live music performances, which normally one would need 60 euros to do so in Cyprus (loyal visitor).

Therefore, “it is a cheap choice and something different from other entertainment options that generally exist” (volunteer) as well as an important affordable choice since “[p]eople seek out cheap solutions, due to the economic conditions... somewhere they can find cheap souvlaki to eat, cheap beer to drink” (volunteer).



This at the same time does not imply a low-quality content as “people might find something cheaper but do get cultural knowledge as well” (loyal visitor). Instead, as another says “the different stations do create those conditions that satisfy needs of the youth, the workers” , as well as of “[c]hildren, teenagers and the old... (who) come together under a shared cultural event, where they do not only give but take as well; either through the different discussions or the concerts” (loyal visitor). In other words, the festival can satisfy “generally the needs of the ordinary people” (Ibid.).

### •Exhibition-based learning

Moving on, one of the disabling factors that seems to be related to the limited public’s participation at especially the informational and social places, is the *exhibition-based* and thus, less interactive learning. Therefore, the chances to engage the general public in critical interactions and meaningful connections are limited.

Specifically, although informational installations constitute a main component of the communication strategy is lacking interaction. Volunteers describe that although “we can expose our own problems, the Cyprus problem to Cypriots as well, so as to get informed better about them” (volunteer), in a well-visualized way and “appropriate so that even without reading them all, just the titles or the bolded letters, someone can understand the concept” (volunteer), they do not manage to engage significant number of visitors. That the strategy used for informational installations with “[p]utting just a placard and sticking something on it...is not attractive” (volunteer). In addition, decreased participation is also observed during informational discussions confirmed and explained by the organizers. That “discussions take place earlier so that it would not occur simultaneously with the concerts, and thus, with loud sounds. Therefore, people due to their working hours cannot come earlier” (Christofias & Charalambous, 2016). Subsequently, “the audience consists mainly of festival volunteers” and discussions manage only to be produced through “dialogue between the members, volunteers and the main speakers, but not with the visitors” (volunteer).

The aforementioned reflect the need for the overall approach of interaction at the informational and social places to be improved which is also expressed in volunteers’ ideas for changes. For instance, “to enhance presence of volunteers at the places in order to attract the visitors and have a dialogue with them... to stand

and explain what each of them is about, inviting the people to come and see and thus attract their interest” (volunteer). Or by using technological equipment such as “video projection instead of a poster...something that would attract the young people to see like, for example, a digital quiz” (volunteer). Also, about participation in arranged discussions at the social places, research participants suggest that it could be improved “by increasing the discussions or their duration or frequency during the day” (volunteer), while a visitor suggests that apart from increasing discussions “[i]t would be nice to generally increase the topics of discussions like on education, so as to attract people broadly, not only EDON supporters, and thus, to listen to more people’s desires and needs” (loyal visitor). That in this way it would make discussions more inclusive as well. Along the same lines, a Turkish Cypriot representative critically suggests that “[m]aybe more talks can be arranged where people can interactively participate, rather than someone giving a speech” (invited facilitator).

Towards this, the general secretary of EDON, Christofias, apart from agreeing with volunteers’ observations, he reflects and shares the following:

I have to say we are not satisfied with this. I mean the degree to which we achieve to engage people in discussions and make them generate questions. It is disappointing and we would like to open up more discussions and increase stimulation we provide to people (Christofias & Charalambous, 2016).

#### • Selective dissemination

Another factor that seems to disenable and limit the public’s engagement and therefore interactions at the informational and social places is the *selective promotion of activities and places*. This is important as especially newcomers are aware mostly about the performances which limits the chance to generate interest in the other activities.

Specifically, volunteers discuss about the need to improve the festival’s promotion on media, as “[w]hat we mainly do is to promote the concerts of the festival” (volunteer). Instead, we should invite the public to all places by saying “come because you are going to have the opportunity for discussions, to educate yourself, to meet people and moreover that there will be an opportunity to talk with our Turkish Cypriots compatriots” (Ibid.). Also, it is important to promote the rest of the content (other than the main stage concerts) as another says since “many do

not listen to this kind of music and might be more interested on things that happen at the remaining stations, that we do not promote” (volunteer). For instance, discussions at the international city “about the refugee crisis, which although was a very important addition to the festival, we did not promote it” (Ibid.).

Finally, the discussions with research participants and their experiences revealed observations about the general public’s participation in the activities of the festival while related factors reflect *a general weakness of the festival in interacting meaningfully with all visitors*. Therefore, the way these places are facilitated needs to be improved so as to “engage people in all the festival areas; to make them want to come for something more; to discuss, to collect educative material” (volunteer).

#### •Young people’s limited political participation

On the discussion about the participation numbers of newcomer visitors, research participants would also refer to external factors to provide a rounded critique on the issue of limited engagement at the other activities, different from performances. What seems to be one of the external reasons related to the lack of participation in certain places is the *young people’s limited political participation* that characterizes the Cypriot youth.

Discussions link this with the role of media and economic crisis in affecting youth’s perception to politics and its association to youth’s current conditions of living. Specifically, a volunteer observes that:

disinterest exists generally...an impact coming from the outer society; of how it faces the current political situation in Cyprus. They know that they come to a festival that is organized by the youth of the left wing, but they do not come because of that, but because of the singing performances (volunteer).

Therefore, “I do not want to be absolute but to most of the people that come here and are indifferent in political terms, I do not think that the different topic stations bring any change (Ibid.). Similarly, another volunteer observes:

It is society’s weakness. We do not see that at the festival only; generally, people are against party politics. People are bombarded daily by the radio and all of the media which promote that politics is not good and that it is politicians that destroyed the economy of the country. Thus, it makes sense coming at the festival and seeing that people are not interested for anything else but the concerts (volunteer).

Towards this, a different visitor although critically identifies the lack of interaction at the different stations “on the other hand it appears that...there is not the culture of going to a festival — whether this is EDON’s festival or a different kind of festival — in order to learn something” (volunteer).

Along the same lines, the EDON general secretary describes that “[w]e live in an era where the disinterest to political life is escalating. And this plays a significant, a negative role in the festival’s intention to attract people for political reasons” (Christofias & Charalambous, 2016). Also, disinterest is linked to:

the current situation of economic crisis which subsequently has been defining the consciousness of the majority of the youth who think politicians and political organized bodies, whether these are parties, youth organizations and anything that is related to politics, are to blame for their poverty, impoverishment, and all the consequences brought about by the economic crisis. And this is expressed through the youth’s limited participation in organized events by political youth organizations and by extent on our festival (Christofias & Charalambous, 2016).

## Loyal visitors

Similar to the previous section, the table below (figure 6.31) outlines the enabling factors related to the participation of the loyal visitors:

Factors	Status	Linked to
Affective relations, (political) home and belonging	Enabling	Festival
Sharing a (joyful) space / Making connections	Enabling	Festival

Figure 6.31 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of factors that enabled the participation of the loyal visitors, and therefore, interaction and co-creation with other groups.

### •Affective relations, (political) home and belonging

In adding to the above, the discussion examines also factors related to the great participation of loyal visitors at the festival and specific places. In general, it seems that it is their *affective relations with their political home*, that is, EDON, and therefore *feelings of belonging* that attract them to visit the festival, and therefore, allows them to interact and connect with others. Specifically, it is their *ideological consciousness* that drives their will to visit the festival every year, as a way to support

the festival and its volunteerism-led production. Visitors highlight that: “I am not coming just to listen to the concerts” (loyal visitor), while another shares that he visits “the whole place; I will go to the foreign representatives (international city), to other stations and then to the highlight of the night, the concerts” (loyal visitor). This is explained through emotional attachments and that, according to another, “[o]ne that does not have the emotional attachment will only come for the artists” or in other words “[e]specially those who are not EDON supporters are coming here for the artists” (loyal visitor). While for loyal visitors “it (the festival) became a great habit” (loyal visitor), “a tradition for us” (loyal visitor). One shares that “I am 70 years old and have been coming since I was 14 years old...it is a tradition that we should never let be forgotten. And I will keep coming as long as I live” (loyal visitor). Therefore, the yearly visit, according to a different loyal visitor, satisfies the need “to show our appreciation to volunteerism... to all volunteers that transform this naked place to a vibrant one, a place full of life”, as well as their “support (to) our organization that is the most remarkable and active youth organization nowadays and over time in Cyprus” (loyal visitor).

Also, the political attachment of loyal visitors seems, inevitably, to be coexisting with their *affective one*. Therefore, their visit to the festival fulfils also their need to escape from everyday life into a familiar environment, an elsewhere place where they know they will find affection and emotional support, to feel and share empathy with like-minded people; or simply to feel a sense of belonging and connection with other like-minded individuals at a place that feels as their (political) home. Specifically, visitors describe their need to “to feel a sense of belonging...to come to ‘my place’” (loyal visitor); or as others call it “my home” (loyal visitor) and a “place (that) is ‘ours’” (loyal visitor).

The festival for them is “a meeting place to see each other” (loyal visitor). In other words, as another says: “EDON is our political home...and it is very important for us that we meet comrades and friends with whom we share past experiences” (loyal visitor). Another participant highlights that the need to meet other like-minded people is important “also because of the political pressure experienced especially during the past few years, you need to feel strong again, that you are not alone, that you have many others by your side...those you know, the many... (and in that way) you can find your confidence again” (loyal visitor). Similarly, another visitor describes that being with like-minded people “is the feeling of something massive...

Not only is it important that people know they can find interesting elements at the festival, but that they will find others with similar opinion who seek to find the same things” (loyal visitor).

#### • **Sharing (a joyful) space / Making connections**

Another factor that seems important in enabling opportunities for affective interactions is the fact that the festival offers a shared space within a joyful atmosphere, which encourages individuals to connect with like-minded others. What is revealed is that the visitors’ *act of escaping into a festival* and ending up for most of their evening at the social places to just gather together and connect with others implies that it is *a critical act of collectiveness against the individualistic and isolative lifestyle that they live in*, expressed in a more indirect or silenced way. At the same time this implies that the places offer the opportunity to connect through maintaining a joyful atmosphere. Specifically, as a representative from the activist Cypriot organizations describes, the festival encourages meaningful interaction that fights against “the way we live nowadays that isolates each other and make us exist as individuals at our home” (invited facilitator). Whereas “the festival unites us, brings us together, and makes us think we are stronger, contrary to what we believe when we think when isolated at home” (Ibid.).

Similarly, visitors describe that “we are looking to escape from everyday routines and the isolated social life at our homes” (loyal visitor) to a place where one can “actively participate in the ‘becoming’, the making of the festival” (loyal visitor). As another participant describes, this implies a form of entertainment, where one, instead of remaining “just as an observer, they can sing, eat, walk, meet others, friends; that is very important” (loyal visitor). Also, it is important that one can participate in “discussions that are taking place at many levels...and one can express his/her opinion” (loyal visitor). Therefore, “you can move between the many different stations of the festival and thus, experience different levels of fun, that is, between a more relaxing level to the craziest level” (Ibid.). Or as described from a different visitor, a different style of entertainment from a leftist people perspective implies “entertainment in the right sense; that is the treatment of soul”, of psyche (loyal visitor) that can “escape from sub-cultures and the lifestyle that media promote...(towards) something different, with quality that cannot be found elsewhere” (loyal visitor).

The festival for the participants then becomes a meeting place that encourages meaningful connection with others or “a social assemblage that at the same time

offers the opportunity for discussion, dialogue, exchange of opinions for issues related to daily life but also to political developments” (loyal visitor). As a volunteer describes, dialogues are easy to emerge:

because the general atmosphere and environment there (social places) are festive, celebrative and relaxed. There are chairs to sit and have your coffee and food, that all help a lot for an honest and relaxed dialogue, without being confined by formalities; that you have to sit up straight and speak loud and clear (volunteer).

More importantly the volunteer argues “that those dialogues could really be recorded as they are full of meanings. I overheard many of them; some might conclude to convergences, to common grounds, which is very important for communication. And yes, this specific environment does help very much” (Ibid.)

### **Turkish Cypriot visitors**

In addition to the above observations, it is revealed that the limited participation of the Turkish Cypriot visitors at the bi-communal place reflects a general limited participation in the festival, whereas those that do visit the bi-communal place do so because of the alliances of EDON with other Turkish Cypriot organizations. By extension it is mostly the representatives of these organizations, and less the Turkish Cypriot general public that gathers there.

Therefore, a critical evaluation would be that although the festival offers opportunities for interactions between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities, these are more likely to be produced amongst Turkish and Greek Cypriot loyal visitors of the festival, and even less so between newcomer visitors of both communities in general. This is confirmed by the process of data collection itself, as the people that would gather at places and therefore would be invited to participate in the research were loyal supporters — either representatives or loyal supporters.

The table below (figure 6.32) outlines the enabling and disabling factors related to the participation of the Turkish Cypriot community.

Factors	Status	Linked to
Cross-border movement and connections	Enabling	Festival
Lack of bilingual communication and cross-border dissemination	Disabling	Festival
Young people's fear of and bias towards party-affiliated events	Disabling	Context

Figure 6.32 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of factors that enabled or disabled the participation of the Turkish Cypriot visitors, and therefore, interaction and co-creation with other groups.

### • Cross-border movement and bi-communal connections

To begin with, as it has been discussed earlier, the bi-communal place represents the importance of solidarity and of building reunification consciousness. Nevertheless, observations reveal that not only the place's facilitation attracts limited numbers of Turkish Cypriot visitors but the festival in general. Also, those that do visit the festival are probably recurrent followers of the festival or have affiliations with EDON and its members or are visiting the festival as representatives of their own Turkish Cypriot organizations. Specifically, a volunteer observes that "mostly they are friends that know they would find each other here every year" (volunteer) or "they are those that have a role to play here" (volunteer), meaning the representatives of Turkish Cypriot organizations that EDON invites. Therefore, "although Turkish Cypriots visit the festival, it is more in a symbolic way as there is not massive participation" (Ibid.).

However, it cannot be disregarded the fact that the festival does encourages cross-border movement and connections between the two communities, even though it is still limited, due to different factors. A Turkish Cypriot representative shares his personal experience to explain the way the social places including the bi-communal place can be a way for communities to connect meaningfully. For instance, because he lives in north Cyprus and has also friends in the south it is important to visit the festival. He specifically says that:

the main reason that I attend this festival every year is not just to represent or sell anything for my organization, but it's to meet with people...to make new friends or to meet with the old ones because with a lot of friends that live for example, in Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos, it's not easy to get to see each other every day. And I know that these days they will be here and that we can drink together, chat, help each other on things, we can talk about things that we have not talk about before (invited facilitator).



Therefore, his act of visiting the festival is important “because we (communities) need this sort of events, to meet each other and blend together, as through them we can get to know each other better” (invited facilitator). Simply, “we need to have fun together” (Ibid.).

#### •Lack of bilingual communication and cross-border dissemination

What seems to be a related factor to the limited participation of the Turkish Cypriot community at the festival that both the festival volunteers and the Turkish Cypriot representatives share, is the lack of *bilingual communication* and cross-border dissemination strategy that could not resolve the language barrier adequately. Specifically, on the discussion on whether there are appealing elements that are used to attract the Turkish Cypriot public, a volunteer shares: “No, there are not. Everything is in the Greek language and the music as well, which is not even Cyprus-oriented” (volunteer), meaning the main performances at the centre stage. She then continues to say that “[o]nly at the traditional area these can be found where, for example, there is the bi-communal dance group ‘Dance for peace’. That’s all” (Ibid.).

The aforementioned reflects the need for inadequate focus on the language barrier that arises from discussions towards a communication strategy that will be based on bilingualism, that is, the use of both the Turkish and Greek language, as well as the promotion of the festival in the north areas. As a TC supports, it would help to use both the languages, for example, in “some posters, banners; something like that, to attract a Turkish Cypriot”, as well as, “to cross the border and to advertise the festival in the north side” (Ibid.).

Moreover, another idea on improving the presence of the Turkish Cypriot community was to engage persons in the production of the festival, as building-something-together. Specifically, a representative from a south-based activist organization suggests that “the bi-communal place itself is not enough” and thus, it might be a good practice “to also give the Turkish Cypriots responsibilities and make them feel as being part of the festival, not just visitors (invited facilitator). Similarly, a volunteer supports that “[s]omething we have not tried until now is to have Turkish Cypriot volunteers in all stations...which will make them feel it as ‘theirs’. There is nothing stronger than feeling that we built-something-together” (volunteer).

In addition, from a Turkish Cypriot perspective another idea was to enrich the content of the festival by incorporating knowledge-exchange activities between

the youths of the two communities, aiming to “invite young people to exchange their views (like) an open assembly, for example, for the young people, the young generation” (invited facilitator). This is important, as what he observes to be a great issue among the Cypriot youth and crucial for the bi-communal relations, is the limited awareness about the origins of the Turkish Cypriot community; that is, the fact that they are Cypriots and therefore, different from the Turkish settlers that came from Turkey. Specifically, he shares that:

What I realize actually is that many of the young people in Cyprus are not informed about the Turkish Cypriots...they do not know why we speak Turkish and why we do not speak Greek, for example...they automatically start thinking that we all came from Turkey and we are not actually “real” Cypriots (invited facilitator).

#### •Young people’s fear of and bias towards party-affiliated events

Similar to what has been discussed earlier as one of the external factors that are possibly associated to the way the general public is spread in the activities of the festival, the Turkish Cypriot representative of a youth organization shares that it is challenging to attract the Turkish Cypriot community, especially the youth, in *party-affiliated events*. This is due to both the *fear of and bias* towards them. Specifically, he shares the idea that “[w]e need to make more festivals...that does not have to be under one theme... It can be titled as only ‘Let’s have fun together’” (invited facilitator), so as to offer more joyful moments between the youths of both communities. As he then explains, in the north there is a fear that when someone is found to be related with a political party he/she can even lose his/her job and therefore “a lot of people...do not join events just because it’s under one party’s name...especially if you are (working) in the private sector...they can easily fire you” (Ibid.).

Finally, based on the observations, factors and ideas that have been discussed, the leaders of EDON who critically reflect on them, refer to the subjective and objective obstacles that define the public participation from the Turkish Cypriot community. As regards the subjective obstacles, EDON leaders refer to the capacity and efforts to address the issue of language which “we unintentionally do not give the attention we could either by translating or using bilingualism which the festival should have” (Christofias & Charalambous, 2016). They find this important and observe that “it is something that isolates them... And this is a serious limitation” (Ibid.).

However, objective obstacles that define and restrict EDON's capacity to develop a better communication strategy is dependent on the more important fact that EDON's action is inevitably focused "in the free areas where the majority of people living there are Greek-speaking people, and which constitutes an aftermath of the division and occupation itself" (Christofias & Charalambous, 2016). Therefore, as long as "we are separated, one (community) in the north and the other in the south, there will always be objective difficulties in making the festival truly bi-communal" (Ibid.). Nevertheless, the EDON general secretary envisages a different future for a reunified Cyprus and therefore, the organizations capability to organize the festival "together". That:

After the island is free and reunified, we hope that we will be acting as one organized body, that we will have massive membership of Turkish Cypriot youth, which will inevitably provide the capacity to start and finish the festival together. But currently all these actions cannot take place, and it is challenging to do so while being divided (Christofias & Charalambous, 2016).

#### 06.04 Principles towards tangible Interplaces or spatial practices of Solidarity Pedagogy

Section 6.2 focused on the way places/activities facilitated depositions, exchanges and co-creations revealing techniques that specifically fostered co-creations. Section 6.3 focused on factors that either enabled or disabled interactions between groups, at the places/activities where co-creations could emerge.

This section takes a wider look to draw out key-learnings that emerge from the previous sections. Key learnings suggest a list of pedagogical *principles* (outlined below, figure 6.33) that could be used to facilitate meaningful connections — based on the strengths as well as limitations drawn from the festival. Strengths and limitations form the reasons that the in-depth research needed to be enriched with a second case study.

Collecting these key learning points helps to imagine tangible ways to facilitate spatial practices of solidarity pedagogy, or what I call as *Interplaces*, that can transform relational borders through space. This implies that Interplaces are thought of as transformative practice, which as discussed earlier in the thesis (Chapter 3), implies a practice that facilitates *connections* through and across the border, therefore, in space; a practice that is temporary; and also, critiques the current norm of living separated-from-each-other. At the same time, Interplaces are *shared spaces* that

Pedagogical Principles	
<b>Access, scale and participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• affordability and big-scale</li> <li>• open-access</li> <li>• cross-border</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bilingualism</li> </ul>
<b>Dissemination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cross-border</li> <li>• comprehensive</li> </ul>
<b>Means and Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interaction- and co-creation- based</li> <li>• joyful-critical and context-specific</li> </ul>
<b>Site/s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing spaces</li> </ul>

Figure 6.33 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of the pedagogical principles that can be used to facilitate Interplaces or spatial practices through which to learn how to co-create and connect with others, and eventually, achieve solidarity pedagogy.

are co-produced after communities connect in order to inhabit these spaces and cooperate so as to create-together. In the context of Cyprus, Interplaces imply that communities from across the divide, cross the border and move through it towards Northern or Southern Cyprus in order to meet and co-create shared experiences; and potentially new relational ties.

Based on the analysis of the moments of co-creation that I found at the EDON festival, my interest is to suggest ways Interplaces could be produced in the future for achieving meaningful connections between different groups and especially between Turkish and Greek Cypriots.

### **Access, scale and participation**

- **affordability and big-scale**

A fact that should be considered if aiming to achieve greater participation in numbers could be the price of the ticket. The festival showed that the affordable price of its ticket, with which one ensures access to multiple activities, is related to the fact that it attracts thousands of people, although for a different person, this could be

considered as non-affordable as well. Considering the entrance fee and maintaining it to an approachable price, might be a way to overcome the social-economic barrier or border that can prevent different individuals and groups who wish to participate.

- **open-access**

In relation to the access to the production of activities, it is important that is maintained open, meaning to allow the participation of individuals and groups in the process and outcomes of the learning process, which also adds to the previous point towards ensuring increased inclusiveness. As seen earlier in the category of co-creations, interactions where possible when visitors were allowed to engage and contribute in the process of creating-together. This was not the case in the category of depositions, which implies that the reason co-creation was not possible was the fact that visitors could not engage, and rather, could only be present and passive during the activities.

- **cross-border**

To add to the above, the festival showed that although there was a specific space called 'the bi-communal space', invitation to TC youth organizations that are north-based, as well as the site of the festival was located near the crossing point in Nicosia, there was still need for an integrated bi-communal strategy to achieve the participation of the TC community.

This leads to suggest that the pedagogical process should have a stronger focus on inviting communities to cross the border and meet each other, either in the North or South, where individuals and groups can jointly and more equally participate in the learning process, shaping a more tangible way to produce Interplaces and practise solidarity.

The position is based on the ideas of Freire (1996) and Mohanty (2003) where practising solidarity implies and requires a process of learning *cognitive* and *geopolitical crossing* so as to overcome different social borders. This cumulates with using also Stavride's (2016; 2007) ideas to argue that practising solidarity, especially in the context of Cyprus, should also imply a process of *crossing spatial borders*. For this to take place, however, according to this proposition, a pedagogical process should create opportunities for cross-border connections and thus, for a more inclusive participation of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

## Communication

- **bilingualism**

What is also an important principle in relation to ensuring inclusiveness, participation and overcoming relational borders through the pedagogical process is that there should be attention given to the spoken languages of participants, as it is perceived as another type of relation border that prevents or procrastinates building of relations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The festival showed that this has been a great factor for the limited participation of the TC community and a social-cultural obstacle that was addressed only in specific instances. Therefore, it is proposed that a pedagogical process that aims to lessen relational borders between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots and thus allow opportunities for meaningful interaction between them, could utilize bilingualism, that is, the use of both Greek and Turkish language.

## Dissemination

- **cross-border**

In relation to dissemination, firstly, it is important that the promotion of pedagogical activities that aim to improve the relations of the two communities, reach to both the Northern and Southern sites of Cyprus, that is, to approach dissemination as a cross-border strategy. Discussions with research participants at the festival showed that this could be a significant factor in increasing the numbers of the public that come from the TC community, and therefore, to not be represented only through the individuals that the EDON organization invited.

- **comprehensive**

Secondly, it is important that the dissemination of such pedagogical initiatives promote all activities included therein, that is, to be comprehensive, so as to let the public be aware of the opportunities they can find and attract a diverse range of learners. The festival showed that its selective approach to promotion of the festival by highlighting mostly the performances, constitutes a great factor in attracting significant numbers of newcomer visitors who are mostly interested in the shows they can watch and much less interested in the rest of the activities.

## Means and Content

- **interaction- and co-creation- based**

In relation to the pedagogical means, firstly, it is important that learning is based

on *interaction*, rather on exhibited information as seen in most of this festival's activities. The suggestion is based on what is learned through the category of co-creations during recreational and learning activities of the festival where creating-together was possible due to the fact that visitors could interact with each other, for either having facilitated and casual discussions, or for practising cultural rituals such as eating-together. Also, the suggestion builds on the ideas explored in Chapter 3 through Freire (1998) and Gauntlett (2011) to argue that ensuring interaction during the educative process offers space for learners to firstly, participate in the process and outcome of production, and secondly, to develop their own *creativity*; and more importantly, to *create with others* or co-create that is especially important for generating feelings of *joy* and empowering *togetherness* amongst the communities of Cyprus.

Contrary to this, the exhibition-based learning at the festival found during depositions, meant that visitors were not able to interact, but only observe the different acts. The approach was reflected in both learning and recreational activities: learning was mainly facilitated using spatial installations with exhibited information (and complemented with live topic discussions); and likewise, recreation was based on non-interactive acts where one could only watch them but not participate in them. This relates to what Freire (1997) calls as 'banking education' and fights to change as discussed in Chapter 3, which implies that the educative process does not allow the participation of learners in the process of learnings, and thus interaction-based learning. Therefore, it is less likely that the experience of learning is joyful or that it will develop learners' creativity, collective creation or togetherness.

