

Displacement in Cyprus

Consequences of Civil
and Military Strife

Report 1

**Life Stories: Greek Cypriot
Community**

Olga Demetriou



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GREEK CYPRIOT COMMUNITY**

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Nicosia, October 2011

LOCATIONS



View of Pendarakhtylos mountain range from the village of Akanthou in 2011



Kyrenia harbor in 2003



The Pendarakhtylos mountain range (view from Kantara castle in 2003)

PART ONE: BACKGROUND

Introduction

The stories of displacement presented in this report differ in many ways. Some of their differences are determined by rather objective criteria, others are more subjectively determined.

For example, geography can be considered a factor that has shaped particular refugee identities over the years, giving rise to the proverbial 'Kyreniotes' (*Keryniótes*, people from Kyrenia), who are thought to be the least likely to have their properties reinstated in full, and thus often held in Greek-Cypriot discourse to embody the pain of loss of ancestral lands.¹ At the other end of the spectrum, people displaced from the fenced-in area of Famagusta (*Varoshótes*, people from the Varosha area) are thought to be the most likely to have their properties reinstated, since the area has been under negotiation for territorial readjustment, within the framework of confidence building measures (CBMs), even before an eventual comprehensive agreement on the Cyprus issue. The location of homes and properties abandoned and that of later resettlement, in rural and urban areas, is another factor that can shape the perspectives on refugeehood and loss. This may cross-cut or enhance the effects of profession and class in the formation of narratives and action, but the relationship is not a straightforward one. The type and size of the properties lost/abandoned is often related to the subsequent (and subjective) evaluation of the magnitude of one's loss, and cited in the interviews as an important constituent of expectations of restitution.

The chronology of displacement is perhaps one of the most salient factors affecting the experience of displacement and resettlement. In the majority of cases, this temporal factor is strongly correlated with ethnicity, the overarching structure being one in which Turkish-Cypriots were displaced from 1963 onwards, Greek-Cypriots having in their majority been displaced in 1974. However, not all members of the Greek-Cypriot community were displaced in 1974, a fact that has had important ramifications in the framing of refugee identity. Thus, whereas Greek-Cypriots displaced in 1974 are officially recognized by the state as 'refugees' (*prósfyies*), those displaced prior to this point are categorized as '*Tourkóplikti*', literally meaning 'those struck by the Turks'. This translates into differential treatment by the state of the

¹ And Kyrenia, for example, is singularly the town chosen in public slogans against the occupation of the island by the Turkish army to situate the 'true' boundaries of a unitary state: 'Our borders are not here', slogans found on various parts of the Buffer Zone read, 'our borders are in Kyrenia' – locations elsewhere on the northern coast of the island are not used.

displacement trauma. Moreover, smaller-scale differences between the timing of displacement through various stages of the 1974 war have also played a role in shaping the experience of displacement and loss. This temporal aspect also becomes ethnically mapped amongst members of minority groups within the Greek-Cypriot community. The majority of displaced Armenians hail from and were displaced in 1964, rendering them *Tourkóplikti*, while most displaced Greek-Cypriots are classified as *prósfiyes*. The majority of displaced Maronites were displaced in 1974, but a significant number of them have also been enclaved within the northern part of the island in areas where the control of the Turkish army has been particularly strong, and of those, some were displaced to the southern part of the island controlled by the government of the Republic subsequent to 1974 (as were Greek-Cypriot in the region of Karpaz/Karpasia). Yet Maronites have also had easier access to their properties since 1974, and many have repossessed them following the opening of the checkpoints in 2003.

In many ways, the structures of resettlement and rehabilitation put in place for the benefit of those displaced to the southern part of the island have been informed by such temporal factors, as well as factors of location and property use. Thus, for example, the category of *prósfiyes* under which the state has offered most benefits to the displaced is largely based on considerations of the time of displacement and the use made of the property lost/abandoned at the time. Its size, location, and quality have also been considered in the offer of additional benefits such as housing loans, as well as in deciding restitution options in international courts and by the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) established in the northern part of the island and used by a number of displaced individuals.

Although these factors have in different ways formed a reference point in the official approaches to the needs of refugees and, as the interviews show, have also given cause for criticism about the nature of such approaches, other factors have been less of a point of reference, and in many cases have not been considered relevant at all. Some of these are more difficult than others to quantify, yet the interview data gathered shows that they are nevertheless significant in the constitution of refugee identity and the experience of displacement that shapes it.