What derives from the above-mentioned is that in a pedagogical process that aims to transform relational borders, it is important that interaction in learning engages learners in the process of creating-together and thus enhance togetherness. The festival showed that co-creation is an important reciprocal process of give and receive, where learners as creative agents, arrive with mutual work to creating-together and connecting meaningfully. This was evident at the informational exhibitions and social places *as dialogues* with representatives of organizations at the international city and non-governmental organizations place; the *facilitated discussions* by invited speakers at the social places; also, *as casual dialogues* between groups (mainly) loyal visitors at the social places and the traditional tavern; moreover, *as cultural rituals* practised between the visitors, such as the *drinking-together* the Cypriot

coffee at the Bi-communal place, or *eating-together* at the tavern.

Against this approach were the interactions found in the category of depositions, where acts were produced by the facilitators' creative work only who would "give" — or deposit in Freire's words (1996) — its outcome to visitors, as seen at the *performances, screenings, demonstrations, informational displays and artistic installations*. Similarly, the exchanges as forms of economic interactions, although based on give-receive, was a pre-defined relationship that followed the rule of economic reproduction, as seen *at the internal economy* including the bazaar, the food and drink courts and the bars or *the external economies including* the vendors at the traditional corner and the bookshop. This meant that visitors could not for instance engage the earlier stages of economies, the process and creation of the outcomes as beneficiary members of a collective-benefit economy.

- **joyful-critical and context-specific**

Another important principle that learnings from the festival help to form in relation to the pedagogical content, is that combinations of learning activities with recreational ones can offer a joyful-critical experience of learning to connect meaningfully with others. Linked to this, it is suggested that meaningful connections can arise when a context-specific content is given to these learning and recreational activities. This means that the content stems from the *Cypriot culture* and reality which can culminate to affectionate bonding and meaningful communication.

The fact that these principles are suggested to be a powerful way to connect, builds on what I have already realized during my exploratory journey as presented in Chapter 4, when joyful and critical moments found in different learnings and recreational activities were to become pointers that would help in starting to imagine tangible ways to practice Solidarity Pedagogy in Cyprus and between its two communities.

These findings from practice are also in line to what has been discussed in Chapter 3, where the ideas on joyfulness during the development of critical abilities explored through Freire (1998) and Gauntlett (2011), helped to imagine that the transformative power of solidarity pedagogy in regard to relational borders, implies that it is both joyful and critical practice, for which the festival showed tangible ways to materialize it. Specifically, moments of critical learning were found during learning activities, which aimed to inform the public about the latest developments in the



political, social and economic background of Cyprus (as well as other countries). Also, moments of joyfulness were found during recreational activities, which were based on local Cypriot culture and where visitors had the opportunity to dance and eat together, have casual discussions, as well as share their experiences and concerns. For instance, at social places the content was related to the Cypriot culture, including the performances of bi-communal dance and music groups, and generally of traditional Cypriot music and dances, the Bi-communal place with the presence of Turkish Cypriot representatives such as the BKP youth organization in the north (although symbolic), the Cypriot traditional meals and drinks such as the coffee, as well as the tavern itself that constitutes a ritual of the Cypriot culture.

Also, at informational exhibitions and arranged discussions the content was related to the *Cypriot reality* including current developments on economy, politics, and education, and action of other Cypriot organizations as well as that of other countries and the action of inter-national organizations. This included the national organizations (non-governmental and volunteering) such as the Cyprus Youth Council or the POGO Women's movement, or the international organizations at the international city such as the Portuguese JCP youth organization.

## Site/s

- **sharing spaces**

What is also an important element to consider for the pedagogical process is the site that this process takes place at. It is important that learners can meet each other at a common place which they can share for an amount of time, and therefore, to have the time and space to connect, feel belonged and create affective relations. The discussions with research participants at the festival showed that it was important for them that they could find a place, the festival, that is not related to their routine, where they could escape to, in order to connect with others — whether coming from Northern and Southern Cyprus, or other countries and continents.

This learning point from the festival highlights the need to create opportunities for the Greek and Turkish Cypriots to meet at shared spaces, and helps to develop the understanding of an Interplace also as an escape to an elsewhere place. This means that an Interplace should be perceived as an opportunity for individuals to temporarily leave their everyday routines and locations, cross the border and meet with the other community at a shared place, an elsewhere Interplace in order to connect with others.

## Moving to the next case study

On the one hand, the facts altogether, cannot lead into certain conclusion that the relational borders between groups of visitors that visited the festival were able to be transformed. The disabling elements that were identified require attention and a critical approach to the level that different individuals and groups managed to connect and thus the diversity of differences that were met. This constitutes a contradictory fact as a youth-led festival such as the EDON festival manages to attract thousands but fails to engage adequate numbers especially in activities that are supposed to raise critical consciousness.

On the other hand, it could be said that the festival itself as a form of spatial practice can be thought of as a facilitator of Interplaces, and thus, it has been an opportunity for shared spaces and connections to be produced, that overcame geographical or disciplinary borders. Also, although this specific festival has not been effective in facilitating meaningful interactions at a significant level, at the same time, this exploration still confirmed that festivals, as a form of practice at the intersections of learning and leisure, offer an interesting way to approach connections.

However, pointers that were to be explored in the case of the EDON festival, that is, hybrids of joyfulness and critique, need to be further investigated in theorizing transformative spatial practices. This is based on the fact that although interaction techniques were utilized within a festive atmosphere and possibly promoted a joyful way of learning, nevertheless, this was not in ways that achieved interactions between a diverse range of individuals or groups, nor did (most of the) learning opportunities that were based on interaction. Therefore, opportunities to co-create and connect meaningfully with new others were limited.

Subsequently, having this knowledge and analytical tools at hand, I continued the exploration to the second case study, the Xarkis festival, presented in the next chapter (7), in seeking interaction-based approaches to learning and recreational activities in the quest of discovering more tangible ways to facilitate meaningful connections, and thus, suggest principles to imagine Interplaces as joyful and critical spatial practices for Solidarity Pedagogy.

## 07 The Xarkis festival

Following the case of the EDON festival, the exploration continues with the investigation of the second case study, the Xarkis festival. I decided that the Xarkis festival was a significant case to investigate due to the fact that, firstly, although a leisure-based event, its activities were mainly participation, and interaction-based, aiming to promote creativity and learning in ways that could engage local communities and raise awareness about the importance of arts and culture in engagement and empowerment of local communities, and intergenerational interactions, therefore, solidarity between generations; secondly, it managed to attract diverse groups of young people. Both were unique features that cannot be found among other festivals in Cyprus (a complete list of elements that led to choosing the Xarkis festival can be found in Chapter 5, section 05.03, *Research Design*). What was interesting was the fact, contrary to the EDON festival, the organization has reported that the festival attracts only a few hundred visitors during the course of three days and two nights annually; and that this is a conscious choice, dictated by the desire to engage in depth with local communities.

Based on these features, the Xarkis festival has been promising for providing effective practical insights to learn from and complement learnings from the EDON festival, and thus, the guidelines on learning how to connect with others so as to imagine spatial practices of solidarity pedagogy; that is, tangible Interplaces through which communities can learn to connect and practise solidarity with each other.

The chapter following general information about the festival in section 07.01, through its sections presents a socio-spatial analysis of the festival, aiming to understand to what extent forms of social interaction developed during the festival are linked to solidarity pedagogy.

Similar to the previous case, section 07.02 looks closely at the three types of *social interactions* identified and the places/activities that they could be found making distinctions between interactions that may lead to learning solidarity and to connect with others, namely *co-creations*, highlighting associated *techniques* that supported this learning and interactions, as well as other interactions found, namely *depositions and exchanges*.

Section 07.03 from a critical distance identifies *factors* that managed to enable participation of specific groups at festival and the specific places associated to the

emergence of co-creations. In offering a rounded critical evaluation, the section includes also factors that *disabled* further participation of specific groups.

Section 07.04 draws from findings in the previous sections especially the techniques and factors that enabled the participation and emergence of interactions and co-creations, to arrive to pedagogical *principles* that can be used in learning solidarity and connecting with others meaningfully. Principles draw from the strengths of the festival complemented by critical reflections that look also at its *limitations*, resulting however, into placing it as an effective festival that complements limitations from the EDON festival; the Xarkis festival provides good practices to adopt for improving the relational border between the GC and TC communities.

## 07.01 Context

The second case study of the empirical research is the cultural-artistic festival *Xarkis* organized by the Xarkis cultural, non-profit, non-governmental organization, as part of their annual cultural events. The festival usually lasts three consecutive days and takes place at different rural areas of Southern Cyprus. During the research in the field, the Xarkis festival was organized at Koilani village within the Limassol district (figure 7.1). No-fee entrance allowed access to all activities. These were a combination of simultaneous workshops, installations, and performances spread out on different sites of the village. The research on the festival was completed over the course of two festivals accessed between 19th and 20th of August in 2017, and between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of August in 2018.

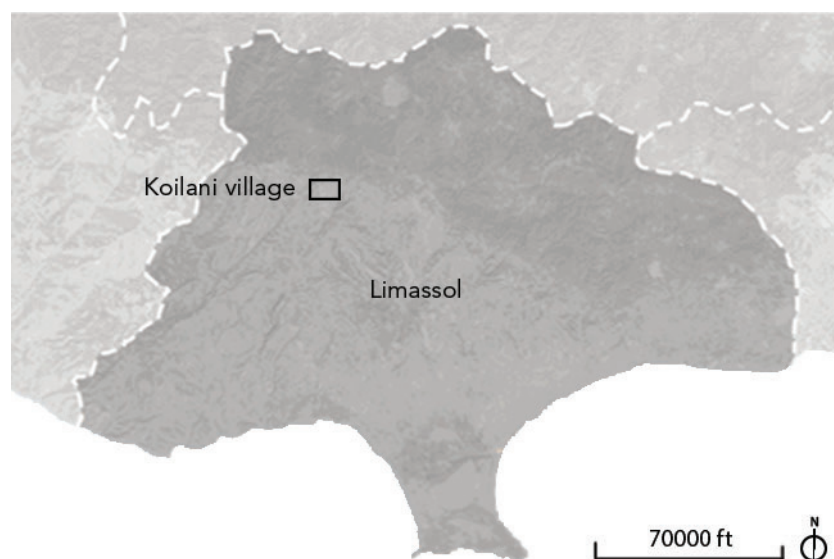


Figure 7.1. Pashia, E. (2019). The Xarkis festival site is located within the district of Limassol.

## Aims

The Xarkis festival constitutes one of the yearly projects of the organization and is identified as “a nomadic, international arts Festival which travels annually in a rural region of Cyprus” (Xarkis, 2019a: para.3), but mainly across areas of the Southern side of the island. It was initially started as “a concept for a social experiment, an occasion for an inter-generational get together, and an impulse to react creatively against a more general crisis that began then to plague the island” (Xarkis, 2017a: para.1). However, this has changed over time, according to the festival creative director and founder of Xarkis NGO:

[c]urrently it’s more about bridging the generation gap. Generally, we are interested in socially engaged art and design, DIY culture, folk culture, vernacular culture and everyday culture (Skarpari, 2017).

In doing so, at the festival:

[w]e usually use participatory art and design. At the same time in order to organize this festival we aim to work with multiple stakeholders. Also, we aim to work with the local community of the festival village as much as possible... we want to visit villages that are abandoned and it can offer only positive outcome to villages (Skarpari, 2017).

Every festival has a different theme that defines the call for artists and thus the content of activities. In 2017, at the 5<sup>th</sup> Xarkis festival, the overarching topic was focused on “the idea of ‘sympraxis’\* the rejuvenation of traditional crafts and revival of interest in younger generations, in order to pass them down in meaningful ways, and preserve them in the years to come.” (Xarkis, 2017a: para.7). Sympraxis was defined as “[c]ommon action to achieve a certain goal, participation in a joint effort, co-operation” (Xarkis, 2017a: para.8), reflecting the festival’s objective to be a production based on collaborations, communities, artists and related stakeholders.

The following objectives reflect what the festival tries to achieve, as well as they constitute long-term aims of the Xarkis as an organization:

“We consider the following missions as important first steps:

1. Encouraging publics’ active engagement in experiential activities within the realm of culture.
2. Strengthening “community identity” wherein people can better understand,

appreciate and interact with local culture, history and the environment.

3. Providing a dialogue between people of different backgrounds, for the purposes of preservation and revival of manifestations of cultural heritage. Within this, we aim to explore new avenues for expressing traditions, handicrafts, customs and arts, on a local and global level.

4. Cultivating a culture of participation, co-operation and contribution and widening the circle of interest for culture and heritage.

5. Creating a learning framework that encourages the study and experimentation in relation to the methodological axes and practical applications, as well as innovative ideas around socially responsive, participatory art and design practices.” (Xarkis, 2019b: para. 1).

## Site

### • Koilani Village, a Limassol wine village

In both field visits the festival took place at one of Limassol’s twenty wine villages, Koilani village (figures 7.2-5). It is considered as one of the currently abandoned villages in Cyprus with less than 300 residents. The festival activities took place at different sites of the village in its core area. Due to its site-specific character, the content of each activity was appropriated to the different sites chosen, except some necessary technical equipment.

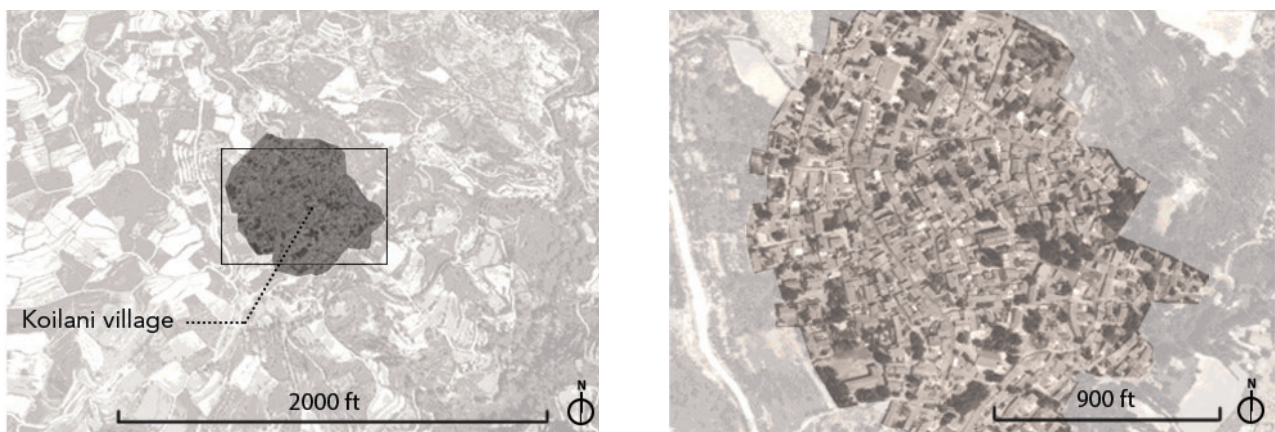


Figure 7.2 Pashia, E. (2019). The site of the festival located at Koilani village, in the Limassol district.



Figure 7.3 Cyprus alive. (2019). Landscape view of Koilani village.



Figure 7.4 Cyprus alive. (2019). The streets of Koilani village.



Figure 7.5. Cyprus alive. (2019). The characteristic outlook of Koilani village's buildings.

## Content

The festival map (figure 7.6) produced from the festival in 2017 is indicative of the way the festival was spread onto different sites of Koilani village. Different recreational and informational activities, combined workshops, artistic installations, performances and music as well as sites for camping were all situated/took place at community buildings or public areas such as the village's amphitheatre, or the football pitch, or a classroom in the abandoned school (figures 7.7-8). The activities were facilitated mainly by the invited facilitators such as the local and international artists as well as the festival volunteers.

Activities took place for two consecutive whole days; workshops and installations during the day and music acts and performances in the afternoon and at night. The content of activities combined progressive and traditional perspectives of art and culture while it aimed to be participatory and promote community engagement in bridging the generation gap.



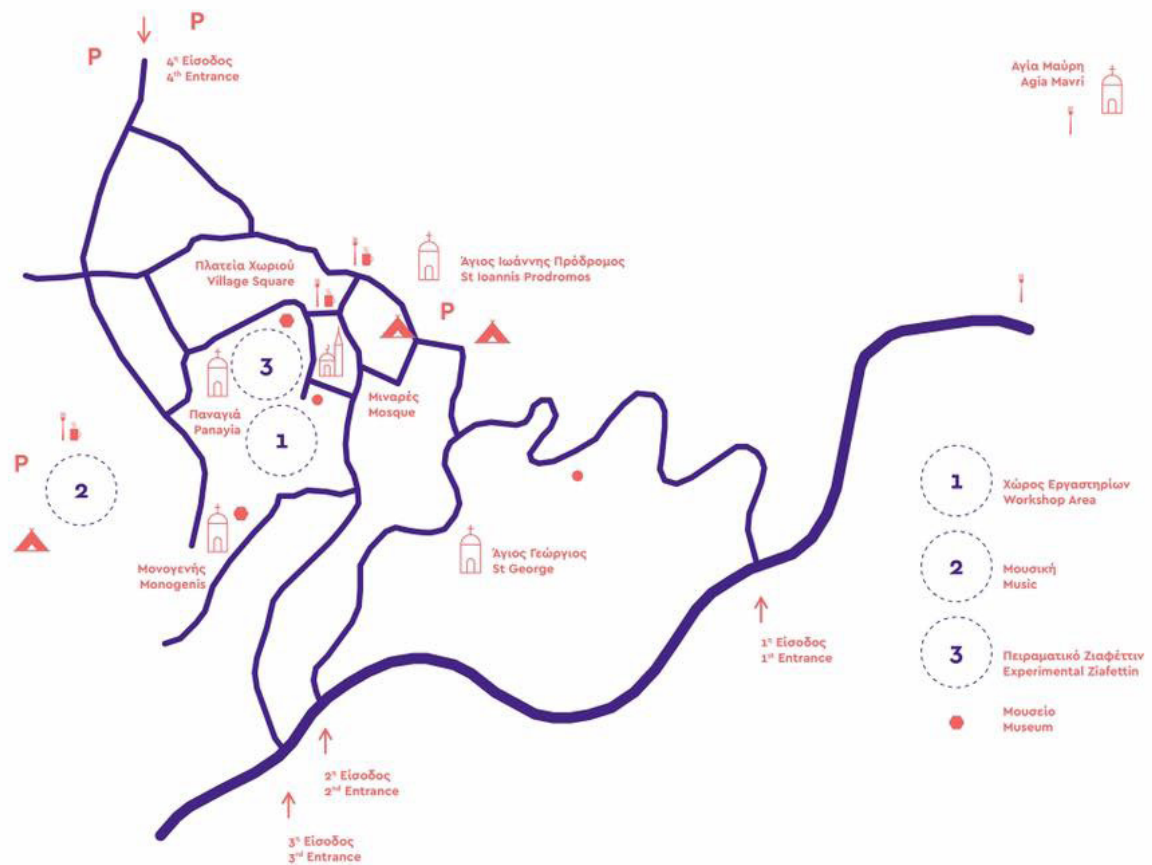


Figure 7.6 Xarkis. (2017). The festival's map in Greek and English language, illustrating the different places across the village. It was given to the public at the Xarkis festival in 2017.



Figure 7.7. Pashia, E. (2017). The outdoors amphitheatre situated at the centre of the village.



Figure 7.8. Cyprus alive. (2019). The abandoned school of the village situated at its centre.

## Groups

The groups I will be referring to throughout the chapter are as follows:

- *organisers*: the Xarkis cultural organization;
- *volunteers*: friends of Xarkis who contributed to the day-to-day running of the festival and facilitated activities as part of the festival;
- *invited facilitators*: practitioners other than the Xarkis team, who facilitated activities as part of the festival;
- *local visitors*: residents of the village;
- *newcomer visitors*: the general public that comes from different locations to the village. The organizers have reported that the festival possibly attracts a few hundred visitors throughout the two days altogether, with people coming from different cities of Northern and Southern areas of Cyprus. In relation to this, although it was found that there was participation of the TCs community at the level of artists/facilitators, this was not a targeted intention that would engage the community, as seen at the EDON festival, therefore it was hard to know numbers of the community's newcomer visitors.

## • Organizers

Xarkis is identified as a non-profit and non-governmental organization established after:

a need to realize cultural initiatives that embrace local culture and contribute towards community empowerment...in order to offer a greater range of collaborative and community-based projects (Xarkis, 2019c: para.1).

The Xarkis NGO initiates participatory design services, curation, coordination and facilitation of cultural and socially responsive actions. Also, it aims to generate networks and collaborations for know-how and skill exchange, named by the organizations as “matchmaking” that brings together “creative practitioners, researchers, experts and non-experts, with inclusivity and public participation being at the heart of our actions”; what the organization simply refers to as “collaborative and social design practice” (Xarkis, 2019d: para.1). The aim is to generate “new ideas” that could be implemented so as to offer “a positive influence on the local societies” (Ibid.). This extends to a broader vision, where the Xarkis NGO “envisages a society that actively explores, celebrates, experiments with, and participates in actions that re-define aspects of culture. We want to work with, collaborate and facilitate any team or individual with the same urge for positive change” (Xarkis, 2019e: para.1).

## • Supporters

The production of the Xarkis festival is carried out mainly through the organization’s board members support as well as volunteers. Also, the production includes other supporters whether present at the site or not.

Drawing from the festival 2017, supporters that were present (figure 7.9) included among others, national and international invited facilitators of activities from different locations of Cyprus (north and south) and other countries (such as Greece, UK, Spain, Canada etc.).

Supporters that were not present (figure 7.10) included national-based and global-based resources related to funding and product supplies, and to media promotion, from different governmental, semi-governmental and for-profit institutions, as well as local authorities which assisted in accessing the village.

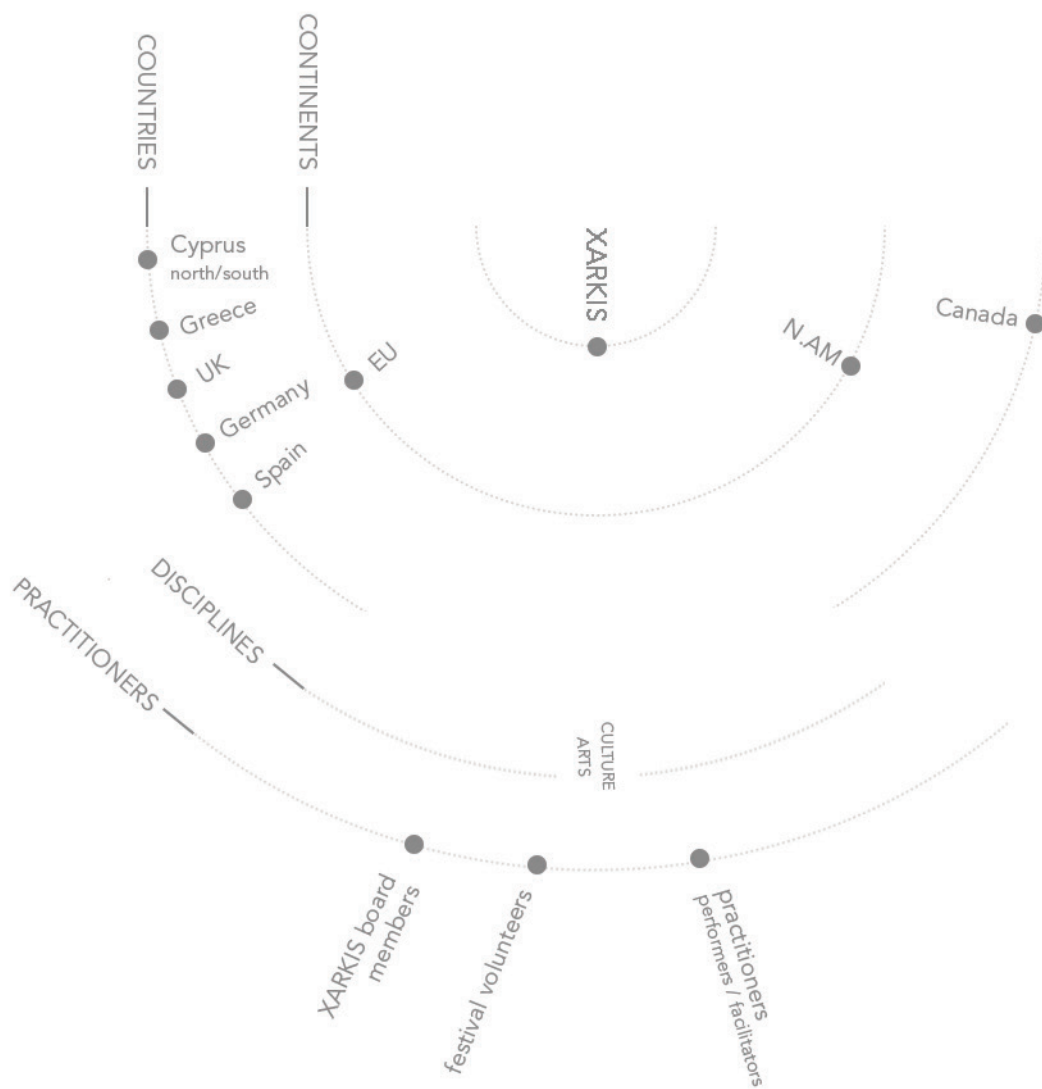


Figure 7.9 Pashia, E. (2019). Diagram illustrating supporters that were present at the festival site, including practitioners coming from different disciplines, countries and continents (Xarkis festival 2017).

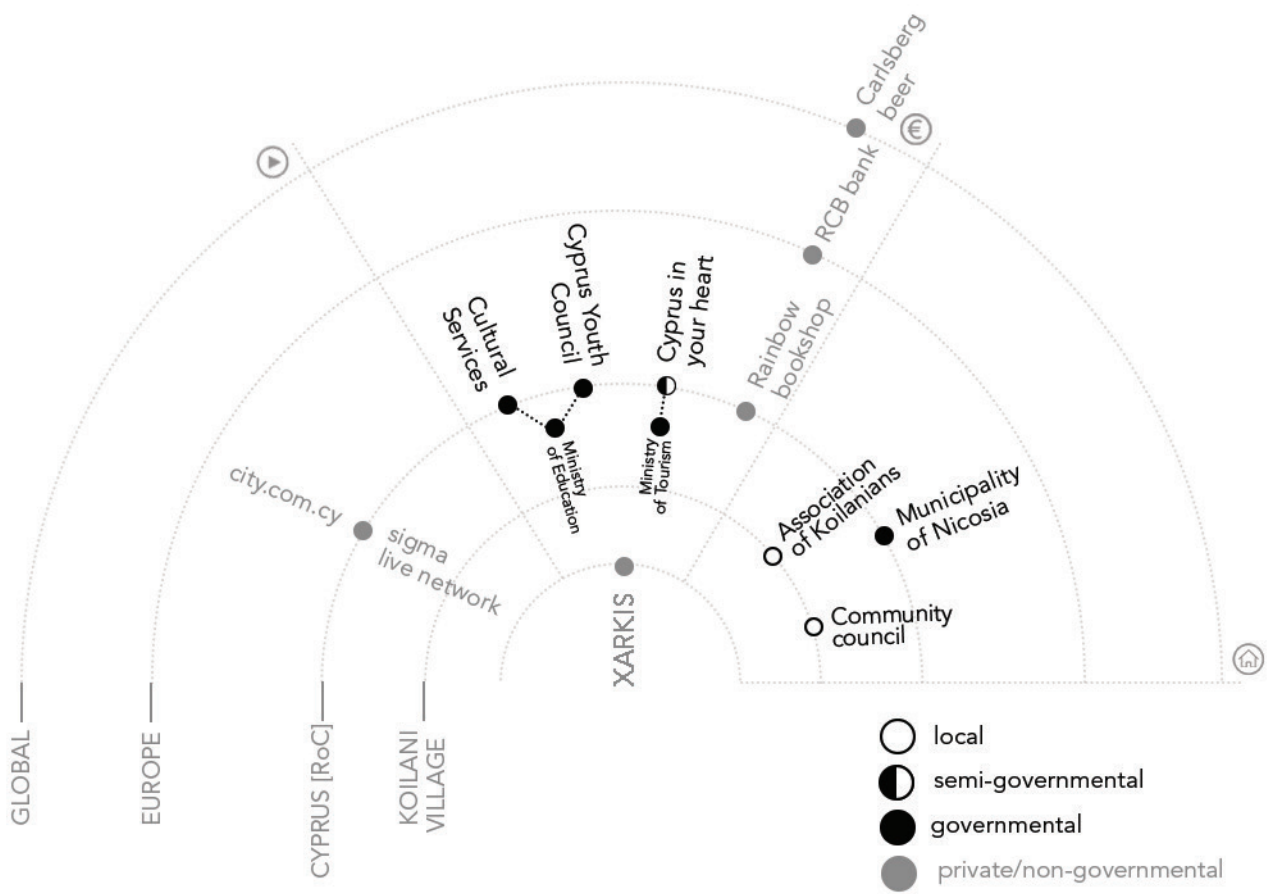


Figure 7.10 Pashia, E. (2019). Diagram of supporters that were not present at the festival site, including different national, European, global and local organizations that are part of the private, governmental and semi-governmental sectors (Xarkis festival 2017).

## • Collaborations and connections

It is interesting the fact that the festival manages to facilitate connections, either physical or collaborative. *Physical connections* were produced across individuals and groups coming from *within south Cyprus*, that is, visitors who travelled from different areas of Cyprus including Nicosia, Limassol, Paphos, Larnaca and Ammochostos, and moved to Koilani village. Also, connections were formed between persons *across the border*, that is, between Turkish Cypriot performance artists and facilitators and visitors who travelled from different areas of north Cyprus and moved to Koilani village, in south Cyprus. Interestingly, connections were formed with persons from other countries *beyond Cyprus*, that is, between the international facilitators who travelled from other countries such as Germany, Greece, Canada and others, and moved to a village in south Cyprus.

*Collaborative connections* that were evident within the festival reflect the networking practice of Xarkis that achieved to facilitate connections and cooperation *over relational, geopolitical and disciplinary borders*, within and beyond its situatedness, across different individuals, groups and bodies.

Specifically, the festival managed to facilitate connections between *disciplines* at a *translocal* level. Local and international practitioners landed from the fields of art and culture such as the GC and TC artists and facilitators for performances and workshops, the international artists and facilitators for performances and workshops from different countries, and the Cypriot Xarkis volunteers living mainly in Nicosia.

Also, the festival managed to facilitate collaboration with Cypriot sectors that were not traced at the festival but supported its production, including the international private suppliers (Carlsberg beer) and national private suppliers (Rainbow bookshop, city-com.cy), national governmental bodies (Cyprus Youth Council and Cultural services), semi-governmental bodies (Cyprus in your heart) and local bodies (community council and associations of Koilanians).

## 07.02 Interactions/non-interactions and techniques

The diagram below (figure 7.11) outlines the festival's socio-spatial production including activities and sites. As in the previous case, the activities of the festival are reassembled into three categories — depositions, exchanges and co-creations — according to whether their production was based on interaction or non-interaction, that determined the ability of the visitors to engage (or not) in the production of

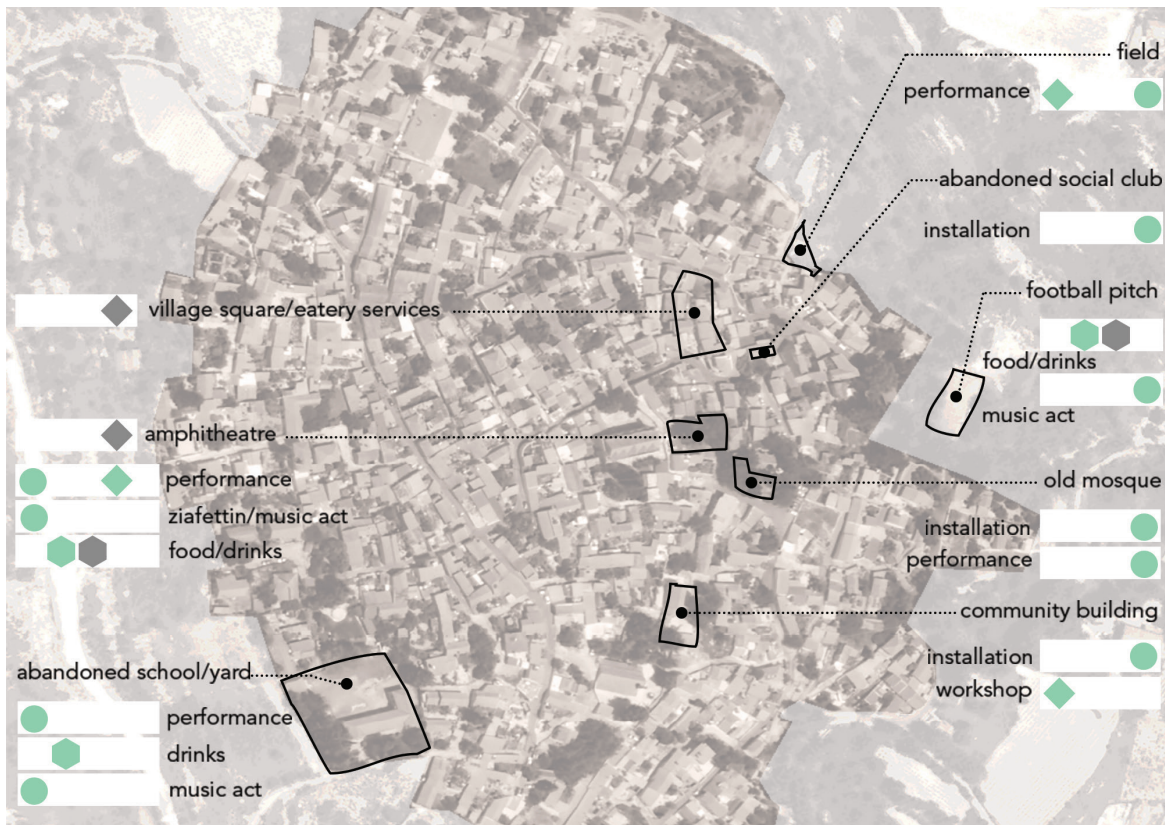


Figure 7.11 Pashia, E. (2019). Diagram illustrating the festival's places. The legend below the diagram shows the three categories social interactions that were encouraged during the different festival's activities.

each place (see detailed explanation of the three categories in Chapter 5, section 05.05, *Qualitative analysis of data*).

The categories and the places to which these productions occurred are marked with an icon language that is explained in the legend below the diagram. The three columns represent each category. Each column explains interactions and non-interactions: who could engage and where it would take place. Each category is described in detail within the following sub-sections that make up an overview of the content and associated meanings that the organization aims to convey through them.

## **Depositions: performances, installations**

Depositions were *non-interactive, non-participatory acts* found in (sound and movement) *performances* as well as in (sound, visual, oral) *installations*, all of which could be either static or mobile between sites, and taking place at different sites and routes across the village. The activities would be attended mostly by newcomer visitors at the village, with the exception of some performances especially the sound performances that were based on traditional music and attracted a few locals as well. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

### **• Sound performances**

Sound performances of experimental progressive music took place at the abandoned *school's yard* (figure 7.12) and the *football field*, while the experimental traditional acts took place at the *village's amphitheatre* (figure 7.13). Sound performances were facilitated by the artists. Seating arrangements were provided for the visitors. The program included *non-interactive sound performances* that combined progressive with traditional perspectives of experimental music performed as live music acts by young and old generations of artists who came from both communities of Cyprus as well as from different countries such as Greece, UK, Germany, Lebanon, Palestine, Mexico, Austria and others. Sound performances would be a prepared work of the artists' residency or of participatory workshop's residency, prior and during the festival.

The experimental-improvised character of the sound performances appears to be one of the elements associated with visitors' observation that "[t]he whole festival is different" (newcomer visitor). This was reflected for instance in the discussions about the progressive music acts. A visitor observes that "the music last night was





Figure 7.12 Pashia, E. (2017). Two moments from the activity of sound performances, at the old school's yard. The icon on the left implies that visitors could not participate in the process of this activity nor could interact with others. Therefore, it is allocated in the category of depositions as the outcome of the activity could only be a given production by the artists, rather than co-produced with the visitors. The subtle icon on the right implies that the activity was accompanied with food/drinks booths located nearby where visitors could exchange their cash from festival volunteers into the different products.



Figure 7.13 Pashia, E. (2017). Two moments from the activity of traditional sound performances at the village's outdoor amphitheatre. The icon on the left, as in figure 7.12, implies the non-participatory and non-interactive character of the activity. The subtle icons on the right imply that the activity was accompanied with food/drinks booths coordinated by both festival volunteers and invited sellers.

not aiming to attract many people...It was more like an artistic act, like an installation” (Ibid.). Therefore, he reflects that “I am not sure whether it was addressed directly to the audience. It had more of an artistic value” (Ibid.) meaning that maybe what mattered most was the internal exploration the artist improvised and shared with an audience. That “she (singer) made her piece of performance so as to attract only those that like it” (Ibid.).

We, the visitors, could walk in the different sites, sit, and listen to the performances. Also, near the sound performances there were bars that provided drinks, as well as vendors’ that provided freshly made meals.

### • Movement performances

Movement performances took place, for example, at the abandoned school’s classroom, the old mosque’s yard and the village’s amphitheatre. Site-specific performances were facilitated by the artists, while seating arrangements were not always available depending on the form and site of performance. The program included *non-interactive movement performances* performed by professional artists who came from Cyprus (mainly Greek Cypriots), as well as from different countries such as Greece, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, UK, USA and others. Movement performances were a prepared work of the artists’ residency or of participatory workshop’s residency, prior and during the festival. The content thus stemmed from the village’s life and generally the Cypriot culture, adapted to the festival’s theme.

Performances were facilitated outdoors on stage-site (figures 7.14-16), for example, the stage of the amphitheatre or curated indoors in a room-site (figures 7.17-18), for example, a classroom of the abandoned room or the abandoned shoe shop. We,



Figure 7.14 Pashia, E. (2017). Moments from the movement performance “You had to be there...Spatial Explorations in Embodied Storytelling”, created by Anastasia McCammon, at the old mosque’s yard. The icon on the left, as other activities included in the category of depositions, implies the non-participatory and non-interactive character of the activity.



Figure 7.15 Pashia, E. (2018). A moment from the movement performance “The world’s hardest job”, created by Demetra Kallitsi, at the village’s outdoor amphitheatre. The icon on the left implies the non-participatory and non-participatory and non-interactive character of the activity. The subtle icons on the right imply that the activity was accompanied with food/drinks booths coordinated by both festival volunteers and invited sellers.



Figure 7.16 Pashia, E. (2018). A moment from the movement performance “Negotiating space”, created by My Johansson, at the village’s outdoor amphitheatre. The icon on the left implies the non-participatory and non-participatory and non-interactive character of the activity. The subtle icons on the right imply that the activity was accompanied with food/drinks booths coordinated by both festival volunteers and invited sellers.



Figure 7.17 Pashia, E. (2017). A moment from the movement performance “Displaced frequencies”, created by Manuel Lopez Garcia, at the abandoned school’s classroom, also a non-interactive activity. Edited photograph: personal production adapted from personal collection.



Figure 7.18 Pashia, E. (2018). A moment from the movement performance “At the ‘Skarpariko’”, created by Eleana Alexandrou and Eva Korai bytheway productions, at an abandoned shoe shop, also a non-interactive activity.

the visitors, could walk in the sites of performance, and watch the performances either by standing, sitting (for instance on the amphitheatre's stairs or on structures provided and, on the floor) or simply watch as we walked by.

### • Installations

Installations were different forms of *visual, audio, movement and oral* exhibitions spread across the site of the village. For instance, *visual* ones included spatial-display installations-interventions such as a house's entrance door and at the village's fountain; *audio* ones included spatial-audio installation outdoors such as at a small garden within the village's community building (2018), or indoors such as in an abandoned social club-café (2018), or a combination of movement and audio such as sound walks among routes in the village; *oral* ones were talks on various topics.

We, the visitors, could walk around into the different sites to observe and to listen (visual and oral installations), or to listen (audio installations) while walking. Installations, whether audio, visual, or oral, were the outcome of the artists' residency or of participatory workshop's residency, prior and during the festival. In that case the content stemmed from the village's life and generally the Cypriot culture, and appropriated to the festival theme. For example, the visual installation "Tourlou Tourlou" (figure 7.19) was described as "a youth initiative that was crafted through stories of art and narratives shared in the company of others", who:

With the help of locals from Koilani, they will gather their life stories and myths that may be circulating in the village about things that happened in the past, that they still remember. "Tourlou Tourlou stories" will make you appreciate the village gossip that you are not well acquainted with and find out things you have not heard before (Xarkis, 2017b).

Also, another visual installation, "Possible Landscapes" (figure 7.20) was described as "[a] reconciliation participatory project that uses Instagram as a means of reaching young Cypriots around the country" (Xarkis, 2018) that invited:

Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot artists...to contribute with images that contain a horizon. Through the workshops, the project will look into the symbiotic relationships of the two communities, to test the formation of a peace building "buffer zone" and a space of common existence in the same earth and sky (Xarkis, 2018).



Figure 7.19 Pashia, E. (2017). Moments from the visual installation “Tourlou Tourlou”, created by a collective of local voices, exhibited at different locations across the village. The icon on the left, as other activities included in the category of depositions, implies that visitors could not participate in the process of creating the exhibited information nor could interact with the displays.



Figure 7.20 Pashia, E. (2017). Moments from the visual installation “Possible Landscapes”, created by Monica Alcazar Duarte, exhibited at the village’s fountain. The icon on the left implies the non-participatory and non-interactive character of the activity.

## Exchanges: economic activities

Exchanges were *economy-based interactive acts* that were taking place mainly during the music performances, located at a bar and booths selling mainly food and drinks. Since performances were taking place at different sites of the village, the drink bar and food booths were travelling with them.

### • Economic activities

The facilitation of exchanges produced two forms of economic exchanges, the *internal* one where profit from the exchanges between visitors and festival volunteers would be directed to Xarkis, and the *external* ones where profit from exchanges between visitors and invited vendors would be directed to the vendors.

In terms of the internal economy (figures 7.21-22), visitors could buy the desired products through exchanging cash into tokens from the cashier booth, and then tokens into products, for food and drinks at bars and booths, whereas for the external economy (figures 7.23-24), visitors could buy the desired products directly through using cash, for traditional snacks and sweets at booths.

Although the festival initiated its own economy, this has been mainly for financing



Figure 7.21 Pashia, E. (2017). A moment from the info point, part of the internal economic activity, at the main road of the village, coordinated by festival volunteers. The icon on the left implies that visitors could exchange their cash from volunteers-cashiers into tokens so that they can exchange them at the different food/drinks courts with products.





Figure 7.22 Pashia, E. (2017). A moment from a performance at the amphitheatre, where there was an invited vendor's booth (left), part of the external economic activity, as well as one of the festival's bar (right), part of the internal economic activity. The icons on the left reflect the ability of visitors to exchange their cash or tokens into the different products.



Figure 7.23 Pashia, E. (2017). A moment from the seating area of a local coffee shop, part of the external economic activity, located at the centre of the village. The icon on the left reflects the fact that visitors could exchange their cash to buy products from the local owner-seller.



Figure 7.24 Cyprus Island. (2019). A tavern nearby the coffee shop presented also in figure 7.23, part of the external economic activity. The icon on the left implies that visitors could exchange their cash to buy products from the local owner-seller.

festival expenses to a discreet extent, since the main aim of the site-specific festival has been to support Koilani village. The village could mainly provide eatery services at the village’s square such as taverns and coffee shops, as well as accommodation services such as guesthouses, all privately owned.

### **Co-creations: artistic creations, dialogues, cultural rituals**

Co-creations were *interactive acts*, and thus are considered as the most relevant in regard to learning to connect with others. Co-creations could be found at (sound and movement) *performances*, *workshops* and *local social places*. The festival activities were attended mostly by newcomer visitors except for a few performances where locals would attend as well, a fact that is discussed in detail in the next section.

Similar to the previous case, the table below (figure 7.25) outlines the groups that could interact, alongside the techniques that supported the processes of co-creation, all of which are presented in more detail within the following paragraphs. The techniques together with factors that enabled or disabled interactions and co-creation (presented in the following section 07.03), will lead to pedagogical principles that add to the ones from the previous case and can be adopted for

Performances	
Groups	Techniques supporting Co-creations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performer/facilitator- visitors</li> <li>• newcomer visitors – local visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• movement and sound acts (using objects)</li> </ul>
Workshops	
Groups	Techniques supporting Co-creations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• invited facilitators – visitors</li> <li>• newcomer visitors – local visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spatial-textual-visual synthesis (for example, installation, illustration, poem)</li> <li>• movement-oral synthesis (for example, choreography, singing)</li> <li>• dialogues</li> </ul>
Local social places	
Groups	Techniques supporting Co-creations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newcomer visitors- local visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practising Cypriot cultural rituals</li> <li>• dialogues</li> </ul>

Figure 7.25 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of places and activities that different groups visited and engaged with and where co-creations were possible to emerge. These are accompanied with techniques that supported and allowed co-creations to emerge.

learning solidarity and connecting with others meaningfully (presented in the following section 07.04).

#### • During interactive performances

Movement and sound performances took place for instance at the abandoned school's classrooms, the old mosque's yard and the village's amphitheatre. The program included *interactive movement performances* facilitated by professional artists who came from Cyprus (mainly Greek Cypriots), as well as from different countries such as the Netherlands, UK and others. The performances were outcomes of the artists' residency or of participatory workshop's residency, prior and during the festival or live improvised acts. Thus, the content stemmed from the village's life and generally the Cypriot culture, adapted to the festival's theme.

The facilitation of interactive performances would invite visitors at unexpected instances to engage in the process and aimed to be opportunities for co-creations, including *improvisations of movement and sound acts* between performers-facilitators

and visitors, and between visitors. These interactions aimed to both reach to an artistic outcome as well as to engage visitors in the process of creation with others.

We, the visitors, could walk into the site of the performance, and either stand or sit (for instance on the amphitheatre's stairs, or structures provided, as well as on the floor), and watch the performance. The following paragraphs present some examples of these instances.

### *"The string - inspired by worry beads or komboloi"*

One example was the "The string- Inspired by worry beads or komboloi" (figures 7.26) which took place at the amphitheatre and was performed by the visual artist and performer, Jacqueline van de Geer, who comes from the Netherlands and emigrated to Canada in 2005. The worry beads or as it is called in Greek, "komboloi" written with Latin letters, is widely-used in Cyprus mostly by elder men by playing with / manipulating the beads with the hands.

The description of the performance reflects the artist's perception:

Komboloi comes from kombos, meaning the knot. The fascination and magic derived from these knots running through one's fingers may well have come from the thoughts conjured up from playing with the string of beads. The komboloi is said to be more than just a means of passing time, it reflects a way of life (Xarkis, 2017b).

The performance, although initiated by the artist, develops and ends as an act of improvisation with members from the audience, after Jacqueline's direct instructions and use of materials. Specifically, during her performance, she kept repeating a sequence of numbers and openly invited the audience to use her markers and write a wish about Cyprus on the prob — an enlarged komboloi. While this was ongoing, she invited another person from the crowd to join her in an improvised dialogue, which generated moments of laughter among the crowd. The audience were mostly newcomer visitors, including children, some of which were keenly following Jacqueline's invitation to grasp a marker and write on the paper-made balls. A few locals joined as well.

### *"Performance"*

Another example was the "performance" (figures 7.27) that took place at a field of the village, performed by En.act (a theatrical group that comes from Cyprus). The



Figure 7.26 Pashia, E. (2017). Moments from the interactive performance “The string- Inspired by worry beads or komboloi”, created by Jacqueline van de Geer, at the village’s outdoor amphitheatre. The icon on the left implies that visitors could participate in the process, interact and co-create with the performer an improvised movement act. Therefore, in contrary to the category of depositions, the outcome of the activity could be co-produced.



Figure 7.27 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the interactive performance “Performance”, created by the En.act, at a field. The icon on the left implies the interactive and participatory character of the activity where visitors could co-create with the performers an improvised movement act.

performance was based on the biography of a Cypriot choreographer, Grigoris Assiotis, who “choreographed and recorded 17 Cypriot dances. When the Republic of Cyprus did not recognize him as the creator of these, he emigrated to Canada, with 13 of his 17 choreographies lost in the passage of time” (Xarkis, 2017b). The group “[i]nspired by his biography... collect and examine what has been lost, what may be lost and find out how something is lost in the Cypriot landscape” (Xarkis, 2017b).

The performance, although initiated by the artists, developed and ended as an improvised act after provoking the affective reaction of the public. Specifically, artists started the performance clapping rhythmically and while being far from the audience. Gradually they came really close to the audience and kept clapping the rhythm for so long that it created almost an awkward feeling that something was not going the right way. The frustration and disappointment of artists could

be felt and expressed without words. Sooner or later though people from the audience engaged and started clapping along with the artists. More followed and the performance ended with artists and audience not just clapping together but also dancing together, while others were singing popular songs that matched the rhythm. The audience was mostly newcomer visitors as well as locals.

#### *“Musicorum – Bamboo Mustard”*

Another example was the sound performance “Musicorum – Bamboo Mustard” (figure 7.28) which took place at the amphitheatre, performed by Adam Paroussos (a sound artist, composer and performer who comes from the UK). The performance was based on “improvisation, communal creativity, decay, anti-consumerism, smog and power structures of group dynamics” and aimed “to create a non-hierarchical collective sound expression, embracing and being open to the communal spontaneity and creativity of the present moment” (Xarkis, 2018).

The description reflects the fact that the performance although initiated by the artist, was developed and ended as an act of improvisation with the audience using objects to make sound together with him. Specifically, the performer would start experimenting with different props to create sound. At some point he started sharing the props with the crowd sitting on the amphitheatre stairs. The performance ended with some young visitors at the centre of the stage using the different props and creating together various sounds. Among the audience there was a significantly increased number of locals, who were probably waiting for the following performances, including mainly traditional music, more familiar to them.

#### *“Deep Love Tours”*

Finally, another movement performance “Deep Love Tours” (figure 7.29) that was facilitated by Korallia Stergides (a Cypriot English performer) was a walking route among the streets of the village and focused “in diversifying the experience of your local traditional village by excavating reimagined myths and banterous facts” (Xarkis, 2018).

The description reflects the fact that the facilitation invited visitors to engage in a collective form of learning about the village’s myths and sites. It started at a gathering point near the amphitheatre and then moved on with a guided tour including stops at different spots of the village and narration of different stories about them in a humorous tone. Also, on the way to different stops there were interactions with the



Figure 7.28 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the interactive performance “Musicorum – Bamboo Mustard”, created by Adam Paroussos, at the village’s outdoor amphitheatre. The icon on the left implies the interactive and participatory character of the activity where visitors could co-create with the performer an improvised sound act, using given objects. The subtle icons on the right imply the fact that the activity was accompanied with food/drinks booths coordinated by both festival volunteers and invited sellers.