One key such factor is gender. Here, the difference in the experience of refugeehood has been officially interpreted by the state as recognition of differential access to rehabilitation in the patriarchal frame of viewing women as dependent on men.² Thus, women have been barred from transferring their official identity as *prósfiyes* onto their children. At the same time, structures were established shortly after 1974 to rehabilitate women (albeit with ambiguous success) who had suffered violation and gender-based abuse during the war, many in the course of their displacement, on the basis of their classification as especially vulnerable victims. On the other hand, other aspects in which gender has affected the experience of

² For fuller analyses of this see Vassiliadou (1997; 2002), Hadjipavlou (2010) and Agathangelou (2000).

displacement and resettlement have gone largely unrecognized. The interviews show that this has been an important factor in shaping experiences. Two main examples are the widespread entry of women into the labour force, which was largely rooted in financial need, and the separation of men from their families at the time of displacement, when many men were away fighting in the war.

In all the interviews, the age of the interviewee at the time of displacement was treated as a framing factor in the recounting of the experience. This, together with one's placement in the life cycle (e.g., family make-up) was treated as definitional of the kind of memories recounted as well as of the evaluation of the losses suffered in relation to property and livelihoods. By extension, age also was presented as a causal effect of future expectations. In official terms, the significance of this factor is also reflected in the classification of refugees as first-, second-, and third- generation in the allocation of state support through schemes that require the establishment of connections to the original *prósfíyies* or other displaced categories (e.g., refugee paternity or inheritance deeds).

Class is reflected in the type and quality of abandoned property as well as in other facets of the experience, such as professional rehabilitation and expectations of restitution. Access to, and ability to make use of support mechanisms established to alleviate the trauma of displacement can also be affected by one's location in the class structure. Class also intersects with the general discourse in which 'refugees' are presented as destitute and needy. This has at times led to discriminatory public attitudes towards refugees, while it has also fostered a discourse of morality whereby the concept of 'refugee' stood in opposition to 'rich', leading to the view of displaced individuals seeking rights and benefits as greedy. At the same time, the losses suffered by big landowners and business people have also affected specific attitudes towards restitution that in turn impacted on public perceptions (e.g., of the acceptability of the IPC).

One of the factors that is less accounted for through official structures is the experience of displacement per se. The only exceptions to this are the policies of rehabilitation of different categories of war victims, such as soldiers wounded during the hostilities, women raped by the enemy, or people who disappeared either in action or while fleeing from their homes (all categories in which there exist significant numbers of displaced or would-be displaced). However, it is clear in almost all of the interviews that the experience of leaving one's home and property has defined to a large extent the ways in which people have made sense of their lives afterwards.

Another factor that is important in the shaping of these experiences is the level of individual involvement in the politics surrounding the Cyprus issue. This may range from left-/right- wing political alignments, to rejection of those alignments, to involvement in communal politics (e.g., through refugee associations), to articulations of political analyses, or even to the framing of one's expectations within the high-level politics of inter-communal negotiation. Although this involvement has never been recognized in policy-making, many individuals hold that the implementation of various policies of resettlement and other kinds of refugee support has historically been tied to party affiliation. This is not only true of the interviewees

selected here, but for wider public discussion across the island. This discourse affects the experience of dispossession arising from displacement.

The trope of remembering the past, narrating displacement, and materializing loss, is another crucial factor that differentiates the narratives presented here. Whether in the memory of the valuables lost forever, or the cherishing of those saved, or attempts to recover others (keys, toys, photos, furniture), all of the interviews evidence the importance of these tropes in the evaluation and articulation of what was lost and how the material world is linked to the mental configuration of refugeehood. While all these factors affect and shape the experience of everyday life post-displacement, new investments in the resettlement settings may acquire a significance of their own in framing current articulations and actions.

Considered together, as well as in their complex interrelations, these factors provide an initial contextual frame for understanding the views presented in the interview summaries. Delineating this frame further, the next section provides a historical background to the stories that follow in the second part of the report.

Historical aspects

The history of displacement in Cyprus is intertwined with that of the ethnic conflict. In the classic study by Attalides (2003 [1979]), the decline of ethnically mixed villages from 342 in 1881 to 48 in 1970, is correlated to nationalism and urbanization; respective numbers for Greek-speaking villages being 342 and 444, for Turkish-speaking 114 and 110, and the percentages of urban population being 13% amongst Greek- and 25% amongst Turkish-Cypriots in 1881 against 32% and 40%, respectively, in 1960 (Attalides, 2003 [1979]: 89).³ The forms of 'displacement', therefore, that today constitute the crux of discussions on the property and refugee issues are only one aspect of a much more complex and longer process of population movements spurred directly or indirectly by ethnic rivalry, conflict, and violence, taking place both within and outside the island. The settlement of Armenians from Anatolia in the island's urban centres, for example, in the 1920s, was also part of this process.⁴

This complexity notwithstanding, the start of the 'displacement' period that culminated in the current demographic organization of the island into a majority-Turkish north and a majority-Greek south is often located in the division of the municipality structures, in 1958, during the British colonial period (Markides, 2001: 11-42). By that time, the Greek-Cypriot guerrilla campaign (1955-1959) for union of the island with Greece, under the leadership of EOKA, and the Turkish-Cypriot one (1957-1959) for partition of the island between Greece

³ Criticisms of the notions of 'mixing' which essentialise ethnic identities shown to have been much more fluid than in the modern period, as well as of the ethnic designations (Greek/Turkish) along lines of categorization imposed subsequently need to be acknowledged (e.g., Hirschon, 2003). In this report, these designations are imported from the literature and are cited for reasons of simplicity.

⁴ An indicative example of this is the historical demographic make-up of Nicosia (see Demetriou, 2009).

and Turkey, under the leadership of TMT, were in full swing. As the partition of the municipalities took place in an environment of both inter- and intra-communal violence (EOKA having initiated a murder campaign against Greek-Cypriot 'traitors' and TMT against Turkish-Cypriot ones), it is understandable that it was also attended by a demographic consolidation of ethnic space. In Nicosia, for example, Greek-Cypriot shop-owners operating in the now Turkish sector of town moved their businesses southwards, within the Greek sector. Similarly, as the Greek neighbourhood of Ai-Louca fell within the Turkish sector, Greek-Cypriots were displaced to the southern part of town, and vice-versa for the Turkish neighbourhood of Omeriye in the south.

The constitution of 1960 reflected the growing separation between the two main communities in the political sphere. However, after the inter-ethnic killings of 1963, that separation took on a decisively geographical aspect with the retreat of Turkish-Cypriots into self-administered enclaves. Although the vast majority of those displaced at this point were Turkish-Cypriots, some members of the Greek-Cypriot community were also displaced from mainly mixed areas as these became Turkish-Cypriot-run enclaves. One case in point is that of the residents of Nicosia's north-central neighbourhoods who were largely Armenians (and since 1960 counted as members of the Greek-Cypriot community). The plight of these people was not immediately recognized by the authorities of the Republic; only later were they categorized as *Tourkóplikti* ('those struck by the Turks') in differentiation from 'refugees' (*prósfiyes*) of 1974. Furthermore, the category *Tourkóplikti* obviously excludes Turkish-Cypriots and their flight from the experience of displacement in official discourse. The period of violence from 1964 to 1974 was also marked by the internationalization of the Cyprus conflict at the level of the UN, which, through the deployment of its Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and its Security Council Resolutions, has since become a key arbitrator in peace-seeking efforts, including overseeing negotiations on the property issue and its humanitarian dimensions. The legal discourse with which the property issue has become intertwined in the last four decades is firmly based in this involvement.⁵

The war of 1974 is undoubtedly the next key date associated with the problem of displacement in Cyprus. In its aftermath, 150,000-200,000 Greek-Cypriots fled the north of the island and 45,000 Turkish-Cypriots the south. This movement, however, was not instantaneous. Following the coup d'état executed by the command of the Greek-Cypriot National Guard, under orders from the military junta that ruled Greece at the time, against the Republic's President Makarios (with the ambition of effecting *enosis*), on 15th July, many individuals across the island began to seek safety by temporarily moving to relatives' homes. As the interviews evidence, at least within the Greek-Cypriot community, many sensed that worse

⁵ For an analysis of the ways in which this level was incorporated into the experience of refugeehood, see Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis (1987).

was to come and had begun to make arrangements. When the Turkish army landed on the shores of Kyrenia on 20th July, most residents of the immediate area were evacuated. Some, however, refused to leave or were stranded and were moved to safety by the Red Cross and international mediation. From accounts collected over the course of my work in Cyprus, it appears that this initial attack was particularly brutal, employing tactics that would terrorise the civilian population into retreat. As a result, a great number of the refugees who fled at this phase of the war from the Kyrenia area also suffered other forms of violation: many have large numbers of relatives who went missing after being taken hostage by the Turkish forces, women were raped, prisoners of war were tortured.⁶

The majority of Greek-Cypriot refugees, however, abandoned their homes during what has become known as the 'second invasion', i.e., the second offensive by the Turkish army which began on 15th August. At this point, the regions of Famagusta and Morphou were evacuated, as well as the villages close to Nicosia and the Mesaoria plain in the north.