Figure 7.29 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the interactive performance “Deep Love Tours”, created by Korallia Stergides as a walking tour among the village’s streets. The icon on the left implies the interactive and participatory character of the activity where visitors could co-create with the performer an improvised act.

locals who were sitting at their balconies. The performance provoked instances of laughter upon myths about the village and was joined mainly by newcomer visitors of different ages.

- **During participatory workshops**

Workshops were either static in space or mobile processes. They could begin at the site, for instance the community building, then allow time for exploration among the village spatiality, and finally, gather participants again at a common site to reflect and deploy ideas. The program included *participatory workshops* facilitated by professional artists, educators, researchers and practitioners who came from Cyprus (Greek Cypriots) as well as from different countries such as UK, Italy, Poland and others. The content stemmed from the village’s life and generally the Cypriot culture, adapted to the festival’s theme.

The facilitation of participatory workshops would invite visitors to engage in the process and aimed to be opportunities for co-creations between facilitators and visitors, and between visitors, who were mainly newcomer visitors. Co-creations could be *spatial/textual/visual synthesis* taking different forms such as installation or illustration made from different objects found in the village, or a poet, and others. Also, co-creations could be *movement-oral synthesis* such as an improvised choreography and singing, and others. These interactions aimed to both reach to a learning outcome as well as to engage visitors in the process of creation with others.

We, the participants, according to the aims of the workshop or the space's capacity could either just walk in the workshop or sign-in online or at the info point at a central spot in the village. The following paragraphs present some examples of these instances.

#### ***“Natural & Human Distortion”***

One example of a workshop was the “Natural & Human Distortion” (figure 7.30) facilitated by Sara Ortolani, an Italian illustrator, which began at the community building. It was themed around “human and natural heritage, to broaden research of memory from a personal (or natural) memory towards a collective one” (Xarkis, 2018) and therefore through the workshop to “study how the symbiosis of nature and human heritage can interact with memories of the place” (Xarkis, 2018).

The workshop was initiated by the facilitator giving examples of practice (that is explaining the visual technique of distortion), developed and ended with an exhibition showing participants' creations made from different materials. Specifically, after discussion on distortion techniques, instructions required us to engage in an open exploration at the village, individually and/or together with others, in order to gather images that would be used later. After returning at the community building, we would create our own illustrations using materials such as cardboard under the guidance of the facilitator. The workshop ended with our co-creations exhibited on walls of the community building.

#### ***“Mapping Koilani”***

Another example of a workshop was the “Mapping Koilani” (figure 7.31) facilitated by Nasia Papavasileiou, a Cypriot performance practitioner, and began at the community building. The aim was to:

begin with a psycho-geographic group walk, with participants being called





Figure 7.30 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the participatory workshop “Natural & Human Distortion”, facilitated by Sara Ortolani, initiated at the village’s community building. The icon on the left implies that visitors could participate in the process and interact with each other and the facilitator, so to co-create hand-made illustrations. Therefore, contrary to the category of depositions, the outcome of the activity could be co-produced.



Figure 7.31 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the participatory workshop “Mapping Koilani”, facilitated by Nasia Papavasileiou, initiated at the village’s community building. The icon on the left implies the interactive and participatory character of the activity where visitors could co-create with each other and the facilitator, spatial installations using materials collected from the village.

to document their observations in written and visual forms. We would explore the ethnographic, collective memory of the locals and the associations with chosen sites. The participants would then respond to their findings with site specific, performative actions, together with objects and materials drawn from the course of the workshop (Xarkis, 2018).

The workshop was initiated by a group discussion, developed and ended as spatial installations from each team. Specifically, after an introductory discussion on situated mapping, instructions required us to engage in an open exploration at the village, individually and/or together with others, in order to gather knowledge about the village that would be used later. During the exploration different discussions about each other’s life would be combined together with discussions on our project. After returning at the community building, we would collectively reflect and separate



Figure 7.32 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the participatory workshop “Becoming Body”, facilitated by Borys Slowikowski and Dorota Michalak, at the community building. The icon on the left implies the interactive and participatory character of the activity where visitors could co-create with each other and the facilitators, movement-oral improvised acts.

again into our groups in order to finally, select a site and collect objects, with which to create our own spatial installations in teams. The workshop ended with all participants visiting each installation at the different sites of the village.

### *“Becoming Body”*

Finally, a different example, the movement workshop “Becoming Body” (figure 7.32) facilitated by Borys Slowikowski from Poland and Dorota Michalak from Berlin, who work between dance, music, improvisation and culture. The workshop was “based on improvisation” (Xarkis, 2018) and with the aim to “explore ‘heritage’ as embodied intimate knowledge created always in a relation to another person, in continuous movement and transformation” (Xarkis, 2018).

The workshop began, developed and ended as movement-orally improvised acts. Specifically, after an introductory warm-up, different constant instructions required us to use space and movement individually, while after a while we would be separated in two groups and interact with each other. This together with the following and final practice into couples generated both laughter, affection and free expression between participants. The workshop ended with participants and facilitators sitting on the floor, reflecting and sharing impressions from our experiences.

#### • **At the local(ity) social places**

As it has been described earlier, the site-specificity of the festival not only was reflected in the content and the way facilitators appropriated activities, but also in the way the whole festival interacted with the existing locality of Koilani village and therefore, to facilitate visitors’ engagement and thus, co-creations, with the local everyday life in an organic way. Co-creations could be *dialogues* as well as *practising*



Figure 7.33 Pashia, E. (2017). A moment from discussions between newcomer and local visitors, at a coffee shop located at the centre of the village. The icon on the left reflects the participatory and interactive character of the social place where visitors could co-create through dialogues and practising Cypriot cultural rituals such as drinking together. The subtle icon on the right implies the ability of visitors to exchange their cash into products sold by the local owner-seller.



Figure 7.34 Pashia, E. (2017). A moment from the camping area, located at the school's yard. The icon on the left reflects the participatory and interactive character of the social place where visitors could co-create meaning that it encouraged dialogues and meaningful connections with each other.

*of cultural rituals* together. Specifically, the village's square that was mainly a narrow pedestrian passage between buildings at its centre, offered eatery services including taverns and cafes, with seating areas and tables (figure 7.33), where visitors and locals could *practise together cultural rituals* such as eating or drinking together. Also, the festival organizers would suggest camping sites across the village including small yards such as the abandoned school's yard or another yard between local houses, with greenery and shade (figure 7.34), which allowed newcomers to stay at the village and generate *discussions and dialogues* with locals, and thus, engage more meaningfully and experientially.

We, the visitors, at instances other than during the performances and workshops that facilitated engagement with the village sites and locals in different ways, could engage with locals and others mainly at social places of the village and dwelling sites.

- **Techniques to facilitate co-creations in learning solidarity**

Investigating all three types of social interaction, co-creations have been the most relevant in relation to learning to connect with others. Focusing on co-creations at the different places and activities has been a way to reveal *techniques* that emerged from activities based on leisure, learning and performance. It implies that these techniques managed to engage different individuals and groups in the process of creating-together, important in supporting ways to learn solidarity. These could be combinations of creative performance and learning including *movement or sound improvised acts, spatial-textual-visual synthesis, movement-oral synthesis*, as well as *casual dialogues* and *practising shared cultural rituals*, all processes of creating-together.

### 07.03 Enabling/disabling factors for co-creations

Whereas the previous section examined closely techniques that were used for the emergence of three types of social interaction, this section observes from a further distance *factors* — linked to the festival or other context-related reasons — that enabled participation (or *disabled*), and thus, the emergence of interactions between groups, at the specific places where *co-creations* were more possible to emerge, through the critical views of research participants.

One of the overarching observations is that although there has been decreased public participation in relation to other festivals, it achieved to bring together newcomer visitors and local visitors, from different age-groups including the young (mostly the newcomer visitors) and old (mostly the local visitors), different interest-

led visitors (including art/culture-led and curiosity-led followers), as well as visitors from Cyprus — mainly from Southern Cyprus though — and other countries. The participation in the facilitated activities and the local social places specifically reveals that newcomer visitors were relatively evenly spread between interactive sound and movement performances, interactive workshops and the local social places, whereas local visitors participated in specific moments and in limited numbers such as at the traditional sound performances. Therefore, a critical evaluation would be that although the festival provides opportunities for meaningful and critical interactions, these are more likely to be produced between newcomer visitors and less with local visitors, while interactions between newcomers and locals were more likely to occur at the engagement of the former with the locality. Also, it was even less likely to attract members from the Turkish Cypriot community.

The process of data collection itself confirms this, as those who were easily identified in workshops and performances and therefore were invited to participate in the research were newcomer visitors, while for local visitors' identification was best to visit the local social areas where they usually would be gathered.

The following paragraphs elaborate, to present factors that affect the participation at activities and the festival in general, alongside a discussion on whether these factors have been *enabling* or *disabling* interactions between groups.

### Newcomer visitors and local visitors

The enabling and disabling factors related to the participation of the newcomer visitors and local visitors are outlined as follows (figure 7.35) and explained in detail in the following paragraphs.

Factors	Status	Linked to
Radical Affordability / Access	Enabling	Festival
Sharing space / Making connections across difference	Enabling	Festival
Bilingual communication and dissemination	Enabling/Disabling	Festival
Supporting local economy	Enabling	Festival
Interaction-based learning and creating-together	Enabling	Festival

Figure 7.35 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of factors that enabled or disabled the participation of the newcomer visitors and the local visitors, and therefore, interaction and co-creation between them.

## • Radical affordability/ Access

One of the most important factors that enabled newcomer visitors to participate in the festival and engage with local community is the *no-fee entrance* — at least over the two field visits in 2017 and 2018 — therefore, an *open-accessed* event, that instead would be accepting donations since Xarkis is a non-profit organization. This has been important as it increased the chances for a more diverse participation of groups of visitors and interaction across difference. To this, newcomer visitors support that this is what makes the festival different in comparison to other popular festivals that aim for greater numbers of participation and are profit-led. A newcomer visitor explains that “although many know about this, at the end not many of those coming to visit makes me understand that the people do not randomly come here, but for a specific reason” (newcomer visitor). Or according to another, it might show that “the people that come here are those that want to think. Not just to fill their stomach”, because “this festival has different aims behind it. Profit is not one of them” (newcomer visitor). The visitor supports this on the fact that “this year they decided to have free entrance so that everyone participates in the workshops... [whereas] if they were aiming for profit, they would not do this” (Ibid.).

Similarly, another indicative fact was that “on Facebook they promoted that it is free of entrance, therefore invited us to support them financially by buying the promoted beer. This made me understand that the money I am giving will only go for the maintenance of the festival and not for making profit” (newcomer visitor). Along the same line of thought, within a different group discussion, a visitor observes that “the only things they do sell are drinks; there are not any merchandized products like cups or printed t-shirts...their aim is not to make profit” (newcomer visitor). Subsequently, the festival is perceived as different from others because, according to another, “[i]t has its own character, they (organizers) are trying to maintain it as a great thing and they are not changing a thing so as to make more people to come” (newcomer visitor).

Another visitor highlights that:

even if festivals are the latest trend [and] we are talking about that kind of festival that is becoming a trend, which is different from the commercialized ones, [then] it is a great thing. And generally, I would definitely not classify this festival or compare it with the commercial ones (newcomer visitor).

Specifically, in comparison to one of the festivals that have been characterized popular and profit-led, for instance the Fengaros festival (see Chapter 4), although the Xarkis festival does not gain the same numbers “one can see that it (Xarkis) is well maintained ...(even though) it has less sponsors” (newcomer visitor).

Upon this, a preliminary interview with the organizer summarizes and confirms visitors’ observations. It aims to be an open-accessed festival “for everyone” and more importantly it is not the organization’s deliberate aim to achieve great numbers as:

We have tried that in the past, we tried to grow, but that was counter-productive. That’s why we decided to go for something small, very discrete one...it was never meant to be big. We do not aim this festival to become a commercial activity (Skarpari, 2017).

Therefore, what matters is “to achieve participation based on curiosity... We want to keep it open but make sure that the participants are genuinely interested in the concept of interactive workshops” (Ibid.)

#### • **Sharing space / Making connections across difference**

Another important factor that seems important in enabling opportunities for interactions is the fact that the festival utilizes Koilani village to invite individuals to a shared space that provides the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the locality, while also it encourages interactions and connections across other individuals and groups. Specifically, newcomer visitors observe that the festival achieves “[t]o bring communities together...to create a community” (newcomer visitor). This is not only in regard to the art-led followers or “[t]he followers more familiarised or related with what the festival offers who come specifically for this”, but also to “[t]he less familiarized or related people (who) are mainly locals” (newcomer visitor). Also, it brings together “people (who) came because they live close and are just curious” and which “I think they are coming because they do not know what they will find here actually” (newcomer visitor).

Also, it is believed that connections between the different groups are beneficial for each of them, where they learn from each other by just having the opportunity to interact with each other. Specifically, “for the artists, it might be a way of networking. And you could say even a career strategy” (newcomer visitor). Also, for the locality “I assume that the festival does help the village financially, but also at an intellectual

development level. And not only for the locals but also the people who come from different countries; even by simply contacting others, they do open their horizons” (newcomer visitor). That since “they (Xarkis) brought this in their (locals’) home... locals can be exposed to different forms of art” (newcomer visitor). Also, as another says, they can “develop relations because they can talk directly with the artists and the visitors” (newcomer visitor).

This was also evident in the interactions I had with the locals. Although the general participation of the locals was limited, an extract from the field notes describing an interaction I had with one, reveals that the fact that the festival took place within their own environment, could be a chance to pass by, even just out of curiosity:

Last night I had a moment with an elder local- should be around 60 years old, who only visits his village over the summer period. We discussed whether he liked the music and he said that it was very different from what he usually listens to. However, he thought he should visit the performance even if it was different to his liking, now that it is just almost outside his doorstep. Otherwise, he would not have the chance or the will to go to similar acts in Limassol city, where he permanently lives (field notes, 19 August 2017).

Therefore, as a newcomer states “all manage to develop a sort of communication, especially those who live on camping sites and even more the artists that came here a week before” (newcomer visitor). This, according to another, is generally “good because it brings together groups of people that they would never have had the chance and neither the will to meet and attend this kind of event” (newcomer visitor). As another visitor shares, who considers herself as one of the less related to arts or simply being curious, “it is a great thing...because all are stimuluses. I might not have been involved until now but if I find something interesting here, I can become one of the related” (newcomer visitor).

A few characteristic examples from newcomers’ experiences are indicative of the fact that the festival as a facilitator of sharing a space that is an existing locality, offers the opportunity to experience a different lifestyle in relation to their own and promote understanding of locality and meaningful connections, through entering into the village’s lifestyle.

In relation to the experience of a different lifestyle, visitors describe that “this festival gives a different lifestyle, more relaxed, a lot more artistic... reminiscent



of more relaxed times, like the 70s festivals were” (newcomer visitor). Contrary to those days, he finds this as a great option to boost everyday life as “now our life is fully organized” (Ibid.). According to another visitor:

It is absolutely a different thing from staying home. I was telling the other guys that I really liked the village which I have never visited before. The villagers themselves are unique figures. By just having a chat with the locals or by just observing the people visiting the festival or even experiencing this everyday simple thing when someone passes by and says “hello”, all are very different from the daily life (newcomer visitor).

Meeting something different, therefore, offers “the opportunity to see new things. And I have seen many. And not only that, I have new questions and I want to search new things further that I have not thought about before” (newcomer visitor); that experiencing something different can generate new stimuluses. More importantly, visitors that dwelled at the village support that such experiences of escaping into the elsewhere provide the opportunity to embody a different lifestyle which can be generally transformational. It gives the opportunity to “meet people from nowhere. For example, I woke up this morning and the guy there told me ‘Good morning my friend!’ and I replied ‘Good morning my friend’. There is a friendly atmosphere”, which indicates that people can be “more flexible...that they are open to let themselves be exposed to experiences” (Ibid.).

In relation to understanding the locality, a group of visitors share their interaction with an elder local whom they met in the tavern the previous night and a dialogue between them on the matter of marriage. The visitors share that even though they and the locals expressed different views “it was an opportunity to exchange perspectives. This elder man might not have had this sort of discussion before and it was an opportunity for him to hear how young people might think differently nowadays about marriage, to see that things have changed and that it has been evolved” (newcomer visitor). Another visitor complements though that “this does not mean that he will change his opinion. He might just accept that there is a different opinion about it” (newcomer visitor).

Also, an extract from my notes describes a moment from my first interactions which I had with one of the artists and is indicative of the fact that interactions could occur effortlessly and easily and become meaningful (figure 7.36):



Figure 7.36 Pashia, E. (2017). The old mosque's yard where chance discussion would occur with artists.

Today at the mosque's yard there was a small crowd under the shade and so we (me and my friends) decided to go there. After greeting two of them, I realized that they were two of the artists that were preparing for the performances that would take place later in the day; one of them an elder woman from the Netherlands and another young Cypriot woman who was helping the first one to learn a few lyrics in the Greek language. Soon, one of the artists invited us to sit down and I caught myself laughing and helping her with Greek. Also, she asked me to show her how to use the worry beads which was also important for her performance (field notes, 19 August 2017).

Similarly, other newcomers share instances of their engagement with the locality through which they could gain more understanding about the village life and its people. One of them comments that "judging from the people I have seen these days I understand that they do really respect the festival and the participants" (newcomer visitor). Towards this, she describes a moment when a resident helped other visitors to drive their car through a narrow street in the village: "I was walking and an old man with this dog was making signs to other drivers to stop so that the ones stuck in the street could get through" (newcomer visitor). She argues that: "[f]rom these little things you understand that they do like this when it is done with respect towards them" (Ibid.). Along the same lines, another visitor relates the hospitable behaviour as a return for respecting the festival, as the festival itself makes them the centre of attention for a while, something which gives them confidence. That:

maybe because the festival is centred around the village, they have the urge to tell their stories... it's like another motive for them...and apart from that, I think that since an event comes to their village, and is done with respect — it respects their space, and exploits it in a nice and constructive way — they (locals) feel satisfaction, a confidence that 'although we live in this village people do not forget us' (newcomer visitor).

#### • **Bilingual communication and dissemination**

Related to making connections, it seems that in order for meaningful interactions and engagement to emerge between groups was the language barrier as the festival was not only open to Greek speaking groups but also to others, mainly internationals. For that, a communication strategy was deployed using both Greek (and Cypriot-Greek dialect) and the English language in on-line and off-line communication, which however, did not include the Turkish language and thus more possibilities to



Figure 7.37 Pashia, E. (2017/8). The use of both Greek-Cypriot dialect and the English language on navigation signs across the village.

attract the Turkish Cypriot community and enable interactions of the others with the Turkish Cypriots. The two languages would be used for instance for the event descriptions on Facebook and on the Xarkis organization website, as well as the direction signs spread across the village, the printed program and the execution of the workshops. The bilingual strategy of communication is indicated in one of my field notes extracts (figure 7.37):

We followed the signs to arrive at the workshop area. Meanwhile we found the info point at the village amphitheatre to sign in our interest and also bought tokens to use for drinks later. We took a program from the table that was printed in both Greek and English. A volunteer explained us where the workshop would be and we moved on towards there. However, this was not difficult as there were signs everywhere. It impressed me that they were written in the Cypriot dialect and in English. Like the sign for the word “Κο-ντεύκεις” which means “You are close” (field notes, 19th August, 2017).

As visitors describe, this is an element that encouraged communication between Cypriots and internationals and more importantly that it made them feel they are in an inclusive and accepting place. “As far as I see, it does not matter where you are coming from. Everybody knows English very well and therefore there is no issue with that, not even for the children” (newcomer visitor). Subsequently, the fact that Cypriots and others co-participate “makes one understand that people gathered here are more liberal, more accepting. Whatever I say the other person will listen and think about it. He/she will not judge directly. We give each other freedom” (Ibid.).

#### • Supporting local economy

Also, what has been related to living locality as a shared space, and promoted community engagement and more interactions especially of the newcomers with the locals, was the *support to the local economy*. This was carried out by providing only a few options for eatery products which were just adequate to cover festival expenses. Therefore, in this way it encouraged newcomers to use the village’s eatery services for further options. Specifically, the Xarkis festival would mainly offer freshly made drinks together with a couple of invited food vendors. Interestingly, a visitor supports that the commercial element could be enhanced at least up to a level that would release the congestion that is created in the taverns which are few in number:

There should be a little more commercial activity though, mainly to provide food; not just drinks, so that they show care for those visiting the festival...I understand that the emphasis is on the community but it could be done in a more organized way...through cooperation with the restaurant owners...by letting them know the number of people who are coming approximately...or having some kiosks selling their dishes (newcomer visitor).

However, it is understood that what the festival aims to is “to support local communities, because a festival comes and gives life to a place and therefore helps this place” (newcomer visitor).

#### • **Interaction-based learning and creating-together**

What adds to the important factors of sharing space and making connections is the content of the activities, where interaction-based ways of learning to connect could be achieved through both interactive performances and participatory as they offered opportunities for critical thinking and create-together, important for the content of solidarity pedagogy. For instance, discussions about one of the interactive performances, titled “The string” highlight that it did not only impact consciousness during the instant interaction of performers and the participants but it also had lasting after-effects upon their critical thinking; that “[i]t did provoke one to think further” (newcomer visitor). The visitor goes on to describe that:

at komboloi last night I caught myself thinking “what is she (performer) trying to say? Why is she counting the same numbers?” ...Also, she (performer) asked people to write a wish for Cyprus on the props, the beads. I tried to think actually what I, myself, wish about Cyprus. And this is something that during my free time I will not think about. I will choose a hobby or to relax but not to think deeply about it (newcomer visitor).

Similarly, another visitor shares that although a day passed, she is still processing it and that “I even have an unanswered question. I did not understand what the numbers she would repeat meant though” (newcomer visitor).

In addition, a different performance, titled “performance” shows how it managed to generate affective interactions and feelings of community building through creating-together. A visitor highlights that “during the last performance I could see people who all wanted it to succeed and wanted to engage” (newcomer visitor), and therefore it ended with some of the visitors being comfortable to spontaneously jump in and perform together with the artists. He shares that for him “[i]t felt like we

were all one group of friends...[b]ecause the people were a few and came specifically for that” (Ibid.). Besides, as another complements “I think that’s why the organizers wanted this to remain as a small festival” (newcomer visitor). That “especially the performances and the different workshops were based on the idea of community engagement, and most of them were participatory” (newcomer visitor).

Towards this, an extract from the field notes indicates the feelings of community as collective and shared:

I am also excited by the different experience of this festival as it encourages interaction and feeling as one community; that for example, we would follow as a group, one performance after the other. And communication, for example, that the next performance is starting, was via word of mouth. Not only it felt that we were doing this together but also, we were open to be exposed and let embarrassment go to not just ‘attend’ but participate in the performances (field notes, 19 August, 2017).

To add to the above, as it has been described in the previous section, participants while carrying out the tasks together, could also meet each other more, learn stories about each other and thus create new connections. Besides, this is what makes the festival different as newcomers describe: “this is a different festival in relation to others, the Fengaros, Afrobanana and so on... (because) it gives emphasis on the workshops and performances... rather than solely on music” (newcomer visitor). Consequently, as another says “one can gain something more constructive in relation to other festivals; knowledge, learning more about the tradition and generally experiences” (newcomer visitor). Also, workshops ensure “that there will be something new to do and learn” (Ibid.).

Despite the different initiatives of the festival and the experiences of the newcomer visitors, as it is described at the beginning of the section, and the opportunities for meaningful interactions between groups, the participation of the local visitors was limited. On the one hand different chance discussions revealed that this might be more of an external factor related to the village authorities and their reluctance to help. Therefore, as one of the locals described this could be determining to the fact that the event was not known to the villagers. A piece from my field notes reveals about a local who said that:

‘Nobody from the village including residents and the authority expressed interest or will to help this festival to be carried out...at least to offer accommodation to the artists’. Therefore, his mother-in-law offered her house to five of the artists just the night before, at short notice. He explained that the mukhtar of the village is 80 years old and is not interested in attracting the young generation to the village. Also, that there were disagreements between different councils of the village that impacted the locals’ interest in helping the Xarkis festival. He also pointed out that the locals’ reaction might be such because it is not their own festival...However, he finds the Xarkis festival a good opportunity for the village as it brings the young generation back to the village which is almost abandoned” (field notes, 19 August, 2017).

Also, a visitor specifies that when he would talk to one of the tavern owners, he discovered that “the owner had no idea that this festival was going to take place at the village” (newcomer visitor). On the other hand, apart from possible resistances of the villagers it should be considered that Koilani village has a few more than 200 residents, many of whom are only seasonal. Also, it is noted that the participation of the locals during the second year of the research over 2018 was a little more enhanced, as the festival would return to the village for the second consecutive time, something that might have increased their trust.

#### **07.04 Principles towards tangible Interplaces or spatial practices of Solidarity Pedagogy**

Section 7.2 focused on the way places/activities facilitated depositions, exchanges and co-creations, revealing techniques that specifically fostered co-creations. Section 7.3 focused on factors that either enabled or disabled interactions between groups, at the places/activities that co-creations could emerge.

As in the previous case, this section collects key-learnings to suggest a list of *pedagogical principles* (outlined below, figure 7.38) that could be used to facilitate and enable meaningful connections — based on the strengths as well as limitations drawn from the festival — and which can play a significant role in transforming relational borders between different individuals and groups. Pedagogical principles extracted from both the cases are brought together as guidelines to facilitate tangible Interplaces for solidarity pedagogy, presented in the following chapter (8).



Pedagogical Principles
Access, participation and scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open-access, radical affordability and small-scale</li> </ul>
Communication and Dissemination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bilingualism</li> <li>• comprehensive</li> </ul>
Means, Content and Site/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interaction- and co-creation- based</li> <li>• joyful-critical learning and recreation</li> <li>• site- and context-specificity</li> <li>• living, sharing and supporting space/s</li> </ul>

Figure 7.38 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of the pedagogical principles that can be used to facilitate Interplaces or spatial practices through which to learn how to co-create and connect with others, and eventually, achieve solidarity pedagogy.

## Access, participation and scale

- **open-access, radical affordability and small-scale**

In relation to the access, this festival helps to highlight again the importance of open-access, meaning the intention to be inclusive and allow participation in the process and outcomes of the learning process, a learning outcome initially found in the case of the EDON festival. However, the Xarkis festival contrary to the EDON festival maintained a no-fee entrance to the festival and its activities, which helps to think of a factor that as mentioned earlier in Chapter 6 could be a relational border that prevents connections between individuals and groups, and adds to the understanding of open-access and inclusiveness, the perspective of radical affordability.

Despite this choice, the festival would not attract big numbers of visitors, which is different from the case of the EDON festival, where it achieves great numbers related to the affordable price of the ticket. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier in the chapter this was not a primary aim, as what mattered was to attract those that were really curious, keen to learn and engage in participatory activities for which small numbers would be more effective. Subsequently, the Xarkis festival has been a way to think of transformative spatial practices in the future and consider that it might be more effective in strengthening relationships and generating more meaningful connections to aim for small-scale pedagogical events and small

numbers of participants.

## **Communication and Dissemination**

- **multilingualism**

Another important principle that is formed out of the learnings from this festival, is related to ensuring inclusiveness in communication and dissemination, for which the language could play the role of another relational border that prevents learners to connect. Contrary to the case of EDON and in order to address this possibility, the Xarkis festival showed a tangible way to a comprehensive bilingualism. The organization addressed the language barrier during arranged activities by using the Greek-Cypriot dialect and the English language. Subsequently, this allowed interactions between (mostly) international visitors/facilitators and Greek Cypriot visitors, in the case they knew how to speak the language. Also, the bilingual strategy supported the navigation of learners between the different sites where the activities were taking place, and the execution of workshops, where participants were not only Greek-speaking.

Therefore, the language barrier is important to be taken into consideration in both the learning process and the navigation across the site of practice. However, as learned through the case of EDON, if the aim of pedagogy is to be inclusive towards the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities explicitly, it is important to consider also the use of the Turkish language. At the same time though, the Xarkis festival showed that the English language was an important factor that allowed the non-Greek-speaking individuals to interact with the Greek-speaking ones, as it is a language that is widely spoken as a second language among people living in Cyprus. This leads to suggest the use multilingualism to form a pedagogical process including the Greek, Turkish and English language as a way to increase inclusiveness and participation of individuals and groups from different communities that live in Cyprus.

- **comprehensive**

In relation to the promotion of pedagogical activities, the Xarkis festival showed a tangible way to a comprehensive strategy that was suggested in the previous chapter, where all activities included within are promoted evenly and therefore, the public is aware of the activities that possibly match their interests. Interestingly, if the comprehensive promotion of an event's content is combined with the use

of multiple languages, it can increase the diverse participation of individuals and groups even more, as they can be attracted not only based on the fact that they will be able to interact and speak with others, but also because they found an interesting event to attend.

## Means, Content and Site/s

### • interaction- and co-creation- based

In relation to the pedagogical means and similar to the previous case, it is suggested that the process of learning should be interactive as well as promoting togetherness through co-creation. The suggested principle emerges from the examination on the category of co-creations seen earlier in this chapter, which revealed that interactions between participants were possible in instances of *artistic creation*, casual dialogues and during *practising cultural rituals*, all found during workshops, performances and social areas across the village. These instances expand the spectrum of possible interactive activities that could be included in the learning process and were found at the EDON festival. Specifically, participatory workshops and interactive performances that both required the contribution of learners in the process and outcome, has been a way to imagine tangible forms of transformative activities that can be included when designing a pedagogical event.

More importantly, the case of Xarkis reinforces what was already emerged from the learning outcomes on the previous case, and shows that important interaction in learning should aim to engage learners in the process of creating-together. Following Freire (1998) and Gauntlett (2011), co-creations can shape a joyful experience of learning and promote togetherness, which is important especially for strengthening the relations of the two communities of Cyprus. Specifically, similar to what was found in the previous case, co-creation as a reciprocal process of give and receive, allows learners as creative agents to arrive with mutual work to create-together and potentially develop meaningful connections. This was evident as *artistic creations* through the cooperation of artists and visitors, during performances and workshops such as sound and movement improvisations or spatial installations; also, as casual *dialogues* that could arise during workshops or interactions with the locals at the social places like the local taverns or the coffee shops, where also they could *practise cultural rituals* such as eating-together.

At the same time thought, interactions found in the category of depositions, meant

that artistic acts were produced by the facilitators' creative work only, who would "give" its outcome to visitors, as seen at the sound and movement *performances* and the *exhibitions*. Through the pedagogical lens of Freire seen in Chapter 3, this could be called an act of depositing knowledge rather than co-producing knowledge, shaping subsequently what he names as banking education where learners-depositories can only accept what is given (1996). Similarly, the exchanges explored at the festival as forms of economic interactions although based on give-receive mode of production, was a pre-defined relationship that followed the rule of economic reproduction, as seen at *the internal economy* including the bars and the *external economies* including the invited food and drinks vendors. Therefore, similarly to the EDON festival, visitors could not for instance engage the earlier stages of economies, the process and creation of the outcomes as beneficiary members of a collective-benefit economy.

#### • joyful-critical learning and recreation

Another important principle that arises, relates to the content of the pedagogical process, and confirms what emerged from the exploratory journey (Chapter 4) and the previous case, as well as it adds to it. Specifically, it is suggested again that when aiming to foster the learning of how to connect meaningfully with others, combinations of learning with recreational activities can offer a *joyful-critical* pedagogical experience.

What the Xarkis festival adds to previous findings from the EDON festival and should be highlighted is that learning could not only be found in expected forms such as a workshop and only as critical learning, but also in the form of interactive and participatory performance offering a joyful learning experience. This relates to what also was learned from Rendell, who explores performative practices to argue for their pedagogical capacity to develop one's critical abilities, and interestingly, through space — or better through embodying space (Rendell, 2006). To this, the case of the Xarkis festival helps to take her concept of 'critical spatial practices' further by highlighting the fact that participatory performance as a critical spatial practice can as well be a joyful learning experience, as in line with Freire (1998) and Gauntlett (2011), allows learners to interact and co-create with others during its production.

Therefore, the case of Xarkis help to make the suggestion even stronger and imagine tangible ways that a pedagogical process could be joyful and critical, as

well as spatial. This has been an important research finding for imagining a future practice of solidarity pedagogy, as other performances found in both Xarkis and EDON festivals that were based on non-interaction and categorised as depositions — meaning acts that the public could participate in or facilitate interactions.

- **site- and context- specificity**

Related to this in seeking to offer opportunities for meaningful interactions is the principle of *context-specific content* that the Xarkis festival case showed can coincide with *site-specific content*, meaning that the content and the material on which to build a pedagogical process are important to stem and adjusted to localities. This is important as it increases understanding of local contexts, increasing the chances for stronger bonding between communities.

The Xarkis festival showed that this can be achieved through the way the site of the festival and the specific activities are developed. For instance, the organizers invited facilitators to live at the village, collect material from the locality and design activities — whether performances, installations or workshops — that should be inspired by the Koilani village local culture, people and everyday life, and generally the Cypriot culture, as well as adapt them onto the sites of the village. Also, the festival showed that this can be achieved with following a discreet presence of economies, as the Xarkis did by bringing only a few choices to buy, so visitors could mainly support the local economy of the village.

To begin with, as also seen in the previous case, learning outcomes from the Xarkis festival lead to suggest that creating a context-specific content of learning and recreational activities that stems from the Cypriot local cultures and reality, can culminate to affectionate bonding and meaningful communication. Specifically, the content of sound and movement performances as well as the workshops were inspired by the *Cypriot culture* and the *locality of the village*, as well as the process of creating them was adapted to the sites of the village, that all contributed in understanding more about the village and the Cypriot culture, as well as connecting with others, through experiential knowledge. For instance, some of the music acts were inspired by the Cypriot traditional music evident during traditional performances at the village's amphitheatre such as the experimental music during “ziafettin”, while other music acts would invite the audience to participate in live improvised acts.

Also, the movement performances were appropriated to the sites of village and related to Cypriot cultural characteristics as seen, for example, at “The string” performance that was based on the idea of worry beads, familiar to the Cypriot culture or the “Performance”, inspired by Greek dance rhythm, that is embedded also in the Cypriot culture and which achieved to engage the audience resulting into dancing with each other creating a celebratory atmosphere to which all participants contributed.

Moreover, the content of workshops followed the same approach, such as the workshop for “Natural & human distortion” and “Mapping Koilani” that both asked participants to execute tasks in teams, so as to explore and collect materials from the village as well as create site-specific installations as outcomes, referring to the “Mapping Koilani”.

- **living, sharing and supporting spaces**

To add to the above, the engagement with locality by living at the village itself can enhance the learning to connect with others, and considered as an experiential understanding of the everyday life of locality and elements of the Cypriot culture, which by nature constitutes a site- and context- specific learning that enables share spaces and to make connections. More importantly, a learning based on experiencing a context helps to imagine tangible ways to materialize what Freire (1996) and Stavrides (2007) embed in the meaning of practising solidarity. That a solidarity posture to those that need empowerment implies to be able understand their own situation and empathize with them (Freire, 1996), or differently, “to leave a condition that is familiar and to enter a condition that is essentially ‘other’” (Stavrides, 2007:2). Both perspectives help to think of these ventures as the tangible opportunities of entering a context in order to live it, understand it and support it, which the Xarkis festival offered.

For example, this could be achieved through the direct interaction and casual dialogues with the locals and through experiencing the local social places where visitors could also try Cypriot traditional meals and drinks such as the village’s taverns and coffee shops, and simultaneously experience the ritual of eating-together or drinking-together that is integral to the Cypriot culture. Also, bonding between visitors could emerge, apart from the arranged activities of the festival, during their stay at the camping site where they would share existing spaces of the village and appropriate them. This allowed to get a glimpse of the village’s local culture, people

and everyday life as well as make connections with each other, either visitors or the locals. Linked to that is the principle to support the locality, which the Xarkis festival showed can be addressed by, for example, adopting a discreet presence of product-selling (mainly to cover expenses of the festival) and therefore encouraging visitors to use local services that inevitably, can enhance interactions with the local residents.

## **Moving to the proposition for future practice**

On the one hand, the facts collected from the Xarkis festival revealed limitations that require attention and a critical response especially if principles suggested are to be applied for learning solidarity between the two communities of Cyprus, and potentially expanding into other cultures. Limitations could be considered the fact that it attracts less TCs in relation to the EDON festival and does not focus explicitly on the matter of peace and reunification, while communication and dissemination of the festival is not inclusive or overcomes language barriers in the sense that it only uses the Greek and English languages, and not the Turkish, a fact that was also a matter of concern in the case of the EDON festival. To add to the limitations, it seems that there should be more inventive ways to engage the locals and familiarize them with the procedures and activities of the festivals, which together with overcoming the language barrier can increase the diversity of differences that can meet. Therefore, facts cannot lead into certain conclusion about the level to which locals and newcomer visitors were able to connect.

On the other hand, the case of Xarkis offered significant insights for pedagogy of solidarity, based on community building and engagement, and accepting otherness. As also realized from the EDON festival, the festival itself as a form of spatial practice can be thought of as a facilitator of Interplaces, and thus, it has been an opportunity for shared spaces and connections to be produced, that overcame geographical or even relational borders.

Also, the exploration in both cases showed that festivals offer interesting combinations of learning and leisure activities. However, contrary to the EDON festival, the Xarkis festival has been effective in facilitating meaningful connections between the diverse individuals and groups, based on open-access participation, interaction, and critical learning, as well as joyful learning.

Although strengths and limitations were found in both the cases, these are brought together as learning outcomes and synthesized with principles instilled from each case in the following chapter (8) so as to propose tangible *guidelines* for future practice, for practising solidarity space. This implies to suggest ways to establish tangible Interplaces as joyful and critical spatial practices for solidarity pedagogy, towards more meaningful connections between different groups and especially between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots.



## 08 A proposition for practising Solidarity Pedagogy in Cyprus

Following the objectives set, the research investigated a number of spatial practices and practice-based theories, with the aim to arrive to a new theory of action that can reinforce connectedness, eventually transform relational borders and perceptions about the other that are embedded due to the long-lasting division of Cyprus and separation of its two main communities, leading potentially to cultivating peace between the Greek Cypriot (GC) and Turkish Cypriot (TC) communities.

For this, as a first step, I created the framework of *Solidarity Pedagogy* through critical and practice-based theories (Chapter 3), which guided the second step that included the empirical research — focused on collecting insights about forms of learning to connect — as well as the analysis of outcomes. The empirical research began with my exploratory journey among a range of spatial practices — the most influential have been activist and recreational spatial practices — that were found in everyday life in Cyprus (Chapter 4). Eventually, this led to the selection and in-depth study of two recurrent festivals, the EDON festival (Chapter 6) and the Xarkis festival (Chapter 7).

The study on the two cases was guided by the investigation line to specifically explore the *techniques* that the festivals utilized in order to facilitate interactions and connections between individuals and groups, and ways that hybrids of joyfulness and critique, learning and recreation, were embedded within. Techniques were analysed and assessed in relation to their capacity to enable participation and interactions between individuals and groups, leading to a number of *principles* that can be used for practising Interplaces and learning to connect with others meaningfully.

In this chapter, the discussion synthesizes these principles to propose tangible *guidelines* for future practice, for materializing the learning of solidarity in space. Through this, the thesis in seeking tangible ways for transforming divisive relational borders culminates with the proposition of festivals as an intertwined form of *joyful-critical spatial practice*. This implies that it can combine learning and recreational activities suggesting another way to conscientization and connecting with others, which can potentially nurture connectedness between people and differences, over discriminatory borders and through geopolitical borders.

Also, learnings from the in-depth research on the festivals, inform further the conceptualization of *Interplaces* as spatial practices for solidarity pedagogy, refining

the theory of action that has been set as the first objective of the research. The theory of action can subsequently inform spatial practice with *guidelines on learning how to connect with others*, and with the ability to encourage inter-border connections between communities, that is, through and across the geopolitical border in Cyprus. Guidelines show tangible ways to connecting with others through creating-together and forms of activities that combine joyful approaches to learning and critical approaches to recreation, pointing towards future practice and responding to the second objective of the research; to use learnings from research to inform future practice and policy recommendations (presented in Chapter 9).

## 08.01 From principles to guidelines for future practice

The in-depth examination of the two festivals as possible spatial practices of solidarity pedagogy, revealed techniques and associated factors that enabled the production of co-creations, which both helped to form lists of pedagogical principles from each case. This section brings these principles together to argue for a number of *guidelines* (figure 8.1) that can be used for facilitating Interplaces as a means for achieving solidarity pedagogy in Cyprus and looking more from the position of a facilitator/pedagogue.

Guidelines for learning solidarity	
Access, participation and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open-access, radical affordability and small-scale</li> <li>• cross-border</li> </ul>
Communication and Dissemination (and participation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• multilingualism</li> <li>• cross-border</li> <li>• comprehensive</li> </ul>
Means, Content and Site/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactive learning and creating-together</li> <li>• joyful learning and critical recreation</li> <li>• site/context-specificity</li> <li>• living, sharing and supporting space/s</li> </ul>

Figure 8.1 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of the suggested guidelines that can be used in order to facilitate the process of learning how to co-create and connect with others through space; differently, to facilitate tangible Interplaces as a means to achieve solidarity pedagogy.

## Access, participation and scale

- **open-access, radical affordability, small-scale**

One of the guidelines that I consider essential in increasing possibilities for connections is to adopt an *open-access* approach to participation. This is based on the realizations from both the festivals which helped to understand that entrance fee could become an obstacle or a border that prevents possibilities for individuals and groups to participate in the process and outcomes of activities, and thus, for connections between them. Instead, it is suggested that in order to achieve an inclusive pedagogical action a radical approach to affordability of a no-fee entrance is important.

Specifically, both the festivals showed that participation of the general public could be influenced by the ticket price. On the one hand, in the case of the EDON festival the relatively low price based on research participants constituted a reason to attract a great number of visitors, which also relates to the organizers' intention to achieve a big-scale festival. On the other hand, the Xarkis festival maintained a no-fee entrance even though it has no intention to attract similar number of visitors with the EDON festival. Instead, the Xarkis festival aimed to attract relatively small numbers and be maintained as a small-scale event in a way that activities can be more focused on providing opportunities for visitors to engage and develop stronger relations with the local communities. The case of the Xarkis festival, therefore, helped to think and suggest that if the aim is to create more opportunities for interactions and stronger connections among diverse individuals and groups that come from different social-economic backgrounds, small-scale events with no-fee entrance can be more effective ways to achieve it.

- **cross-border**

Placing the above ideas on the context of Cyprus, I suggest that if a pedagogical process aims to focus on transforming relational borders between communities of Cyprus, especially the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, there should be a great encouragement of *cross-border* participation. This means that facilitators can invite communities to cross the border and move to the other side, either the North or South, which eventually can increase the chances for a more equal participation of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities in the learning process.

This guideline is inspired by the fact that the EDON festival showed specific techniques for including the TC community in the festival. Specifically, TC organizations based

in the North were invited to come to the festival in the South, as well as EDON tried to promote the importance of sustaining bi-communal connections through social activities and arranged discussions on common concerns. However, even together with the fact that the festival site was located near the crossing point in Nicosia, the participation of the TC community remained low in numbers.

Despite the fact that there is still a great potential and need to design a more integrated strategy that can achieve an equal participation of the two communities in its festival, the EDON festival helped to start imagining tangible ways to practise Interplaces as a means to overcome the geopolitical border of Cyprus. The following sections show how both the cases contribute to develop further ideas on Interplaces and practising solidarity in space.

## **Communication and dissemination (and participation)**

### **• multilingualism**

Another possible border or barrier that both the festivals helped to realize is that of language which can be critical in allowing or preventing the participation, interactions and connections between individuals and groups of communities. It is suggested that for an inclusive pedagogical action and even participation, the use of *multilingualism* in communication during the production of activities and their dissemination, is important.

Both the festivals showed the intention to use a second language alongside the Greek language — that is mostly spoken by the Greek Cypriots in the South — in promotion and facilitation of their events. However, in being inclusive especially in regard to the participation of the GC and TC communities it is necessary to use both the Turkish and Greek languages. This was specifically realized through the EDON festival as TC research participants would suggest it as one of the main reasons that the festival does not attract bigger numbers of TC visitors.

Also, the use of English language is suggested as not all members of the communities know the other language, while drawing from the case of Xarkis, the use of English language can increase inclusiveness and interaction between different communities that live in Cyprus and use it as a second language. Drawing from both the festivals, multilingualism is suggested to guide the arranged activities so that participants can interact, while the Xarkis festival showed that it is important to be used also for the navigation across the sites that activities take place at.

- **cross-border**

TC research participants from the EDON festival linked the matter of limited participation from the TC community with the limited promotion of events in the North, and which limitation the EDON organization admits, although there were actions towards this to some extent. This leads to suggest as an important guideline to follow a *cross-border* promotion of pedagogical initiatives, that is, in both the Northern and Southern sides of Cyprus, so as to enable more equal participation.

- **comprehensive**

Related to the above, it is suggested that in order to increase participation of individuals and groups a *comprehensive* dissemination and promotion of their content is important, meaning an equal presentation of all kind of activities included therein — especially if these are multiple. This was inspired by the EDON festival's limitation where according to research participants the focus during its promotion was on its music concerts, and less on the multiple other activities taking place simultaneously. Instead, the case of Xarkis showed that following a balanced promotion of all activities as well as combining it with a multilingualism explained above, can attract and increase a diverse range of participants — not only will they be aware that they are able to interact and speak with others, but also that there are multiple activities that match their interests to attend too.

## **Means, Content and Site/s**

- **interactive learning and creating-together**

Another guideline that is considered imperative in learning to connect with others is that learning should be based on *interaction* and engage learners in the process of *co-creation*. The propositional guideline emerges from the study of co-creations at the Xarkis festival, where one of its strengths was related to the fact that it was possible to identify instances of meaningful connections. This meant that learners could engage in the reciprocal process of give and receive and as creative agents could arrive with mutual work in creating-something-together. Following Gauntlett (2011), creating with others can be a way to strengthen social relations and promote togetherness, which is important when aiming to transform relational borders between divided communities and for which the Xarkis festival provided tangible ways to achieve it. Specifically, the Xarkis festival utilized techniques to facilitate and support interactive learning including *casual dialogues* that could emerge at the

social places of the village; *artistic creations* that could emerge during workshops; and *practising cultural rituals* that could emerge during performances or social areas across the village like dancing-together or eating-together. It should be noted that outcomes present mainly interactions between the newcomer visitors, which reflects the festival's limitation to engage more actively the local visitors and therefore, cannot tell the level of connection between these two groups.

The guideline also builds on Freire's (1998) position that facilitating an interaction-based learning is important in generating feelings of *joy* as it implies their participation and contribution in the process of learning, where interaction is used to develop their creative and critical thinking. Contrary to this, the guideline about interactive learning is also based on learnings from the EDON festival and one of its great limitations — to facilitate interaction-based learning. As seen in Chapter 6, learning at the EDON festival was characterized by an exhibition-based approach, meaning that it was mainly supported by spatial installations with exhibited information and therefore learners were not able to engage in the process, but only observe/receive. Following Freire — and research participants at the EDON festival — lack of interaction constitutes a great limitation as it implies that learners cannot engage in the process and outcomes of learning, and knowledge is not a co-produced outcome, but rather “acts of depositing” (1996: 56); learners only receive and are not able to produce. Similarly, the exhibition-like learning activities at the EDON festival did not allow visitors to engage in them, and instead they would mainly attend the performances.

Despite these limitations, it was possible to identify instances of meaningful connections at the EDON festival where co-creations were supported by techniques of *dialogue* and *practice of cultural rituals* (such as eating-together). It should be noted that the outcome represents mainly interactions between loyal visitors which reflects the limitation to engage more actively the general public, and therefore cannot tell the level of connection between the two groups, as well as the TC community.

Based on my personal experiences as a volunteer at the festival for several years the outcomes were expected, and therefore defined the decision to expand the empirical research into the Xarkis festival and to otherness, not necessarily the TC and GC communities, revealing other possibilities for interaction-based activities.

## • joyful learning and critical recreation

Building on the above-mentioned as well as what has been discussed earlier in the two cases that adds to the content of learning solidarity, I suggest that meaningful interactions can be facilitated through combinations of learning with recreational activities such as participatory workshops with interactive performances, shaping a joyful-critical experience of learning to connect meaningfully with others.

Learnings specifically from the Xarkis festival revealed intertwined forms of joyful learning and critical recreation, suggesting that learning can also be found in interactive performances, offering a different way to think of forms of interactive learning and encouraging meaningful connections, and thus, expanding the spectrum of activities that could be used to encourage them.

What was found at the Xarkis festival confirms what Rendell (2006) highlighted about participatory performances and their potential to develop one's critical thinking abilities through encouraging them to take conscious acts on space. Specifically, she stresses the importance of embodiment and interaction when describing performative practices that aim to trigger critical thinking of the participant audience, and for which body, mind and emotions, since they are inseparable from each other, work together in leading one's critical action upon space (Ibid.).

To this, the Xarkis festival provided instances that showed how interactions and co-creations could emerge in unexpected instances during interactive and participatory performances. These would be initiated after the artists triggered audiences' critical thinking, either directly through dialogue and posing questions or without words and just expecting affectionate response that resulted in dancing-together; or by just giving objects to use to co-create a sound; also, they could emerge during participatory workshops experienced not with words, but as affection and laughter while co-creating body movement improvisations.

These instances helped to add to Rendell's concept of 'critical spatial practices' and argue that learning activities such as a participatory performance can as well be joyful and critical spatial practice, as according to Gauntlett (2011) they allow learners to interact and create-together. To this the case of Xarkis helped to imagine tangible ways that learning solidarity can be both a joyful and critical process, as well as spatial.

- **site/context-specificity**

Linked to the above point, it is suggested that *context-specificity* as well as *site-specificity* are interrelated and can coexist in ways that the content of learning and recreational activities is based on the context of localities in which they take place. The suggested guideline can be effective in increasing meaningful communication between learners and communities, and therefore understanding and empathy between them; values that underpin solidarity pedagogy.

The propositional guideline is inspired by findings from both the cases. The case of the Xarkis festival, interestingly, showed that these two approaches can coexist, suggesting that the content and material of the pedagogical process can be based on existing localities' culture and reality, about which eventually learners that visit them can gain a better (experiential) understanding. The approach implies that the content of learning can be inspired by material collected from the context within which communities live including their culture, people and everyday life. Also, that the designed pedagogical activities — whether recreational or learning — are adapted to the site/s of localities, inviting finally, learners to a learning process through embodying the everyday life of communities.

As found in Xarkis the festival, activities such as performances can be inspired by the Cypriot traditional music (such as “The string”, “Performance”, “ziafettin”), while workshops (such as “Natural & human distortion”, “Mapping Koilani”) can direct learners to explore locality so as to collect material and use it to execute given tasks. Similarly, the EDON festival provided learning and recreational activities that could offer stimuluses from the Cypriot culture and reality such as exhibitions and discussions based on knowledge about the Cypriot current reality and history or social places that were based on and represented the Cypriot culture including traditional meals and drinks, Cypriot traditional music and dances or even the presence of TC representatives from youth organizations and cultural groups.