Still other refugees, who had remained 'trapped' in enemy territory following the ceasefire, were exchanged in August 1975 under an agreement known as the Vienna Agreement, the interpretation of which remains disputed (official Turkish-Cypriot interpretations maintaining it was a population exchange agreement, while Greek-Cypriot ones maintain it was a temporary humanitarian measure).

Even following this, displacement continued to mark the humanitarian reality of the Cyprus conflict as groups of individuals remained enclaved in pockets in the north (specifically in the areas of Kormakitis/Kormacit and Karpasia/Karpaz). Some of these enclaved individuals eventually moved to the south, thus becoming displaced some considerable time after the 1974 war.⁷

In the decades that followed 1974 the populations south and north of the island became increasingly homogenized into 'Greek' and 'Turkish', respectively. Alongside this process, the official discourses on displacement became concretised into divergent perspectives on co-existence and property restitution. The opening of the checkpoints in 2003 marked a turning point in the sense that abandoned properties became accessible, even for the brief time of one's visit to a home now lived in by someone else.⁸ For a number of Greek-Cypriots, 'return' became pursuable through different means at this point, something that is clear from the interviews in part three. These pursuits were mainly located on the legal level, the subject of the next section.

⁶ For an indication of hostage-taking in the various phases, see Sant Cassia (2005: 40-47).

⁷ Some early glimpses of this experience can be found in Volkan (1979: 133-135) and Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis (1987).

⁸ The ways in which this experience dovetailed with official rhetoric has been explored in earlier work (Demetriou, 2007b), while its implications on views of the property question have been analysed by Dikomitis (2010). Also relevant here are the effects of division in the form of the Green Line which up to 2003 was impermeable, which gave rise to differential dynamics in the political imaginary north and south the line. On these dynamics see Cockburn (2004) and Navaro-Yashin (2003; 2005; 2009).

Legal aspects

Laws regulating the treatment of properties affected by the displacement of their owners through the various stages of the Cyprus conflict have been passed since the 1960s.⁹ This has meant that the experience of displacement has largely been framed by the legal categorization of one's identity vis-à-vis the circumstances of displacement.

Thus, for example, the distinction between *Tourkóplikti* and *prósfíyies* has determined the initial lack of access to housing support to those displaced before 1974 in relation to the support enjoyed by those displaced in 1974. Likewise, the definition of 'refugee' identity as based on residence in the north of the island during 1974 has also created a hiatus between property owners (who may have been living in the south during 1974) and 'refugees proper'. The lack of access to a number of benefits of those in the first category vis-à-vis those in the second has at times resulted in feelings of resentment in relation to the state's treatment of the property issue, which in turn has also driven some of the actions that dispossessed owners have subsequently taken, as indicated by some of the interviews presented in part three.

Another aspect of the legal regulation of displacement is the administration regime of the properties used for the resettlement of displaced people. In the south, a large number of these properties came from the properties abandoned by Turkish-Cypriots prior to and in 1974. These properties were placed under the 'Custodianship' of the Ministry of Interior and distributed to individuals and professionals on a rental basis, for the purpose of preserving the rights of the original Turkish-Cypriot owners to the title deeds. The prolonged application of this 'temporary' regime, however, has had adverse effects on the sense of stability for the users of these properties, who have claimed their right to a more permanent arrangement over time.

In fact, this sense of temporariness has also guided the provision of other kinds of housing support, such as purpose-built social housing for refugees, constructed en masse after 1974, to which individuals were given use rights but not title deeds. The pressure to secure their property rights through the provision of title deeds mounted over the years and culminated in the issuing of title deeds by the state to most refugees in social housing in the last decade.

Other housing schemes, such as *aftostéghasi* (self-built accommodation) benefits allowing displaced people to use government land to build their own houses, have been more permanent and less criticized. However, the variability of access to these schemes has also created dynamics within the 'community' of refugees whereby some may be considered to have received more support than others, considering in turn, the state to have been unjust in distributing the benefits.

⁹ In fact, the regulation of property in relation to the inter-ethnic rivalry stretches further back but is outside the scope of this report. For a full account of this relation see Erdal (2011).

An attempt to equalize the distribution of support to the dispossessed (rather than the displaced) was the establishment of the Central Agency for Equivalence in the Distribution of Burden (*Kendrigós Foréas Isótimis Katanomís Varón*) in 1995, which offers housing benefits and loans to individuals on the basis of title deeds for properties located in the northern part of the island. In relation to other schemes, the difference with this one is that approval of loans is based on the evaluation of the property, which is used as collateral, with need taken into account in the prioritization of cases. However, the use made of the property in 1974 (e.g., whether regular or holiday residence) is not considered, as it is in the issuing of 'refugee' identity cards.