The Xarkis festival approach to the site did not consider the village as an “empty” site to appropriate but rather, as a way to generate more possibilities for interactions between the local community and the newcomer visitors that do not live there. This was not the case at the EDON festival, which approached the site in a different way, reflecting also what was mentioned earlier about the fact that it aims to accommodate a great number of visitors. The EDON organization occupied an



existing site which was transformed only for the days of the festival in ways that could support each activity. Therefore, it was not designed in a way that visitors could engage with an existing locality and learn about it through experience.

- **living, sharing and supporting space/s**

What should also be highlighted and are related to the above are the benefits that a learner can gain when living and embodying the reality of an existing locality/community, which eventually can increase the chances of interactions and mutual understanding. Therefore, the guideline here suggests that a site/context-specific approach to pedagogy can engage learners in the important process of sharing space that can lead into making connections and more opportunities to develop values of solidarity — mutual understanding and empathy. This is based on the opportunities that experiential learning offers which can materialize Freire's (1996) and Stavride's (2007) perspective of practising solidarity where one puts her/himself into others' shoes in order to understand their position and support them.

Drawing mainly from the Xarkis festival, it is suggested that opportunities of living and sharing spaces can generate interactions and more meaningful connections such as when being in social places where learners can practise cultural rituals that are shared between them (eating-together or drinking-together that is integral to the Cypriot culture). Also, connections can be encouraged when dwelling at the locality as it allows to taste the local culture, people and their everyday life. Even though it was only the Xarkis festival that provided dwelling at the village on camping sites, the importance of sharing space was highlighted by research participants from both the cases. At the same time, as learned from the Xarkis festival, engaging the life of communities through for instance using local services, shows also a direct support to their local economy and thus, sustainability, where also it is possible to interact with locals.

Both cases showed that festivals constituted a shared space that achieved to connect people that live *within* south Cyprus or *across* the border (in limited numbers) and *beyond* Cyprus with other countries. However, the Xarkis festival through adopting site-specificity showed a spatialized approach to the pedagogical process and elevates the understanding of 'sharing space' that began with the case of EDON (Chapter 6), *as living Interplaces*.

Specifically, by adding the pedagogical perspectives of Rendell (2006) and Freire (1996) that were discussed in Chapter 3 to the learnings from the Xarkis festival helps to take further the conceptualization of an Interplace and argue that it implies a pedagogical process of what I call *embodied conscientization* and which highlights the role of space in the process of transformation. Specifically, it implies that an Interplace as a shared space or a transformative spatial practice, aims to engage learners in the process of changing mental and relational borders, by inviting them to experience different joyful and critical activities that require their bodily participation — according to Rendell this implies simultaneously emotional, physical and intellectual engagement of learners (Rendell, 2006).

The conceptualization of living Interplaces also highlights the fact that it is important to create opportunities for the communities of Cyprus to cross the border and connect so as to inhabit or — as Rendell would have it (2006) — to *embody* a shared space. An Interplace can be a site that can be found in Northern or Southern Cyprus where learners can move towards to, away from their everyday routines and locations, so that they have the time and space to finally interact and engage in a facilitated process of learning to connect with others — whether coming from north and south Cyprus, other countries, culture and communities.

## 08.02 Joyful-critical spatial practices as Interplaces

Drawing from the research outcomes it was revealed that in the context of festivals meaningful connections were possible to emerge leading to guidelines that include tangible ways to develop spatial practices for solidarity pedagogy or Interplaces.

To arrive to these guidelines, the research began with collecting a number of pointers that were initially drawn from theory (Chapter 3) and the exploratory journey (Chapter 4) about the possibilities that combinations of critique and joyfulness might shape in fostering meaningful affective connections. These pointers, subsequently, guided the in-depth research on the two cases (Chapters 6 and 7) focused on examining ways that these combinations could form tangible pedagogical guidelines for practising solidarity and learning how to connect with others.

Indeed, based on the research findings, criticality and joyfulness were possible to coexist in ways that shaped *joyful learning* and *critical recreational* activities. This implies that one element complements the other, and therefore none can stand

in itself. Instead, a transformative spatial practice — or an *Interplace* — that aims to achieve solidarity pedagogy, requires a hybrid of critical and joyful approaches in learning to cultivate connections with others. Therefore, learnings from both the festivals led to conceptualize *Interplaces* as a form of *joyful-critical spatial practice*. That is a form of spatial practice that is both critical and joyful, which I argue can potentially transform relational borders — especially important for the one that exists between the divided communities Cyprus — as it offers a different pedagogical approach to *conscientization* and *connection with others*.

Conscientization was conceived through intersections of ideas originated from Rendell and Freire. Rendell (2006) views conscientization as an embodied experience and practice that she terms as ‘critical spatial practices’. Her term was initially studied through Freire (1996; 1997; 1998; 2000) who describes the method of conscientization as a process of developing critical thinking capacity through critical reflection, which through Rendell (2006), I take further by arguing about *embodied conscientization*. That *consciousness* can be transformed through learning to take a different/critical and conscious course of action in space. This highlights the significant role that space can play in transforming embedded structures of thought, knowledge, perceptions of the other, and therefore social relations between different individuals and social groups. In the case of Cyprus, this is important and implies that a different or critical course of action in space, would be to initiate connections through the border, and with the *other* community.

Also, intersections between Freire (1998) and Gauntlett (2011) provided ideas about how to *connect with others*, for which joyfulness was initially emerged as an important element to achieve it. Specifically, Freire highlights the importance of ensuring a *joyful* experience of learning, implying that it allows the space for learners to develop their critical and creative thinking. Therefore, creativity plays an important role in cognitive transformation, which idea Gauntlett develops at the level of transforming social relations for which joyful processes of creating-together seem effective.

Therefore, joining these intersections together leads to highlight that joyful-critical spatial practices could potentially help to rediscover togetherness and solidarity with each other. For this, festivals provided tangible guidelines discussed earlier (section 8.1) in order to develop such practices, pointing towards a future practice of solidarity pedagogy in space. Also, they helped to consolidate that solidarity

pedagogy can be a critical, joyful as well as spatial process of learning to connect with others, and transforming relational borders.

Specifically, the outcomes from the cases, and therefore the research, helped to extend the understanding of learning as a *joyful practice*, and recreation as a *critical practice*, which as seen in the previous section (8.1) can take different hybrids of joyful-critical forms such as an interactive performance or participatory workshop. This implies that learning/practising solidarity could be achieved through initially the critical act of crossing the border in order to connect with others and through different activities that would be based on embodied conscientization. The aim to transform consciousness and develop critical abilities through space coexists with the aim to strengthen relations between learners and promote togetherness. Therefore, the critical acts can be combined with joyful elements and also be based on promoting creating-together. Both the cases in the previous chapters provided examples of techniques through which co-creations could arise as well as forms of activities that included these techniques (casual dialogues at social spaces, artistic creations through participatory workshops or interactive performances, practising cultural rituals during performances or social spaces such as dancing-together or eating-together).

To conclude, practising Interplaces as joyful-critical spatial practice directly implies an inter-border practice that fosters connections through the border and thus, critiques the status quo of division, while it aims to cultivate affectionate relational ties between cultures and otherness that exist on the island. This is based on my position that relational borders can be transformed through connections in space, and therefore, space has a significant role to play in conflict transformation.

### **Interplaces for Solidarity Pedagogy, in Cyprus**

The study on the two cases aimed to complement the theoretical review on different concepts of learning with empirical insights, so as to propose a new theory of action that informs spatial practice with the ability to transcend the relational border between the TC and GC communities, through crossing the geopolitical border, and eventually to cultivate peace. That is namely *Solidarity Pedagogy* suggesting that it can be developed in space. The theory utilises critical and joyful modalities of learning in space as a means to enhance interaction, connection and co-creation between individuals and groups, across difference and across communities. Based

on this proposition, I hope that the thesis opens up a discussion for inter-border methodologies of connectedness.

In putting forward this proposition, I collected key learnings from the two studies on the festivals, took into consideration their limitations and strengths, leading into suggesting a set of guidelines for future practice to use for an embodied practice of solidarity pedagogy that I call *Interplaces*, as a means to achieve learning of how to connect with others. Learnings from the festivals helped to theorize Interplaces as *joyful-critical spatial practices*, and suggest guidelines including tangible approaches to facilitate Interplaces, contextualized within the reality of Cyprus. The thesis, through the concept of solidarity pedagogy and its actualization through Interplaces, set the foundations to think a future practice of connectedness and learning solidarity.

To begin with, in Chapter 3, I argued for the need to establish a transformative pedagogy of solidarity as a spatial practice in Cyprus. The spatial practice should aim to facilitate *connections* through and across the border, that is, *embodied connections*, so as to critique the current norm of living separated from each other and transform the relation border between the two communities of Cyprus, through the geopolitical. This implies a pedagogical practice during which one community is facilitated to cross the physical border, move towards the other side, north or south, in order to meet and connect with the other community, forming Interplaces, that is, shared spaces either in the north or south.

Whether this takes the form of a festival or other spatial practice that is joyful and critical, I propose that Interplaces constitute “spatiotemporal” practices and spaces (Stavrides, 2007: 2), created after communities purposefully connect and through which solidarity can be learned by focusing on reinforcing connections between communities and otherness, through the border. The act of crossing denotes and spatializes what Freire (1997) and Stavrides (2007) described as *entering into the situation of others* in order to understand it; a radical posture of solidarity, of empathy. What Interplaces also imply and suggest is that communities do not just meet at a shared space, but also *co-create with each other*, even temporarily.

In order for *Interplaces* to achieve impact over time, requires to repetitively act consciously and critically in space, meaning to initiate more connections through the physical border and so to critique its divisive nature. I suggest that the

transformative power of Interplaces lies in their very spatiotemporal nature: in order for the normative imposition of a concrete relation border to be transformed and generate substantial change and nurturing of meaningful relations, Interplaces should be practised in repetition. This draws on Butler's (2015) ideas on gender performativity, where a normative imposition requires repetitive *differentiated* acts than what is imposed, or simply, critical practices, in order for norms to be transformed. Similarly, Interplaces are imagined to achieve transformation of the status quo of division and the border, through facilitating differentiated acts, that is, acts that encourage connections through the border, rather than living separated. The conception is based on the fact that while acknowledging the multiple challenges that define the complex reality of Cyprus I contend that until a resolution comes, the porosity of the border can be seen as an opportunity to exploit the fact it allows access on the other side and therefore, embodied connections, for increasing the frequency and quality of crossings between the two sides of the island, and learning ways to strengthen social relations between the two communities.

During connections, participating communities — individuals and groups — can work through embedded relational borders and re-establish relationships in ways that can learn to connect with each other and any other. For this, connections can be opportunities of learning to understand each other and connect through individual and cultural differences, meaning voicing, acknowledging, accepting and celebrating them rather than silencing them; through creating shared experiences; as well as through determining shared beliefs, concerns and vision for the future. To put it differently, Interplaces, as a new form of practice of connectedness, joyful and critical, aims to facilitate inter-border opportunities of learning how to connect with each other, through the border; that is, communities (and differences) are encouraged to cross, meet, interact and create-together as *creating-peace-together*.

I hope that practising Interplaces can possibly help communities to rediscover solidarity between them, cultivate relationships and more importantly, their power and hope that a change is possible, that peace is possible. Also, establishing inter-border practices and thus, new shared experiences can eventually transform established knowledge, norms, perceptions of the other and relations between each other, as well as to rearticulate the current narratives of *division* as narratives of *connection*.

It is essential then, to experience more Interplaces, more shared spaces where

communities in Cyprus can co-create, so as to empower themselves and togetherness. For this, it is also important that Interplaces are practised in both sides of Cyprus, so that communities, cultures, individuals and groups can familiarize themselves with the “other” side and the other/ness in general.

Potentially, according to Mohanty (2003) who envisages *a feminist praxis without borders*, and for which in order to be achieved networks of co-produced knowledges are imperative, the ultimate purpose for Interplaces by the course of time is that the continuous repetition multiplies the effect of connecting across the divide, and shape *networks of Interplaces*.

Both the cases have been insightful in imagining tangible ways that the porous geopolitical border in Cyprus can create possibilities to shape relational ties between the communities and thus transform the norm of division. The cases helped to discover the pedagogical potential of festivals, and imagine a critical and joyful content for the spatial practices of solidarity pedagogy. Although the cases have only been in the south part of Cyprus, and not attracting a great response from both the communities of Cyprus, they have been great opportunities to identify needs for learners on which future practices can be based on to design their pedagogical methods. Also, it was important that there was a dual exploration between an explicit focus on investigating the bi-communal element at the EDON festival, and the more implicit approach of the Xarkis festival to otherness. It has been a way for myself to think one step ahead and learn from otherness and imagine further how these connections can become networked Interplaces across the divide. In addition, the research has been a way to argue for a spatially-oriented civic pedagogy for community building/engagement and conflict resolution that celebrates difference across the intercultural context of Cyprus, reconceptualises firstly, active engagement as pedagogical-activist action for social change, and secondly, the rediscovering of peace in Cyprus as *a collective, bottom-up* action.





## 09 Interplaces for Solidarity Pedagogy: towards an inter-border practice of learning to co-create and connect, through borders

This research has examined an interdisciplinary resource of critical and practice-based theories as well as a diverse range of spatial practices. Mostly influenced from intersections between critical pedagogy, feminist praxis and critical spatial theory as well as activist and recreational spatial practices, the thesis offers a *critical-spatial approach to the process of learning about how to connect with others, through borders*. It suggests a set of concepts that were tested and used in an empirical research on two cases-spatial practices, supported by a number of other practices.

The thesis proposes a theory of action, namely *Solidarity Pedagogy* through which we can learn to transform *relational borders* in between communities and otherness through the porous *geopolitical border* of Cyprus, and eventually cultivate a culture of peace. The concept opens up the ground for *embodied inter-border practices of learning to connect with others*. To achieve this, the thesis proposes materializing solidarity pedagogy in space through embodied connections and temporarily produced shared spaces, namely *Interplaces*, produced after individuals and groups are facilitated to bodily move towards the “other” side, cross the border, and meet and participate in joyful-critical forms of learning and co-creation. Eventually, a repetitive practice of Interplaces can possibly increase interactions, nurture consciousness, perceptions of the other, and hopefully, relational ties between communities of Cyprus.

Following the foregrounding of social science research supported by feminist thinking, the documentation and interpretation of spatial practices were based on a situated research. The nature of live spatial practices required an embodied and reflexive strategy of documentation and analysis, also based on participation and co-production of knowledge. For this, practices have been experienced first-hand, engaging in them as a researcher, volunteer and public participant. In addition, the empirical research has been carried out using a combination of methodological approaches — ethnography, case study, autoethnography — with research conducted on and with subjects-research participants. Solidarity pedagogy has defined the way decisions were made for the *methodological* and *epistemological* approaches of the research and the way relationships between space and people were assessed and interpreted.

The thesis provokes critical discussions that have not emerged in existing practices. The contribution of this thesis is conceptual, but more importantly methodological and interdisciplinary and can inform a range of facilitators and diverse field of practices and studies — education, activism, culture and arts — that are interested in civic pedagogies for community building and conflict transformation.

### 09.01 Solidarity Pedagogy and Interplaces as politics of connectedness

The research process was guided by the need to establish practices that can be developed through and across the geopolitical border of Cyprus, critique and transform its divisive norm to one that relates and connects. This reflects the fact that I looked at the partially accessible border in Cyprus as a relational one and thus, as an opportunity to encourage physical connections and new relational ties between its two communities, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The research was based on the broader aim to explore different definitions and forms of *learning* through theory and practices, which was channelled in two lines of sub-questions and objectives.

#### A framework of transformative, inter-border practice in Cyprus

The first objective has been to utilize insights from theory and practice to propose a new theory of transformative action to inform spatial practice with guidelines on learning how to connect with others, and with the ability to encourage connections between communities across the geopolitical border in Cyprus. Based on this, the research process began with theory development, a theory of action, presented in **Chapter 3** which reflects the intention to establish ways to learn to connect rather than to remain separated from each other, that I call *Solidarity Pedagogy*. To conceptualize this in physical contexts, the theory of solidarity pedagogy is explored also through space, meaning that solidarity can be *learned and practised* in space. Practising solidarity in the physical space of Cyprus then, implies practices that facilitate *connections* between different subjects through crossing spatial borders. As a result of these connections, new *shared spaces* are produced where communities cooperate and co-create, even temporarily: what I call *Interplaces*. The term reflects the intention to spatialize solidarity pedagogy, while as also suggested in Chapter 8, Interplaces are conceptualized as joyful-critical spatial practices with tangible ways through which we can practise solidarity with each other.

To develop the concepts, I turned to a number of practice-based traditions of

critical theories including critical pedagogy, feminist praxis, and critical spatial theory which offer a review on *divisions* and *connections* across other relational borders, generated by class, ethnicity and gender. These lines of thought, inform *an activist, pedagogically-oriented and spatially grounded approach to the practice of solidarity*, in seeking to transform social divisions. Although constituting different theoretical positions, it was the interesting intersections between them that helped to see tangible possibilities, and more importantly, to reinforce my hope and aspiration that peace is possible. By extent, the set of concepts I created help to think of different ways to frame and practise peacebuilding in Cyprus which combine elements of critique, but also of joyfulness, connectedness and collectiveness.

As viewed in **Chapter 3**, the notion of solidarity is central in discussions about the role of critical pedagogy — through Freire — in the political aim to generate social change by empowering the oppressed, as there is need for a more democratic world. In fact, it highlights that change is possible within oppressive conditions of capitalist living that disempower one's capacity as well as they isolate one from another. In Freire, change or transformation can be achieved, first and foremost, by learning to *think differently*, meaning critically. This requires a process of *conscientization* that includes knowledge co-production as a way to empower one's consciousness so as to take action towards change (Freire, 1996). Conscientization requires one to name her/his own life circumstances, looking at them from a distance and reflecting on them critically, to finally be able to choose a different course of action (Ibid.). This can finally lead one into the process of *politicization*, that is, one's active engagement in the world by taking actions in order to change her/his oppressed conditions of living (Ibid.).

Secondly, change can be achieved through a process of social solidarity, seen as a way to develop affective ties. This implies learning to putting the self in others' shoes in order to understand their position, empathise and stand with them in their own fights for change (Freire, 1996). In view of the context of Cyprus, ideas of critical pedagogy helped to think social solidarity as a way to connect its two communities meaningfully and discover their own way to engage in building peace.

The thesis takes this further by turning into the feminist praxis without borders — through Mohanty — where solidarity is also found as a central notion in the political aim to generate social transformation that can be achieved through honouring the differences, diversity and otherness that exist between subjectivities, as there is

need for a more inclusive world that celebrates differences rather than concealing them. In fact, transformation is not only understood as the development of individual critical abilities as seen in Freire, but that it can be achieved through learning *to act differently* meaning collectively (Mohanty, 2003). This requires practising solidarity as a collective practice of critique by generating cooperative networks over geopolitical borders in which experiences connect and knowledge is co-produced, coming from different agents-subjectivities across the world (Ibid.). Whereas Freire's view on solidarity suggests *cognitive crossing* as a way to develop social relationships through support, empowerment and understanding of each other, Mohanty focuses explicitly on ways to form international relationships by *crossing or overcoming geopolitical borders*. That is important in thinking solidarity as a way to develop connections between the two communities of Cyprus, and through its geopolitical border so as to overcome embedded discriminatory and divisive relational borders.

The discussion builds upon the aforementioned to add another perspective of solidarity contextualized within a critique against individualistic lifestyle and discriminatory and isolated social life. In view of the context of Cyprus, ideas of critical spatial theory — through Stavrides — help to think practising solidarity not only as cognitive crossing as Freire suggests, or geopolitical crossing as Mohanty suggests, but also as *a spatial, physical crossing*. This is achieved through looking at the borders between otherness and communities as porous, and thus, opportunities for crossing and entering into the situation of others so as to understand them and connect with each other (Stavrides, 2016;2007). This has been important for imagining tangible possibilities to connect in space, and transform the relational border of the communities in Cyprus.

### **A Joyful and Critical Spatial Practice: practising togetherness through creating together**

Solidarity pedagogy is conceptualized as a *transformative or critical practice* as well as a *spatial practice*. This implies that the lens of critical pedagogy, feminist thinking and critical spatial and gender theory are blended to argue that embedded structures of thought and knowledge that are imposed by oppressions (class, gender, social etc.), can be transformed through the process of conscientization that is developed in space, or as I call it through *embodied conscientization*. Subsequently, intersection between these lines of thought has been a way to think

ways that solidarity pedagogy can be practised in space so as to change relational norms imposed by the division and the border of Cyprus.

To arrive to this understanding, critical spatial theory — through Lefebvre — helps to realize the interconnected relation of the spatial-social and the dynamic nature of both space and social processes, and rethink absolute views about them both (1991). This implies that subjectivities should be perceived as agents of the social processes, producers, creators and actants instead of mere users of space and as reproducers of norms (Ibid.). Therefore, Lefebvre helps to think of subjectivities and space as temporal and dynamic processes, and so as social relations, against knowledge that tends to fix and predict human behaviour (Ibid.).

Ideas are reinforced — through Rendell — with the concept of *critical spatial practices* by emphasizing the interconnectedness that is entailed when embodying the space; that social processes and practices are interrelated and inseparable from space (2006). Interestingly, critical spatial practices invite into conscious acting on space that can develop one's critical thinking (Ibid.). That is the process of critical reflection which coexists with the process of re/deconstruction of knowledge about an existing space, both of which processes are experienced in space, that is, are embodied processes. Therefore, ideas of both Freire and Mohanty are taken further to argue that consciousness and knowledge transformation can be achieved through space, or the embodiment of space. Also, to argue that critical spatial practices as *facilitators* can as well promote learners' politicization by inviting them to actively engage a process of taking conscious bodily acts upon an existing space/reality, guided by critical reflection. Critical spatial practices help to think of solidarity pedagogy as a tangible transformative practice that invites communities of Cyprus to actively engage in changing the divisive norm of the border, the imposed use of space as well as the imposed knowledge and potentially relationships with each other. That means practices that utilize the opportunity of the fact that the border is a partly accessible, a porous border, so to facilitate connections of communities and produce new narrative of a border that connects.

Finally, critical spatial practices — through Butler — can be thought of as effective ways of subverting dominant power-knowledge and (gender) norms (1999; 1993). Through collective and repetitive practice in space that performs established norms in different ways, it's possible to cause deconstruction of (gender) norms (Ibid.). Both Rendell and Butler helped to conceptualize critical or transformative spatial

practices. Specifically, to think that the facilitation of spatiotemporal practices that engage and encourage participants into utilizing space differently, that is, critically as Rendell suggests. Whereas doing that repetitively, according to Butler, can eventually destabilize fixed norms and rearticulate imposed narratives, signifying the power/ability of subjectivities to transform or produce difference over time.

Taking these ideas into the context of Cyprus helps to think that utilizing the norm of living that the porous border of Cyprus imposes as opportunity, that is, the here-and-temporarily-there. Solidarity pedagogy can be practised in space through repetitive spatial practices that invite the two communities to cross, meet and co-produce. Also, these ideas enhance the understanding that space embodiment can be developed to a transformative practice. One that can alter established consciousness, knowledge, social norms, perceptions and potentially relations. Akin to what the thesis argues, a different acting on space, that is, making more connections with each other, can produce new experiences, new meanings, and therefore, new knowledge about cultural-spatial processes. Towards building a culture of peace in Cyprus, this requires to *cross the border* and *initiate actions together in space* which — following Butler — is even more powerful when conditions of appearing together have been dismantled, meaning the conditions of division in Cyprus (2015). Such a critical action itself will represent the desire of the collective — the two communities of Cyprus together — for the complete removal of the border, the reunification of the island and to live under a shared space and environment. For this critical action, space plays an imperative role in critiquing the uncertain way of living, separated from each other by just appearing together or *acting-together*.

The thesis builds on this idea to support that acting-together or togetherness can be empowered and facilitated through *creating-together*. Critical pedagogy highlights the role of creativity in empowering one's self. Not only does creativity help to hope that change is possible, but also it helps to finally take a different course of action towards changing an oppressed reality. Freire helps to think that a transformative practice should not only be concerned with one's cognitive change, but also with ways that learners can shift from critical thinkers into creative doers (1998). Specifically, self-empowerment means to allow the space to learners to develop their own creativity, creative thinking and imagination (Ibid.). Subsequently, learners are able to hope and imagine that change is possible, and so the life they

desire can be actualized (Ibid.).

In adding to this, the thesis, following Freire (1998) and Gauntlett (2011), supports that creativity not only benefits one's own power to achieve a desired reality, but that creating with others or *co-creation* as I call it, and shaping networks of making something together, empowers togetherness and ways to act collectively. In other words, that creating-together becomes an action taken collectively towards change. *Co-creation* constitutes a *joyful practice* through which we can shape new relational ties with each other, and simultaneously a *critical practice* that directly fights the individualistic-divisive lifestyle we experience in the everyday life.

Taking all the aforementioned ideas into space and the context of the porous physical border in Cyprus, my argument is that a transformative practice would be one that facilitates connections through and across the border, that is, *embodied connections* that critique the current norm of living separated from each other. This requires crossing the physical border, moving towards the other side, north or south, in order to meet and connect with the other community and co-produce shared physical spaces which I describe as *Interplaces*.

Similar to Stavrides' threshold spaces, *Interplaces* are temporal and shared spaces that are created by communities purposefully connecting in order to inhabit a space and cooperate so as to create-together. An *interplace* implies that communities can meet so to co-create shared experiences and potentially new relational ties, by voicing, acknowledging and accepting the individual and cultural differences as well as determining their shared beliefs. More importantly, practising *Interplaces* repetitively can possibly help communities to rediscover solidarity between them, cultivate relationships and even more crucial, their power and hope that change is possible. Therefore, for communities of Cyprus to be empowered so as to define themselves their own building of peace, requires that they can create together, as acting-together for peace, to add to Butler's ideas.

Finally, an *Interplace*, suggests to approach the divisive relational border between the communities of Cyprus as if it is a physical one, as if it's porous, helping to imagine inter-border connections not only as meeting with each other, but also as *building something together*. The concept of *Interplaces* therefore, reflects the position that solidarity pedagogy or learning to connect with each other, can be materialized in space and through the geopolitical border. Such a venture becomes even more

powerful within a frozen conflict and a porous border that nevertheless has to be regulated by building a culture of solidarity even within these dismantled conditions.

## 09.02 Solidarity as knowledge politics and mode of working through the border and otherness

Following the research objectives, the research design required to be structured in such a way so that theoretical investigation is weaved with empirical insights. Therefore, the research process moved from the theoretical review and creation of concepts into practice with an exploration on different forms of learning to finally select two cases for in-depth research, based on *a qualitative approach of empirical social science research* supported by feminist thinking on empirical research.

The research approach was instilled from the theoretical grounds of solidarity pedagogy, which itself takes a critical stance to knowledge production politics. Specifically, the objective for the empirical investigation was for myself to participate and observe live practices so as to trace possible learning and interaction techniques utilized within each practice; also, to understand the level of impact of each practice on the participants-learners alongside their motivation and experience from the different practices; and to understand the processes participated for the spatial production of the practices.

This was carried out through situated forms of documentation combining of methodological approaches of multi-sited ethnography, case study and auto-ethnography, while data analysis methods included the interpretive approach of content analysis of visual and verbal material. Combining these approaches was a way to respond to the challenging conditions of a live event including short duration, multiple sites, and multiple and simultaneous activities within that would take place both during the day and in the evening that necessitated for myself to be adaptable enough to unpredicted circumstances and temporality. Likewise, the combination of approaches was a way to create analytical tools that measure quality rather than quantity, so as to offer a sensitised reading of the socio-spatial production of the festivals and the subjective knowledges-narratives; as if they matter.

### Co-production and participation

Guided by the theory of solidarity pedagogy that is influenced by ideas of critical pedagogy, feminist thinking and relations of space and knowledge, the research politics of knowledge is characterized by *co-production* and *participation*,



*embodiment and reflexivity.*

In my research, co-production not only meant a *bottom-up* approach but also that knowledge is co-produced *with* research participants and myself, as a meaningful way to understand in depth the socio-spatial production. According to the ethics of solidarity pedagogy, this implies that co-production allowed the research to be experienced as a *shared space* between participants and myself and thus, to co-create meanings associated to our experiences. Participation, therefore, coexists with the co-construction/co-production process of the research which in pedagogical-feminist thinking is a way of honouring and voicing marginalized, oppressed, and thus, concealed knowledges and their subjective experiences/knowledge. This has been mutual in the research, meaning that participants' and my personal experiences mattered, and thus, both constituted primary sources.

More importantly, the theory of solidarity pedagogy has been a valuable tool for learning to put myself into the position of others — of practices thinking as a facilitator, and of communities thinking/acting as a member within — and manage to experience meaningful and affective interactions. Therefore, it was possible for co-creations to emerge with participants, while interactions would not only last during the formal instances when recording interviews or observing but also, during chance discussions and participation at the different activities within the different practices.

## **Embodiment and reflexivity**

As explained at the beginning of the section, the research process continued with moving from theory to practice. This was done with an exploratory journey in Cyprus initially described in **Chapter 4**, shaped through engaging in a number of spatial practices, as a learning experience, so as to collect knowledge about the context of Cyprus and reflect upon ideas on the concept of solidarity pedagogy. To regulate the exploration among different practices it was necessary to deploy an inductive process in the review of spatial practices.

In my research, the understanding of spatial practices and the experiences of individuals and groups was carried out through myself examining the processes within, in their natural setting, during their production and together with the research participants. This contributed in a more in-depth understanding both of the production of practices in a contextualized approach, and likewise of the

experiences of the public. Also, practising reflection as an important pedagogical principle of solidarity pedagogy has been valuable to take effective decisions during the circularity between theory and practice that through reflection would inform each other.

In my research this meant that every stage of the research could be adapted to unpredictable changes and re-plan actions and improve my own adaptability to consider such changes also as part of the research process.

Specifically, the method of (self-)reflexivity described in **Chapter 5** regulated this process through a cyclical transition between action (fieldworks and documentation) and reflection (writing, reading and analysing). It was used to narrow the exploratory journey that was deployed in a wide range of forms of practices and sites between activism, art-culture and education, a selection of which was presented in **Chapter 4**. This was regulated through an inductive process of selection of two case studies for in-depth research, presented in **Chapters 6** and **7**.

This choice was not only significant in narrowing the scope of the empirical research, but also for practising self-reflexivity or self-criticism at every stage of the whole research, as an essential distance when trying to understand and collect knowledge about living experiences but also for ensuring rigour since I would engage also as a participant. More importantly, (self-)reflexivity developed my personal critical skills important for both the research approach and actions, and for being critical in a constructive way with regards to the case studies.

### **Working through the border and otherness: multi-sited ethnography and ethnographic case study**

My exploratory journey was an inter-border field work, where I reviewed a range of instances, that is, spatial practices, forming a trajectory of fieldwork across multiple sites that occurred in different locations across Northern and Southern Cyprus. It has been a way to explore solidarity as a mode of working through the border, choosing multi-sited ethnography as its methodological approach. My journey was narrowed down by selecting two spatial practices, two cultural festivals, to investigate them as individual case studies. At this stage of the research, I decided that it was important to choose spatial practices to investigate thoroughly, which could provide effective tools to facilitate connections, either between the two communities, or otherness, and with either having or not to cross the border. The two festivals were found in

Southern Cyprus, and so the in-depth research was developed only in this area.

In my research multi-sited ethnography meant a less conventional approach of ethnography that escapes the single site exploration, and that I engaged and explored a wide range of spatial practices that occurred in different sites of Cyprus. The aim was to produce knowledge about the context of Cyprus, as well as about different learning forms.

The approach provided a way to address the temporary nature of spatial practices lasting between a few hours to three days as well as to enrich the spectrum of practices I would identify in the exploration. Also, I utilized multi-sited ethnography as a way to collect a diverse range of voices across Cyprus and contexts of practice, contributing in the general knowledge that the research is based on.

Using the multi-sited ethnography implies that it has been important to understand different live spatial practices within their different contexts, how they are developed within space and generally understand the complexity entailed. For this, I chose to combine the method of 'case study' as a way to study the practices within their situated locations, a popular way to study a field and a phenomenon in depth. As explained earlier, the exploratory nature of the research allowed the investigation of multiple spatial practices, thus case studies. The investigation focused on understanding methods used in the different practices that were able to connect individuals and groups, and more specifically, to identify forms of learning in space.

The method of case study allowed to study the live development of spatial practices in their real-life context, implying a context-specific approach. By nature, such an approach allowed me to focus on the particularity of each case/spatial practice, deepen my knowledge on a specific context through collecting situated knowledges, appropriating methods to specificities and more importantly producing contextualized understandings rather than generalized results. This was also embedded in the way each case was analysed, inventing a qualitative coding system based on combining the knowledge that participants brought into the research with the literature that influenced it the most.

### **09.03 A proposition for practising Solidarity Pedagogy in Cyprus**

Following the first research objective — to utilize insights collected from literature and practice so as to create a new theory of transformative action — key learnings are collected to inform spatial practice with guidelines on learning how to connect

with others, and with the ability to encourage embodied inter-border connections between communities, that is, through the geopolitical border in Cyprus. Key learnings are then utilized to address the second objective of the research — to use insights gained from the research to suggest future practice for learning solidarity alongside policy recommendations.

In **Chapter 4**, towards improving interaction and connection of the two sides and communities, the Greek Cypriots (GCs) and Turkish Cypriots (TCs), a number of pointers were collected that emerged through the most influential instances during the exploratory journey — including activist and recreational spatial practices — and which pointers became the aspects to focus on during the in-depth research. Pointers show that together with challenges that the doubleness of the new condition creates — a frozen conflict and a porous border — there are also potentialities that should be used in order to transform the relational border between the communities, especially between the youths.

Specifically, *critique and joyfulness* during the exploratory journey could be combined so as to engage individuals and groups both in forms of recreation and learning, and therefore, groups would not just meet for the purposes of the event but also, they would actively participate and interact meaningfully with each other. Interestingly, this would be achieved mainly through activities that also combined *learning* and *recreation* where facilitators would invite the audience to engage, co-create with each other and shape the outcome of the event.

Drawing from this, the exploratory journey was followed by the study on the two cases that were chosen mainly due to the fact that they provided interesting combinations of elements, including hybrids of joyfulness with critique, as well as of recreation with learning activities. The exploration was guided by the investigation line to specifically explore the *techniques* that the festivals utilized to not only bring people together at a shared space, but also to facilitate meaningful interactions with each other — between individuals and groups.

**Chapters 6** and **7** presented the EDON festival, a political-cultural festival, and the Xarkis festival, a cultural-artistic festival, respectively. The festivals' *techniques* were analysed and assessed in relation to their capacity to enable participation and interactions between individuals and groups, leading to a number of suggested pedagogical *principles* that can be used for facilitating Interplaces and learning to

connect with others meaningfully.

In **Chapter 8**, the festivals were discussed and compared to reflect critically on their strengths and weaknesses and synthesize pedagogical principles from each case, so to propose tangible *guidelines* for a future practice of learning solidarity in space. This is complemented with policy recommendations presented in the following section.

## **Guidelines to facilitate Interplaces as joyful-critical spatial practices, for learning solidarity**

Focusing specifically on the factors that enabled the production of interactions and co-creations, revealed a number of guidelines that could be used to facilitate Interplaces as a means to achieve solidarity pedagogy in Cyprus. Guidelines are outlined below, revealing that one cannot be applied on its own, but that one complements the other.

### **• Access, participation and scale**

- *open-access participation* is suggested as an effective way for achieving as much as inclusiveness as possible, by allowing participation and contribution of a diverse range of individuals and groups of learners in the process and outcomes of the learning process which can be encouraged with a no-fee entrance.
- *cross-border access* is suggested as a way to ensure the equal participation of individuals and groups from both the communities, essential when the pedagogical praxis aims to transform the relations between them, by inciting the communities to cross the border and move to any of the other sides, North or South.
- *small-scale* events are suggested to be the most effective when the focus is to encourage meaningful and affective interactions, rather than focusing on achieving either significant profit or number of audiences.

### **• Communication and dissemination**

- *multilingualism* is suggested as an effective way to overcome language barrier, related to ensuring inclusiveness, interaction and equal participation between the GC and TC communities. This can include the languages of Greek and Turkish as well as English when facilitating the activities and navigation

across the sites of a learning event.

- *cross-border promotion* of pedagogical events is suggested also as a way to ensure the participation of both the communities, by initiating the promotion of such events in the North and South sites of Cyprus.

- *comprehensive promotion* of their content is suggested also as a way to ensure a diverse range of audiences, by highlighting all kind of activities included therein and therefore, respond to multiple interests.

- **Means, Content and Site/s**

- *interaction-based learning* is suggested as an effective way to engage learners in the process of *creating-together*, both aspects important for meaningful connections. These different techniques can be used to support and facilitate interactions and co-creations such as casual dialogues, artistic creations, and practising cultural rituals like dancing-together or eating-together.

- *combining learning with recreational activities* is suggested to be an effective way to offer joyful and critical ways of learning to connect meaningfully with others and to develop critical skills. This could be a combination of participatory workshops (joyful learning) with interactive performances (critical recreation) that aim to engage learners in creating-together by inviting them to participate and interact with each other.

- *context-specificity and site-specificity* are suggested to be an effective combination that can encourage affective bonding and meaningful communication between learners/communities. This implies that the content of learning can be inspired by material collected from the context in which communities and localities live therein (culture, people and everyday life). It also implies that design of pedagogical activities — whether recreational or learning — are adjusted to the living site/s.

- *living, sharing and supporting space/s* within which pedagogical events take place is suggested as an effective way to increase interactions, connections and mutual understanding by enhancing opportunities for learners to live and embody the reality of an existing locality/community. This can include to encourage the use of local social places and dwell at the localities which both constitute ways to engage first-hand in the life of communities, offer direct

support and interact with locals.

## Interplaces for Solidarity Pedagogy, in Cyprus

Finally, learning from the cases cumulate in suggesting that facilitating interplaces is imperative for all the above to be materialized in space and through the border, when the aim is to increase inter-border connections between the communities of Cyprus and especially the TCs and GCs.

An interplace signifies an elsewhere place and spatiotemporal practice that provides the time and space *temporarily*, for communities to interact and connect, and through pedagogical activities to feel belonged. It can be found in Northern or Southern Cyprus, shaped by one community purposefully crossing the border in order to meet the other at a shared space so as to create-together. The act of crossing denotes a cognitive and spatial crossing, as *entering into the situation of others* in order to understand it; a radical posture of solidarity, empathy and understanding.

In addition, merging the abovementioned guidelines, an Interplace is suggested as *joyful-critical spatial practice* implying a different pedagogical approach based on what I name as *embodied conscientization* that can be facilitated in joyful ways, encouraging meaningful connections between cultures and otherness.

For *Interplaces* to be effective over time requires to practise them repetitively implying that is essential to facilitate frequent connections through the physical border and between communities. By the course of time and repetitive practise, it is believed that Interplaces can multiply the effect of learning to connect with others and practising solidarity, moving towards a greater vision for solidarity pedagogy: that practising interplaces in repetition in the geo-political border of Cyprus, can shape *networks of Interplaces* that will increase connectedness and otherness in the whole country.

To conclude, the theory of action of solidarity pedagogy in Cyprus, offers an activist, pedagogically-oriented and spatially-grounded approach to the practice of solidarity which aims to transform the relational border between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities in Cyprus and the divisive norm that the border imposes, into one that relates, through learning. To achieve such an aim,

the theory provides guidelines that can materialize learning to connect and practise solidarity with each other in space and through the border. The guidelines offer tangible ways to facilitate connections and shared spaces, namely guidelines to facilitate Interplaces across the whole island and across otherness.

The proposition offers a reframed meaning of politicization as active engagement and peacebuilding as practising solidarity and learning to connect with others, and through borders. That is, embodied and collective ways of conscientization and creation, where communities can think and act together, in space and through overcoming the border.

I support that consciousness and relationships can be transformed through embodied connections, and thus, through space. Therefore, while acknowledging the multiple challenges that define the complex reality of Cyprus, I contend that until a resolution comes, the porosity of the geopolitical border can be re-imagined as an opportunity to increase the frequency and quality of crossings and connections between the two sides of the island, and learn ways to strengthen social relations between the two communities.

#### **09.04 Recommendations for policy, practice and further research**

This section addresses the second research objective and thus, uses gained knowledge from research to form practice, policy and future research recommendations.

Towards this, the concept of solidarity pedagogy and its actualization through Interplaces, stemmed from a range of theories, set the foundations to think the future role of non-formal learning and co-creation in conflict transformation, community building and engagement, and in ways that reconceptualize active engagement as both a *pedagogical and activist* action towards change, and as rediscovering peace in Cyprus *collectively and bottom-up*.

I hope and imagine that the conceptual and practical propositions will bring about changes in the ways that those interested in peace or reunification and conflict transformation (such as party politics, education and social movements), take into consideration the importance of the youth's active engagement and interaction, in addressing the relational border between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot community. In other words, propositions aim to establish stronger connectedness across the divide, through learning, co-creation and affection, that is, meaningful connections that escape from dwelling on symbolic forms of interaction. More importantly,



the thesis, through highlighting critical and spatial approaches to connectedness that are addressed to youth audiences, not only shows the necessity for the young people of the north and south to meet, but also to create-together, as acting upon a shared problem in order to change it, as *creating-peace-together* and imagining a better future for the generations to come.

## **Putting Solidarity Pedagogy into practice and policy for conflict transformation**

By utilizing an interdisciplinary framework that emerged from critical pedagogy, feminist thinking and critical spatial studies alongside the experiences on diverse spatial practices, the thesis is placed in the in-between of spatial, pedagogical, cultural-artistic and activist practice, suggesting ways forward for future practice. This has a potential in entrenching cooperation between non-institutional practices interested in establishing ways of active engagement, collective action, conflict management, community building/engagement, and coexistence between cultures, by exploiting the propositional theory and practical guidelines as transformative catalysers.

The recommendations below are a result of learning from different pedagogical ways (from literature and existing practices) in which hybrids of joyfulness and critique, learning and co-creation have been used in an attempt to connect people. These instances seen in earlier chapters emphasize on active engagement using shared spaces or an interplace for interaction and co-creation, highlighting the importance to increase inter-border initiatives, as only opening crossing-points cannot ensure that contacts will be initiated. The recommendations focus on ways future practice, policies and future research can encourage inter-border practices, and networks of cooperation within Cyprus and beyond. The aim is to establish policies, practices and research, for conflict transformation or of solidarity pedagogy, that encourage self-defined ways to peace through bottom-up approaches to forming initiatives and collaboration, that is, from people to people. This is tuned to the concept of solidarity pedagogy where self-empowerment is placed at the centre.

### **• Beyond bi-communality**

Recommendations although written in view of the two communities, apply also to generally promoting connectedness and otherness across the island, and thus, beyond the border. As solidarity pedagogy envisions, connectedness should spread across the divide and the different communities of the inter-cultural Cyprus. To this,

solidarity pedagogy promotes a new way to frame such initiatives, more inclusive, that can appeal to other groups and communities of Cyprus.

- **Spatial-cultural-pedagogical fields in conflict transformation**

Combining the fields of space, culture, and pedagogy, can offer informal forms of solidarity pedagogy, promoting active engagement of individuals and groups in the peace process. However, alone cannot bring social change and so there is need to be supported by established conflict transformation strategies for long-term effect.

- **Co-habiting an elsewhere place or Interplace, temporarily**

A place that is elsewhere and not central to the everyday life of groups and individuals will give the opportunity to feel that they are doing something different, and devote their time to only engage in the arranged activities. An elsewhere place will be an opportunity to give time and space for relational ties to be shaped. It becomes an even more powerful way to work across conflict and differences, such as forest areas or abandoned villages that both could be appropriated to offer temporal conditions of co-habitation.

Thinking of the youth and the need to provide a safe and welcoming place, such an elsewhere place to meet with “others” could be crossing-points. Crossing-points can be a great option to transform them into shared places, that is, meeting points, open to be used by the communities and actors that want to initiate inter-border projects.

The content of practices in being more appealing to the youth (as seen also in Chapter 8) and the local communities, can be hybrids of joyful and critical spatial practices that create a festive atmosphere and spatiotemporal living-together, where communities’ shared culture, learning and co-creation can be combined to generate interactions.

- **Moving to rural areas, increasing engagement and participation of communities, ensuring inclusion**

Practices could be developed into decentralized areas as well as be mobile events that can be adapted to other areas and their culture, meaning site-specific, and thus, publics from the periphery can engage. More importantly, such an approach, can be an empowering tool by promoting the needs and cultures of communities. This implies that activities are built on particularities of contexts and localities forged with the subjective voices and desires, as well as their diverse ways of living. It is

important to include the participation of communities as the agents of solutions on issues that concern them, and to stand in solidarity with them, by their side instead of designing for them.

Emphasis should be given in participatory initiatives as facilitators of connections across otherness and communities. This was clear in the case of the Xarkis festival where participatory approaches to learning in combination with local culture and arts could generate instances of bridges/connections that encouraged community involvement. The increase of such initiatives and community-based approaches that expose the importance of frequent interaction and co-creation, can encourage policy-makers to incorporate in the policy framework for conflict transformation. This implies that policy-makers should recognise the importance of co-creation and interaction, while also the establishment of dialogue with actors of such practices of which expertise can promote the impact of their work and improve conflict transformation policies. This implies that for all the above to be achieved, requires constant support by policy. This should include specific socio-spatial policies for conflict transformation for which different actors already specialized in this can offer their expertise to form policies.

#### **• Inter-border initiatives and networks of collaboration, within and beyond Cyprus**

Building on the aforementioned, it is important to consider that more Interplaces are imperative to be practised and produced, in order to increase interaction across the divide and between diverse communities. Therefore, more initiatives are needed to be organized not only within the buffer zone or areas at centres, but also on either side, in an attempt to achieve greater and diverse involvement.

What was found really effective at the Xarkis festival was its small scale in relation to numbers that it aimed to reach out to, a very different approach to the EDON festival that aims to attract large participation of the public. Considering the guidelines given earlier, leads to think that multiplying Interplaces across Cyprus does not necessarily imply big-scale events, but rather multiplying small and situated initiatives that eventually will bring about large-scale impact in social terms; that is, to increase connections across difference and acceptance of otherness.

Through this research I realized how interesting the production of a festival can be. It was mostly notable that in the Xarkis festival different fields came together

to work with communities and focus on community empowerment through arts, culture and learning. Taking this further, establishing such a practice frequently as an inter-border strategy, will be an opportunity for networks of collaborations to be shared, within Cyprus and across the divide, as well as translocal with other regions. Also, it would be even more powerful if festivals could be organized in both sides with the collaboration of both the communities. In view of the international community, such bi-communal collaboration could attract the international interest from a variety of fields that work in conflict transformation. This is a great challenge as authorities in the context of a non-recognized state in the north are mostly missing. Thus, it requires ways to find “common” grounds and to move through political obstacles.

In the context of Cyprus, encouraging networks of cooperation among civic practices can offer an independency from public body legislation. Also, drawing from the everyday culture that is emerging through and across the border can inform policy-making, based on the points that communities bring on the table. Networks can include exchange of know-how from similar contexts, and even extend this into creating curriculums of non-formal education that could complement systemic one.

Also, it is important to extend such collaborations to networks that run across the divide and bring together in a form of established databases indicating initiatives that exist, professionals and civic organizations. The network can accept and connect actors on conflict transformation that come for diverse fields and across the divide, making it visible at the same time, in the international community. This could become appealing to funding bodies and mitigate issues of limited funding for bi-communal initiatives.

#### • **Spatial practitioners as facilitators of change**

The propositions are articulated from the position of a facilitator, also as a personal consideration for continuing to be an engaged researcher.

It is important that the critical tools put forward through this research be used also as self-reflection tools, by any person or organization that consider their role as a pedagogue of change and work with communities. Specifically, they can draw from the spatialized propositions to inform projects aiming to address connectedness across communities.

Conversely, propositions open up the role of a spatial practitioner as a facilitator of

change who can draw from the principles of solidarity pedagogy and extend further the ethical approach to projects for which it is required to think of their role as being simultaneously activist, pedagogue and spatial practitioner, and to aim for impact across (knowledge-power) institutions and the everyday life of communities.

It should also be considered that the institutional framework and support, national and international, are more developed in the South in relation to the North, due to the non-recognized status of the North internationally. Therefore, I find as responsibility that practitioners could deploy and extend their personal contacts across the divide, in order to initiate community projects for conflict transformation and thus, to not only rely on institutional collaboration, but on informal structures for collaborations and interactions.

### **Further research *on* and *with* organizations and communities**

Propositions produced through this research may not be the only way to resolve the conflict in Cyprus, however it can be contributory in addressing the relational border between the GCs and TCs, and through things that connect them. This is imperative as a resolution cannot signify that social processes are progressed in the same way.

This research has managed to reveal situated and local knowledge and learn from self-initiated practices that already deal with addressing connectedness between different groups. It helped to establish a framework for practising connectedness and potentially addressing the relational border between communities. The study on each of the cases described different approaches to otherness and different audiences, while both festivals aimed for attracting local audiences and bringing people together under a shared event.

Nevertheless, the analysis focused on specific given circumstances and on the impact of a specific practice to particular groups, which together with the disablers or limitations in relation to connections between groups and the questions raised, requires further attention and creates space for further research. This could focus on understanding the complexities of production and possible necessary improvements and answers on how festivals could become more accessible and effective in terms of perpetuating otherness and facilitating meaningful connections. This leads to a number of specific sub-questions: on how to include diversity of potential participants to a greater extent; on how to engage them interactively that posits on

the wider approach to facilitation; also, a question on the level they aim to reach out and impact that posits on the wider approach to site and localities; and on whether a spatial practice such as a festival can have a long-term impact and how this can be recorded to assess changes in perceptions and relations. In addition, more could be found about the way organizations facilitate cooperative networks and take decisions on who is included or excluded, how this may be related to their aims in regard to the level they want to reach out to and the way they can potentially influence the practice of other organizations and formal bodies and finally, achieve the betterment of life in communities.

Towards addressing this, building upon existing relations with the relevant organizations, future collaborative research *with* them, as well as other organizations, would help to also understand implications from outcomes through directly testing pedagogical interplaces on the ground. Specifically, it could be a collaborative research with (and on) organizations and practice-led research that could also develop co-creation of knowledge and practices with communities that the organizations already work with. This could help to focus on questions raised through the two cases studies, and address them with participatory research activities. This can possibly help to advance the proposition of solidarity pedagogy as well as improve the limitations/challenges for existing practices.

Drawing from the translocal partnerships seen in both the Xarkis and EDON festival and the idea of networks of collaboration that solidarity pedagogy points towards, it would be interesting to use this research and extend it through a network of collaboration between pedagogical, cultural and spatial studies/fields with other countries and regions that underwent violent conflict (such as Northern Ireland). Such international exchanges and collaborations could generate a great mapping of other complex contexts, and influence in ways to address the Cyprus conflict. Also, such a venture, will attract a great interest in international funders, which in combination with local ones can shape structures of supporting translocal actions and research.