The Agency came into force a number of years after 1974 as a response to the need to address the problem of the solvency of those who were dispossessed. In policy terms this has been viewed as separate from the need to address the immediate humanitarian needs of refugees (housing, welfare, job creation) on which economic and social policies had initially focused.¹⁰ This disconnection has recently been questioned, especially by those who have come to view their dispossession not only as an emotional issue, but a financial one as well. This transition has been increasingly an issue for a number of refugees, for whom the passage of time and the repeated failures at the high political level to reach an agreement have been adding a significant dimension to their view of 'loss'. 'Homes' have in this sense increasingly been becoming 'properties' and the former life one laments is also giving way to possibilities of what might have happened had displacement not taken place.

This logic may be claimed to have begun at the legal level, where the ground-breaking *Loizidou* decision at the ECtHR contained the element of what the owner had planned to do with her property in the calculation of loss of use. The same logic is currently being applied to evaluations of compensation offered by the IPC in the north.

Even though originally legislative, however, this transition from 'home' to 'property' has been the outcome of processes taking place on the socio-economic level as well, to which the next section turns.

Economic aspects

In one of the classic ethnographic studies of refugeehood, Peter Loizos used the example of Cyprus to show what the process of rebuilding lives anew entails for refugees (1975; 1981; 2009). The example of the Greek-Cypriot families he presents can be said to be representative of the experience of most Greek-Cypriot refugees, who became destitute in the south in the summer days of 1974, many living in tents for the first weeks and months. As social housing became available the problems encountered under those conditions (overcrowding, lack of

¹⁰ An indication of the major problems faced on the social level by refugees in the first years after the war is provided in Evdokas et al. (1976).

facilities) began to be alleviated (Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, 1987). People began to seek employment, many women for the first time, and many men in sectors other than those they had worked in previously. The debacle of 1974 was not only social and political, but it was also economic. The construction boom that followed was spurred by the need to solve the housing problem. Together with the urbanization that resulted from the resettlement of refugees in cities where they could find better access to jobs and facilities, these are two factors often cited in the economic literature to account for the post-war 'economic miracle' (Strong, 1999; Zetter, 1992; Christodoulou, 1992).

In many of the interviews selected, the theme of overcoming economic hardships following the displacement is prevalent and coloured by the interviewee's position in the family structure. Thus, there is a generational aspect in accounting for this process that needs to be acknowledged. Many of the young, newly married couples who were displaced found themselves in a position of not only rebuilding their accommodation, but having to care for their elderly who were also displaced and in more dire need, as well as for their children, whose needs have often driven major economic decisions (e.g., migration to other countries, existence of relatives and friends in particular towns in the south, women's family income share).

At the same time, these hardships are now viewed with a retrospective lens, where needs are different in the current juncture. The needy children are now grown up and working, and one of the biggest family pressures is to ensure the accommodation of the new families they have created. In the context of the global financial crisis, the vulnerability of Cyprus as a Eurozone member, and property prices which have sky-rocketed with the island's EU accession in 2004 (Erdal, 2011), the cost of buying a home has now become prohibitive for many couples. This difficulty has often led to a re-evaluation of one's social position as a refugee and the long-term repercussions of displacement.

This re-evaluation is also compounded by the effects of the referendum on the Annan Plan, in which the possibility of repossession of properties had appeared for some refugees to have offered not only emotional but also financial closure. In the aftermath of its rejection, the threefold possibility of reinstatement, compensation, or exchange is still the focus of high-level negotiations, but is also a point of reference for many refugees envisioning future options post-settlement.

As recent research has documented (Dikomitis, 2010), this re-evaluation has been taking place on both sides, giving rise to discourses between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots that both converge and diverge. In some of the interviews collected this is accounted for through references to the perceptions of Turkish-Cypriots of which interviewees show awareness.

A more profound ramification of this is that refugee identity has also shifted vis-à-vis community and individual practice. Refugees are less the subjects of state humanitarian help and more active citizens and property owners who take decisions regarding their possessions. This turn to liberalism (Erdal, 2011) on the property issue is also reflected in other facets of it, not least the make-up of civil society as the next section shows.

Social organisational aspects

In the immediate aftermath of 1974, refugee associations were formed on the basis of location; their main aims were to locate co-villagers and neighbours lost track of in the upheaval and to establish networks through which material help and moral support could be offered on an informal basis (see also Demetriou and Gürel, 2008; 2011).