## 09.05 Solidarity Pedagogy in-the-making

To conclude, glimpses of solidarity pedagogy found through this research indicate that the reunification of Cyprus remains not only possible, but also desirable, and that solidarity is in-the-making, shaping a fertile ground to work on. Therefore,

the opportunity to enhance and develop this further, lies right here at this very moment. And as regards my personal contribution towards this, I want to share that this research process has been a great opportunity to engage more with the two practices I investigated, resulting in becoming a core team member of the Xarkis organization and in its community projects, while still being an active member of the EDON organization.

The thesis was initiated and completed through the eyes of a Greek Cypriot woman, a member of the young generation, who desires another way of living in Cyprus, that is both joyful and critical, and through which we can learn to stand with each other, to think, make and act together, to care about any other, for a more connected and rehumanized world; for transcending the very existence of the border(s).





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Figure 7.27 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the interactive performance “Performance”, created by the En.act, at a field. The icon on the left

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Figure 7.28 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the interactive performance “Musicorum – Bamboo Mustard”, created by Adam Paroussos, at the village’s outdoor amphitheatre. The icon on the left implies the interactive and participatory character of the activity where visitors could co-create with the performer an improvised sound act, using given objects. The subtle icons on the right imply the fact that the activity was accompanied with food/drinks booths coordinated by both festival volunteers and invited sellers. Edited photograph: personal production adapted from personal collection.

Figure 7.29 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the interactive performance “Deep Love Tours”, created by Korallia Stergides as a walking tour among the village’s streets. The icon on the left implies the interactive and participatory character of the activity where visitors could co-create with the performer an improvised act. Edited photographs: personal production adapted from personal collection.

Figure 7.30 Pashia, E. (2018). Moments from the participatory workshop “Natural & Human Distortion”, facilitated by Sara Ortolani, initiated at the village’s community building. The icon on the left implies that visitors could participate in the process and interact with each other and the facilitator, so to co-create hand-made illustrations. Therefore, contrary to the category of depositions, the outcome of the activity could be co-produced. Edited photographs: personal production adapted from personal collection.

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Figure 7.38 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of the pedagogical principles that can be used to facilitate Interplaces or spatial practices through which to learn how to co-create and connect with others, and eventually, achieve solidarity pedagogy. Diagram: personal production.

## Chapter 8

Figure 8.1 Pashia, E. (2020). Outline of the suggested guidelines that can be used in order to facilitate the process of learning how to co-create and connect with others through space; differently, to facilitate tangible Interplaces as a means to achieve solidarity pedagogy. Diagram: personal production.

# 12 Appendices

## Appendix 1: Exploratory research

### Interview format

1. What does Solidarity mean to you? How would you describe it? How can it be nurtured?
2. Do you think that Solidarity is relevant to your practice? How?
3. Do you think that your practice or methods contribute in solidarity pedagogy or raising of awareness? How?
4. What change/transformation do you think that your practice achieves? How do you record that?
5. Do you use methods of feedback /reflection?
6. Which spaces do you choose for your practice? Why? Does space play any role to your practice?
7. Which is your organization's/practice's identity?
8. Which is your vision/ desired outcome/ aims?
9. Which methods/actions/ways are deployed in order to carry out those aims?
10. Is your practice addressed to targeted audience?
11. Is it important to cross the border? For which reasons would you cross? Has this experience helped you change the way you think about the "other side"/ "other community"? How?
12. Is contact important between people living in the two sides? Why?
13. Do you collaborate with people/organizations/movements living in across the border? What kind of activities and in which sites?

## List of practitioners: interviews/chance discussions

1. Andreas Trachonitis, Research interview, GC, music engineer and director of “Louvana records”, founding member of “Fengaros (music) festival”, Nicosia, January, 2017.
2. Andry Demetriou, Research interview, GC, professional staff of the workers’ trade union “PEO”, Central Secretary of the arts sector, activist, Nicosia, January, 2017.
3. Aliye Umanel, Research interview, TC, writer, director, playwright, practicing in both sides of Cyprus, Nicosia, January, 2017.
4. Constantinos Kyprianou, Research interview, GC, architect, Dj, founding member of the “AfroBananaRepublic” NGO and “AfroBanana (music) Festival”, Nicosia, February, 2017.
5. Demay Zabitoglou, Research interview, TC, student, participant of the youth exchange program between GC and TC “Reunite\_Cy” by the “EDON” youth organization, Nicosia, February, 2017.
6. Elena Christodoulidou, Research interview, GC, choreographer and artistic director of the Egomio Cultural Centre, Nicosia, January, 2017.
7. Elena Hadjipetrou, Research interview, GC, teacher of special needs, deaf school of Nicosia, member of the “Teachers’ Bi-communal platform ‘United Cyprus’”, activist, Nicosia, February, 2017.
8. Eleni Michail, Research interview, GC, educator, facilitator of experiential learning workshops such as human library, Nicosia, January, 2017.
9. Gregoris Ioannou, Research interview, GC, academic, activist, founding member of the movement “We want Federation”, Nicosia, January, 2017.
10. Irini Iacovidou, Research interview, GC, (past) president of the youth organization “Youth for exchange and Understanding Cyprus”, Nicosia, January, 2017.
11. Izel Seylani, Research interview, TC, actor, director, researcher, practicing in both sides of Cyprus, Nicosia, February, 2017.
12. Lefteris Nicolaou and Marcos Shukuroglou, Research interview, GC, directors of the social and architectural movement “Asila project”, Nicosia, January, 2017.
13. Michalinos Zembylas, Research interview, GC, Associate Professor of Education, Open University Cyprus, Nicosia, January, 2017.
14. Nese Yasin, Research interview, TC, poetess, author and special teaching staff of the department of Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cyprus, Nicosia, January, 2017.



15. Nicos Trimikliniotis, Research interview, GC, Associate Professor of Sociology (University of Nicosia), Activist, Nicosia, January, 2017.
16. Nuri Silay, Research interview, TC, activist, founding member of the movement “Dayanisma” (Solidarity in the English language), Nicosia, January, 2017.
17. Spyros Spyrou, Research interview, GC, professor of Anthropology and Sociology, European University of Nicosia, Nicosia, February, 2017.
18. Vasiliki Nicolaou, Research interview, GC, student, participant of the youth exchange program between GC and TC “Reunite\_Cy” by the EDON youth organization, Nicosia, February, 2017.
19. Vera Polykarpou, Research interview, GC, professional staff of the leftist workers’ party “AKEL”, director of the International Relations department of AKEL, Nicosia, January, 2017.
20. Anonymous source 1, Research interview, TC, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
21. Anonymous source 2, Research interview, TC, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
22. Anonymous source 3, Research interview, TC, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
23. Anonymous source 4, Research interview, TC, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
24. Anonymous source 5, Research interview, TC, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
25. Anonymous source 6, Research interview, Armenian, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
26. Anonymous source 7, Research interview, Maronite, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
27. Anonymous source 8, Research interview, Maronite, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
28. Anonymous source 9, Research interview, GC, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
29. Anonymous source 10, Research interview, GC, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
30. Anonymous source 11, Research interview, GC, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.
31. Anonymous source 12, Research interview, GC, at the Buyuk Han intercommunal meeting place, Nicosia, June, 2017.

## Appendix 2: In-depth research

### Sample of interview transcript and its coding

Anonymous source, Research interview, invited facilitator at EDON festival, Nicosia, July, 2016.

*NOTE: Parts are covered for data protection reasons.*

R: Were you invited from EDON organization?

M12: Yea. E... Like all other years we are invited by EDON. We are here on behalf of [redacted].  
Em... Here, we've participated at all other EDON festivals as well. I mean that's probably my fifth time that I am coming here and hopefully will be coming next year as well.

T/C org  
representative

R: Alright. Em... We are in the bicommunal place. Why do you find it important to be part of or do you find it important to be part of this festival?

M12: E... You mean the bicommunal space...

R: Yea.

M12: If it's important? Of course I think it's really important and... I mean I would like to use multi-communal as well. When you say bicommunal I think the only think represents is Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots; multi-communalism includes all other minorities as well. This sort of space is a kind of space that you can interact with Greek-Cypriots. And you know you can drink coffee and eat together.

multi-  
communalism

rituals

---interruption

M12: Em... For example compared to pass years there used to be more Turkish-Cypriots in this area.

R: So, they were more?

M12: They were but this year I didn't find a lot. Some political parties didn't come. I used to see some individuals coming, maybe they came but I haven't seen. We are always next to the road, the people passes so I haven't seen any familiar faces. So, in terms of bicommunality, I think this year it was bit poorer than last year. And personally I know most of EDON members. When I come here I don't feel I am coming here to you know interact with them; I already know them. It's just like a gathering space for me but for example other people who just came here, I know them specifically they are kind a new organization and it's the first time that they are here and for them I think it's an important place to meet with the Greek-Cypriots.

important  
that T/C  
meet B/C

R: How do you think could this bicommunal approach be improved? Like how we could attract more Turkish-Cypriot public to come to this festival?

M12: You mean how the festival or specifically this bicomunalism?

R: No, no, no. Specifically... Generally the festival; How we could attract them to come here?

M12: Em...

R: Because some others said that having only the bicomunal space is not enough for attracting other people. But how we could...

M12: I'll tell you what can be improved.

R: Yea, yea.

① M12: We have all this panels over there. Very good work but they are all in Greek. I don't understand anything and no one understand. Everything here is in Greek. If they put something, maybe not in Turkish but it can be in English. Because you have the internationals over there, also the members of EDON they already explained them what's going on. Nobody explained it to me and I don't know what's really going on. So, maybe they can put some statements in English or Turkish next to those or they can for example maybe invite Turkish-Cypriots signers as well for the festival. Maybe it might attract more people because every year EDON invites very famous Greek singers and obviously Turkish-Cypriots don't know them.

imitation art  
- language used in Greek

- T/C artists.

R: So, they could invite Turkish -Cypriots singers as well?

② M12: They can be invited, they can participate as well. Maybe there in buat. In youth perspective for example if they are aiming to call for young people, in buat section amateur Turkish-Cypriots players, singers can attract their own friends as well. So, it will attract more Turkish-Cypriot youth. And I like this, what is called 'Ethniki section' over there.

→ many folklore area.

R: Em. International city?

M12: International where is the traditional things to make. I think it's already fine. It's a common culture. We have them as well. But that's what I can think right now to attract more people.

- strengths of festival.

R: E...

M12: More English statement, maybe some Turkish-Cypriot singers or performers.

R: Some others said that we could invite volunteers like us-volunteers of EDON, from other Turkish-Cypriot organizations to participate as volunteers and to build this festival together. How do you find this idea?

M12: It's a good idea to help each other to build something together. Maybe it might work... I don't know if they tried this year but personally I try to [ ] them but they say they are already done or they are doing more technical things that only do know maybe some special workers can do it. I could come and help but next year maybe to this assemble for example we can have... I mean is a good idea to give some responsibilities to Turkish-Cypriots as well.

T/C to become volunteers

But I don't know if let's say Greek speaker can ask them a question how they []. But I think that this is a minor problem.

R: OK. I would ask for language if you find it major problem or ...

M12: Minor problem.

R: Em... Do you have in your organization... Do you do any of this kind of festivals in your area as well? Is there any similar that happens on the other side?

M12: E... Bicomunal organization?

R: Maybe your organization; if they use this bicomunal approach.

M12: E... We didn't organize anything that big; on a small scale due to monitoring problems mainly. But generally EDON, BKP or other parties CTP they organize bicomunal things but not in a big scale and they don't really attract more people.

R: Alright. OK. Em... Well, we are here in a space that is a historical space and we know that Venetian walls is something that is distinctive in Nicosia. Em... Do you think that this, this space is important for the festival and generally for its, for its structure? Is it important or this could be done anywhere?

M12: This can be done anywhere but I don't think it will give that emotion, that feeling to the people; cause we all grow up like most of us grow up in Nicosia, or even in Famagusta-Ammochostos, you have the Venetian walls, if you are in Kyrenia you have the Kyrenia castle; I mean you grew up by seeing these walls and it's part of our childhood memories, it's part of our memory while we were growing up. And let's say if they arrange this festival in conference center for example, I mean it would feel artificial. Like now we are on the grasses, we have the Venetian walls and is a big space as well. Em... it's important to be one, become one with the nature and the historical character of Nicosia and do something bicomunal and promote your cultural products. I think it could have been done in any other places in Nicosia.

R: E... In case there will be a solution of Cyprus [problem], do you think that this festival could be in another place for... some said it could more symbolic to make use of that space is now occupied but it won't be anymore, but do you think that...

M12: Maybe in Buffer Zone for example. When they open the Buffer Zone in rest of the Ermou for example could've been nice to arrange a big bicomunal... of course with the big contribution of Turkish-Cypriot organization as well, cause this is just EDON. Maybe we can organize something that big but with Turkish-Cypriot organizations in currently occupied areas.

R: Yea, yea, yea.

M12: Of course it would be really good.

think  
-> do not organize  
think bi-communal

- Venetian  
walls +  
memories

R: Em... how you understand the aims of this festival? Which are the aims in your perspective?

M12: E... Well, initially that would be bit more <sup>1</sup> helpful for EDON. Secondly, by all the information available while walk on right hand and leften side; the posters and everything it <sup>2</sup> makes those people who are not [sympathize] of AKEL or EDON to understand what's going on and have for example again participated maybe it can help those people change their minds, maybe the next elections they can vote or event if they don't want, if they had this em... if they are not informed about what's happening they can be [] informed by attending this festival. They can have fun, they can listen their favorite singers they have. And I mean I don't personally believe that everybody comes here they actually support EDON. A lot of people come for the singers for example. And for them it's really important. I don't know how much they, how much they spend effort to read what was written there but...

*knowledge/consiousness vote + entertain. public: not all are supporters.*

R: How this could be improved? Like let's say how we could attract more people to read the posters. Could it be done in another way?

M12: Maybe more talks can be arranged where people can interactively participate, rather <sup>1</sup> than someone is giving a speech. They can ask questions to each other. But by using these <sup>2</sup> areas in front of the posters, in front of those panels and I mean... right now everybody is over there because concert already began and they don't really spend much time in here; this is the least crowded section of the festival. That side is the most crowded, tensely crowded. If they use the spaces in interacting with the people, it will attract them to read.

*talks - interactive the informative part.*

R: I will ask you, which places do you find that they mostly promote, I mean are the most intense or promote even dialogue or interaction between people? Which places give this opportunity?

M12: Over there is...

R: 'Laiki taverna'; it's like...

M12: Laiki tavern yea, yea. I mean I see that are like eating, drinking together, there are folk dances, some Cypriot groups there. I see more people closer there rather than in 'steki' here (meaning bicomunal space). I don't think that anybody is talking with each other in the concert area because it has a different aim. I think over there, after everything finish, that section is a good place for interaction with people.

*interaction - folklor - that*

R: Em... let's see... So, you mentioned before that you don't think that all people that come here is to for, to support EDON. But what is basically important for the public to come here? What do you think?

M12: Why is it important...

R: Why someone would come today here?

M12: E...

R: Is it just one answer? It might be more, I mean...

M12: What I can think of now, maybe Papaconstantinou; everybody loves him, he is very famous. Even if they don't attend for the three days they can just pay for one day and attend to listen them. And while they pass from entrance to the concert area regardless what's the political view, they can have a look and... they used to have a banner on the left side I think they removed it. There were some things inside...

R: Yea, yea.

M12: Like birds, bicultural things, these messages or they carried it somewhere else. Em... Secondly, drinks and foods are actually cheaper...

R: So, is food important for the Cypriot culture?

M12: Well, in Cypriots perspective if there is drinks and foods, souvlaki they definitely come and of they are cheaper of course.

ritual important.

R: Alright. Em... So, have you ever participated before in this festival?

M12: Yea.

R: OK. Have you noticed any changes in the numbers of people?

M12: Yes, I think this year less people attended and I think the main reason is maybe the Euro cup and like yesterday Omonoia was playing as well; mainly the football maybe. I don't know like previous year I noticed it was more people, I mean much crowded, this year wasn't like that.

R: Do you think that generally the numbers depend on generally the conditions of Cyprus or is it because there are alterations within the festival and attract more people let's say.

M12: To be honest, I don't, I haven't noticed any difference compared to last year's. Maybe singers I am not even sure, many singers consecutively come every year; whatever they present here it was in last year as well. I mean I haven't seen anything different this year, so maybe they can try to do something different that can attract more people. I mean... they are following a path, same pathway, same structure, festival structure every year and every year.

R: So, do you think that this could be more with the signers or do you think that the political is, I don't know... what is that you are thinking? What do you think that should change?

M12: Em...

R: Because you mean is regarding the attraction of the people right? So, what would attract today the Turkish-Cypriots or Greek-Cypriots or every community of Cyprus?

M12: For example last year, they have invited the Turkish-Cypriots' person to give a speech, talk and explain things. This year hasn't been done. Maybe they can put more effort to invite more Turkish-Cypriots. It can be the journalists, researchers, maybe politicians that I don't [think host]. And...I mean it's really important to call Turkish-Cypriots in that sense because what I realize actually many of the youth in Cyprus they are not [rightly] informed about

Cyprus trend  
-youth unawareness of T/C.

Turkish-Cypriots. I mean I've met with a lot of people and they don't know like why we speak Turkish and why we don't speak Greek for example. Em...they automatically start thinking that we all came from Turkey and we are not actually really Cypriots and in that perspective maybe they can rather than calling a middle age old very well experienced person they can invite some youth, young people to exchange their views. They can actually make an open assembly for example, for the young people, young generation. Em... I am not really considering on old generations. I mean it's past for them, it's on us. Em...so EDON should focus on more young generation and how they can attract young generation. I am sure that many of my friends they are not really aware of what's happening here right now. And they just think it's EDON's festival to you know help themselves to build em...financial power for example. And that's what my friends told; "ok. We are not gonna come. [All is] in Greek music. Nothing attracts me". So, initially if they call a Turkish-Cypriot singer or even amateur cause amateur people have a lots friend company. [...] will sure bringing your friends. And also these open assemblies and talks e...we use exchanges this sort of things. Or maybe we can do something, we can build, we can have a project that we all can participate. Yea.

USF  
open assemblies

R: Good. Yea. I understand. Well, this festival happens every year. Do you think that this achieve something, that contribute to something important by the end of the day or not?

M12: Em... I am not really sure what to say. I don't know the outcome of the festival. I mean if you look at the people attending we can say last year they haven't been successful; maybe not actually cause I don't personally have enough data to tell you that. But always it probably creates more awareness in people. Maybe like people who come [...] like Antonis like grandchildren maybe they can join EDON and become EDONopoula (EDON-birds, meaning the children members of EDON).

R: Em... ok. By the end of the day what this festival leaves to you? I mean...No. Let us give...

---interrupted

R: If you have met new people within this festival even Greek-Cypriot or from other communities?

M12: Em...Or course I've met with new Greek-Cypriot friends but I already know majority of them because we've been to [...] together with many of them but of course in here I met with a lot of new people, new faces, friend of a friend of those who come [...] for example.

R: Do you think that you only met people here because you are in these area or would be difficult in other places of the festival because there...

M12: Maybe it would be difficult to be in the concert area...

R: No. I mean, let's say Greek-Cypriots and the opportunity to interact. Have you met until now Greek-Cypriots because you are in this specific space, I mean because it is the bicomunal space?

M12: No, no, no. I met in other sections as well.

R: ok.

M12: I go around and... I see people, I see my friends and they have their friends, they meet us, they make us to meet each other. Also, being to international section to meet with the people that come from other countries as well.

R: By the end of the day what does this festival leaves to you? What this, a... let's say em... for your consciousness or for your personal experience what is that give to you?

M12: Em... for me the main reason why I attend to this festival to make, meet new people or to meet with old friends because em... a lot of friends they leave for example in Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and we don't get to see each other and these three days I know all of them will can come yea and we can drink together, chat, we can help each other on things, we can talk about things that we haven't talk.

R: ok.

M12: Em... My main reason that I attend to this festival every year is not to sell anything for my organization is just to meet with the people because we need this sort of organizations, we need this sort of events to meet with each other and blend in together. We get to know each other very well in this sort of events.

T/C  
relations.

R: Alright.

M12: It needs to have fun together.

R: So, do you think that it's important for other organizations even the Turkish-Cypriots organizations that they develop this kind of events?

M12: It is important, I believe. And they should, we should make this sort of festivals but I think money it's the main problem. That's why we are not making. Maybe like a... NGO's and the left parties can come together under one umbrella and make. We all for example we are making anti-militarist festival in every 14<sup>th</sup> of August and a lot of friends from EDON also participate as well but not Siberians for example they don't join these festivals. But we are comparing to this really small scale. Em... [...] We need to make more festivals like anti-militarist and maybe it doesn't have to be under one theme, it doesn't have to be anti-militarist. It can be... I don't know "Let's have fun together". And a lot of people for example the don't join for events just because it's under one party's name; maybe NGO's should take the initiative and start, and parties can support them from outside. Because a lot of people they we can say "well, I don't wanna be remembered with this party, I don't wanna be seen in this party's event". You it's such a small island and especially in North it's really difficult if they see you or [] of a party or a member of a party especially if you are in a private sector em... they can easily fire you. There is a reason for them.

Cyprus trend  
party-oriented  
bias/tyranny  
+  
strong division  
of parties  
↓  
impact on  
social life

R: Ooo...

M12: And for example if you are working on government, governmental job, you are a [...] or something again usually let's say if today it's UBP in the government and you have seen another parties organization, you have picture you basically they publish the pictures in



newspaper for example it can create some intension in work. So, people usually scared; they don't wanna approach these events because of this reason. *fear.*

R: Alright (Thank you very much)

## Festival qualities & opportunities

### *Bringing people together*

#### **opportunity to communicate, a meeting place**

“...to make new friends or to meet with the old ones because with a lot of friends that live for example in Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos, it’s not easy to get to see each other in the everyday. And I know that these days they will be here and that we can drink together, chat, help each other on things, we can talk about things that we haven’t talk about before (invited facilitator).

“...because we (communities) need this sort of events, to meet each other and blend together, as through them can know each other better” (invited facilitator).

“we need to have fun together” (invited facilitator).

## Trends of attendance

### *Possible causes & suggested changes*

#### **interactivity**

“Maybe more talks can be arranged where people can interactively participate, rather than someone is giving a speech” (invited facilitator)

## Activities/places

### *Tavern/folkloric stage*

#### **content**

##### *Cypriot culture oriented*

“eating, drinking together, dance...There, I see more people coming closer to each other” (invited facilitator).

## T/C presence & bi-communal place

#### **to create consciousness, communication & do-something-together**

“...I think it’s really important and I mean I would like to use multi-communal as well. When you say bicommunal I think the only think represents is Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots; multi-communalism includes all other minorities as well” (invited facilitator).

“This sort of space is a kind of space at which someone can interact with Greek-Cypriots. And you know, you can drink coffee and even bring your food here and eat together” (invited facilitator).

#### **an informal environment**

“When I come here, I don’t feel I am coming here to, you know, interact with them (members of EDON); I already know them. It’s just like a gathering space for me” (invited facilitator).

**suggestions**

***need for bilingual elements & promotion in the North***

"We have all these panels over there. Very good work but they are all in Greek...If they put something, maybe not in Turkish but it can be in English" (invited facilitator)

***to become part of the festival as volunteers***

"It's a good idea to help each other to build something together...I mean is a good idea to give some responsibilities to Turkish-Cypriots as well" (invited facilitator)

***need to raise awareness & knowledge about the Turkish Cypriots***

...what I realize actually many of the young people in Cyprus are not informed about the Turkish-Cypriots...they don't know like why we speak Turkish and why we don't speak Greek for example...they automatically start thinking that we all came from Turkey and we are not actually 'real' Cypriots" (invited facilitator).

"...invite young people to exchange their views (like) an open assembly for example, for the young people, the young generation" (invited facilitator).

***need for more bicomunal festivals: Let's have fun together VS party-oriented bias***

"[w]e need to make more festivals...that doesn't have to be under one theme... It can be titled as only 'Let's have fun together'...a lot of people...don't join events just because it's under one party's name...especially if you are in the private sector...they can easily fire you" (invited facilitator).

## Appendix 3: Ethics approvals



Downloaded: 22/06/2016

Approved: 20/06/2016

Eleni Pashia  
Registration number: 150104519  
School of Architecture  
Programme: PHD ARCHITECTURE

Dear Eleni

**PROJECT TITLE:** Peace Pedagogical Practices

**APPLICATION:** Reference Number 009158

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 20/06/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 009158 (dated 27/05/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1018619 version 2 (27/05/2016).
- Participant consent form 1018620 version 2 (27/05/2016).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

*I second comments and suggestion of two other reviewers.*

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Chengzhi Peng  
Ethics Administrator  
School of Architecture



Downloaded: 04/01/2017

Approved: 14/12/2016

Eleni Pashia  
Registration number: 150104519  
School of Architecture  
Programme: PHD ARCHITECTURE

Dear Eleni

**PROJECT TITLE:** Overcoming division: Spatial Practices of Solidarity between North and South Cyprus

**APPLICATION:** Reference Number 012142

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 14/12/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 012142 (dated 26/11/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1025308 version 1 (26/11/2016).
- Participant consent form 1025309 version 1 (26/11/2016).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

*Will verbal permission be recorded or witnessed? Ideally you should ask all individual subjects who agree to participate to sign a consent form outlining what use you will make of any data, and how it will be stored. What kind of 'live events' are to be recorded? Are there any organisers/stakeholders whose permission needs to be sought? Overall i think this is fine. The information sheet could be polished up a bit; the promise to destroy raw data after the PhD seems unnecessary unless you believe this is the only thing you can do to persuade potential participants to talk to you; the use of photogrtaphs of public events is always awkward, and your proposals here seem sensible. There is some good advice on the university's ethis policy notes, which you might read through (if you haven't already).*

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Armitage  
Ethics Administrator  
School of Architecture