This civil society came to the help of the state, complementing the latter's work and rectifying situations, chiefly by getting together refugee co-villagers who had been scattered in various refugee settlements all over the island. This scattering had variable effects across communities, as, for example, it meant the beginning of the demise of the Maronite community which had previously been geographically clustered within the four villages in the Kormakitis area. By comparison, Hadjipavlou traced an increasing localization of Greek-Cypriot refugee identity on the basis of towns, villages, and even neighbourhoods (Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, 1987).

The formation of refugee associations based on areas of displacement also had profound effects on the political rhetoric that developed post-1974. Through the years, the rhetoric of *dhen xehnó* (*I do not forget*) became the cornerstone for the cultivation of a Greek-Cypriot identity that centred on the trauma of partition within a hegemonically nationalist discourse (the idea that half the homeland had been enslaved by a barbaric occupier and awaits its liberation). This in turn fostered a generalization of refugee identity within the wider population, through the sense that the north had been lost to all Greek-Cypriots as a collective ancestral homeland (Demetriou, 2007b).

As a second wave of civil society actions, which focused around the call for accessing the occupied territory, took shape in the 1980s and 1990s, the link back to particular experiences of displacement took form. The first of two events where Greek-Cypriot organizations attempted to cross the Green Line was a women's march organized in 1989 under the banner 'women walk home', a reference to the violation of Greek-Cypriot rights (of women as home-makers) to access their homes in the north. The slogan of the march, in fact, harked back to an earlier march in 1975, which had attracted 20,000 people, famous personalities like Melina Mercouri, and considerable international media attention, and which had successfully focused on the predicament of Greek-Cypriot refugees.

The arrest and detention of women demonstrators during the 1989 march drew international attention and gave cause for the first litigation case at ECtHR level against Turkey's violation of the rights to enjoyment of property. The 'Loizidou case', as it became known, became a cornerstone in the development of the property issue, both on the level of public rhetoric, as well as that of high-level political negotiation.

The spin-offs of the Loizidou case on the litigation process produced yet another wave of civil society action, this time focusing on individual pursuits of justice on the property issue, which ranged from espousal of the official rhetoric that universal reinstatement is the only just solution, to critiques of this rhetoric on a number of levels. This variation is clearly documented in the interviews in part three, but is also evidenced in attitudes towards concepts of justice and expectations for the future articulated by other interviewees.

Temporal aspects

The interviews presented here are rather synchronic in nature in that they were carried out in the period between March and October 2011. In this sense they can only provide a glimpse at the issues mentioned above – the variability of perspectives is not dependent on the individuals alone, but on the individuals at the specific point in time. In this sense, the current section will provide an overview about the significance of the specific historical juncture in which the interviews were taken.

While the sealed nature of the Buffer Zone border formed the backdrop of most discussion on displacement prior to 2003, the easing of restrictions on crossing after the April of that year added a new layer to the experience. With an estimated 50% of Greek-Cypriots reportedly having crossed to the northern part of the island (Jacobson et al., 2009), many refugees have had occasion to go back and visit the homes they had left, survey the properties they own, lay flowers on family graves, and socialize with the people now living in the houses and their vicinity. A significant number of refugees have also refused to make the trip, some apprehensive about the experience, some for political reasons, some because their homes remain inaccessible due to military occupation and usage. These reasons are reflected in the interviews selected here. Yet, even those refugees who have not crossed, have collected photos taken by friends and relatives who have crossed and attempted the visit on their behalf. This knowledge of the fate of the properties following their flight is an important reference point in the articulation of their experience.

Similarly important is the referendum of 2004, when the UN-brokered 'Annan Plan' for the re-unification of the island within a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with particular restrictions on reinstatement and resettlement was put to referenda on both sides and accepted only in the north. Although the experience of refugees was a major point of reference in the political discourse that developed in the south in support of rejecting the Plan (on the basis that the Plan denied their rights to reinstatement for all in full), many refugees believe that economic considerations of those who were not displaced played a significant part in delivering the rejection majority vote. Thus, a number of interviewees see the referendum as an opportunity to gain access to their property rights that was wasted. This disappointment has in turn affected the actions and political stances they have adopted since 2004.

During the interview period, negotiations between the leaders of the two sides were ongoing, having resumed in 2008 after a post-2004 freeze. Property was a major point of discussion during this round of negotiations, and the only 'chapter' on which the two sides' positions were leaked in full in the form of the original documents exchanged (known as 'non-papers'). Although interviewees did not specifically mention these positions, they showed an awareness of the likely scenarios of an agreement on restitution (a mixture of reinstatement, compensation, and exchange with other properties). This played a role in the ways they evaluated loss and in their expectations for the future. At the same time, these expectations were framed within a negative outlook, owing to the perception of all interviewees that the negotiations were not progressing well and were on the verge of a breakdown.

This pessimistic perspective was compounded, especially in the interviews conducted after July, by the intensification of public discussion about the onset of a financial crisis in Cyprus, spurred by the global crisis that began in 2008 and a feared default in Greece. Set against the trends of rising house prices after Cyprus's EU accession in 2004 and Eurozone entry in 2007, and booming of the construction sectors on both sides after the referendum of 2004, this added to the economic insecurity that refugees have been living in since the loss of their property assets. This is often reflected in the uncertainty they express about the value of their titles in the setting of non-settlement. Following an accidental but disastrous explosion of dynamite in the village of Mari (inhabited by refugees relocated in the region of Limassol) in July 2011, public discussion about the impending financial crisis was folded into criticisms of the government's handling of internal affairs, systemic nepotism, and other failures of governance. These views were reflected in some of the interviews as explanatory of a political mentality that is irresponsible, uncaring, and unjust – qualities that were also seen to be reflected in governmental responses to the plight of refugees.

The effects of these events on the views expressed are indicative of the limitations of the synchronic nature of the interviews. The limited timeframe in which the interviews were conducted, as well as their singular nature need to be taken into account in drawing conclusions about the extent of their representation of 'the displacement experience'.

At the same time, a few of the factors ameliorating these limitations should also be mentioned. The interviews were selected as part of a wider set of formal and informal discussions with people affected by displacement. These discussions in turn were informed by long-term ethnographic work in Cyprus that has, over the past six years, focused on refugeehood and concepts of loss. Some of the interviewees quoted here were met on previous occasions and discussions with them were held outside the standard 40 minute – 2.5 hour taped interview context.

The selection was made in such a way as to allow some of the societal aspects of the displacement experience to emerge. In terms of geographical areas, the interviewee sample includes people displaced from the four main districts in the north (Kyrenia, Famagusta, Morphou, Nicosia) as well as people relocated to the main districts in the south (Nicosia, Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos). The sample also includes people who have been displaced from urban as well as rural locations and relocated to both rural and urban locations. The interviewee sample covers a range of ages, but most importantly, it includes individuals who were displaced at different stages of their life cycle (well-established families, newly married couples, young adults, children), as well as a second-generation refugee, i.e., a person who was not yet born at the time of displacement. In terms of gender, interviews were conducted with both men and women; in fact, the latter group forms the majority of the interviewees, which has allowed particular aspects of the impact of gender to come through, something not often encountered in a research field that is mostly centered on men. These three aspects of identity (geographical location, age, and gender) have been the primary indicators in the choice of interviewees and have therefore formed the title entry of each interview summary.

In addition, a number of other aspects relevant to the formation of refugee identity have been revealed through the interviews, which are worth pointing out briefly. A key such aspect is the ethnic identity of the displaced. Although most of the research on refugeehood in Cyprus has focused on the two main ethnic groups (Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots), the small sample of interviews presented here shows the profound effects that membership in the smaller minority groups (Armenians, Maronites, and Latins) has had on the individual experiences of displacement, determining both the temporal context of displacement (e.g., Armenians in 1964) and the official recognition of refugeehood stemming from it (*Tourkópliki / prósfíyes*), as well as the context and circumstances of return (e.g., access to Kormakitis village for Maronites, singular permissions of access to salvage valuables for the Latin interviewee). For this reason, the inclusion of individuals belonging to all three groups has been a source of immense insight in the analysis of these experiences.

Considering these factors, the current report has the explicit aim of not 'representing' the holistic 'displacement experience' but rather to highlight its variability. In this sense, the interviews do not exhaust this variability, but point to some of its multiple possibilities.

OBJECTS



Antique lamp brought as wedding present from Akanthou.



Antique chest salvaged from home in Varosha.

PART TWO: LIFE STORIES

Maro (F), 76, Akanthou – Paphos

Maro grew up in the village of Akanthou, in the wider region of Kyrenia, on the hills near the northern coast. Maro left the village to study in the Nicosia high school and eventually moved to her husband's village in the Paphos region, where she has lived ever since. Maro was not displaced in 1974, since she was not living in Akanthou at the time, and thus she is not classified as a refugee. However, she did own land through the property that her parents bequeathed to her, and the titles of which she has since passed on to her children. On the basis of these titles, the children were able to secure loans against their own housing needs. When her mother became displaced Maro took her into her own house in Paphos, where she cared for her until her death in the 1980s. Maro was thus able to articulate her displacement experience in a second-hand manner, being at once detached from the experience of fleeing the violence, but also harbouring strong feelings of loss in relation to both the house and the village life she had known.

Maro keeps pictures and paintings of the village and its surrounding area in her notebooks and home walls, and it is through these pictures that she initiated the discussion about Akanthou:

'These here [pointing to a watercolour of tall rocks] are the famous Stillárka... it is very difficult to get to them and when I went there with my husband my mother explained the special path we needed to follow. You walk and walk and then you take one turn and they are in front of you, towering majestically on top.'

Maro also remembers particular items from the house that blend into her sense of life in Akanthou.

'The marbles on the first floor, when we cleaned them, they used to sparkle. The chandelier that is hanging in the living room [pointing to the location inside her house] we had brought over before the invasion. We had also brought the carved wooden plate display that is on the wall here. It had been hanging in the pantry. They were the only things we managed to save. There was silverware with highly ornate carvings, birds moving and so on. Those were left. If I was in Nicosia I would have been crossing often, looking in the bazaar in case I found them. But they were probably sold and gone long ago.'

Maro also remembers Turkish-Cypriots from neighbouring villages they interacted with.

'Akanthou was all Greek at that point. There had been a few Turks in the old times. The last to go was an old couple; the stupid Akanthiotes managed to kick them out during the EOKA times.'

Turks were coming to the village to sell things, they were living in villages around. Villagers used to work together in the olive groves with them. I remember I used to go with them while studying and there was this Turk who used to say "don't bring this teacher again, she does not let us do any work!" [laughing].'

By 1974, her father had died. During the war Maro received no news about her mother and went on a search with her husband to find her in the refugee camps that had been set up in Dhekelia. The July landing did not affect the village, but during the second offensive of the Turkish army the village emptied. Between the first and second offensive, Maro asked her mother to come with them to Paphos and take things.

"I will stay" she said at first. "Whatever happens to the others, let it happen to me." She was worried about what people might say, that she had relatives to get her out and she had been more fortunate [eventually she was taken out on the neighbour's cart]... Some people stayed behind though and were then exchanged with the others [Vienna Agreement]. And they say that when the others left, they had been the first to plunder the homes.'

After Maro's mother came to Paphos she spent her days in a rather enclosed environment.

'She always waited for the news that she would go back. And once when she got sick and spent some time in hospital, I will never forget this, we picked her up to come home, and when we parked the car here to get her out, she would not come out. She put all her strength, she thought we would take her to her home, not to our home. She planted her feet on the floor of the car and would not move them. We took her in our hands and they were stiff like a dead person's legs.'

Following 2003, Maro and her family travelled to the village twice.

'The worst thing was going back and seeing our house turned into a parking lot. In photos we had seen from time to time before 2003, the house was still standing. When we got there it was all gone, a garbage van was parked on it. We went on a Sunday and nobody was around. Turkish women were peering from the windows, looking at who is coming. You understand from that their position as well... After we didn't find the house we went to the graves. We had a sculpture made for my brother and we discovered they had broken it. It was the time when they used to break the tombstones. It was our fault for not taking it and bringing it back. On the grave of my father we found the cross broken onto the grave, there was a lot of destruction around the cemetery, there were holes, perhaps looking for gold? But we don't bury our dead with jewelry. And in the chapel inside the graveyard we saw they had used it as a cow shed, there was this much depth of dung. When we went six months later we saw that they had cleaned the chapel, but the stench was there, they did not manage to get rid of it. We put the sculpture back where it was, they did not respect the fact that this was about a human being. The second time we went it was toppled over again. Perhaps they thought he was an important personality, I don't know how they thought about it.'

Maro has since transferred the property titles to her children. She has also thought about the possibility of applying to the IPC but finds the paperwork too complicated. If there is a solution, she says, she expects her property back.

'Since the village is now gone, we would not go back to live there. If a village is what its life is, the people, and now there are settlers there, why would we go back? It might not matter of course, but we never thought we would go back. Some people say they would return, even under Turkish administration, but we never considered it. We expect to get the value as compensation.'

Roula (F), 61, Nicosia - Nicosia

Roula was displaced from her home in a northern suburb of Nicosia in 1974. She was at that point married with two young children. She was born in a village in the Troodos mountain range and her husband came from the neighbouring village. Having no property of their own they benefitted from a government grant in 1971 to buy subsidized accommodation in the Omorphita area, from where Greek-Cypriot nationalists had chased Turkish-Cypriots out in 1964 in one of the bloodiest attacks led by Nicos Sampson. During the war of 1974, Roula followed her neighbours who fled the settlement and found refuge in the neighbouring suburb of Kaimakli, moving to refugee housing in the 1980s, where she still lives. Her children grew up in the refugee housing settlement and the house still accommodates her grandchildren, one of whom lives with her while studying. Her husband fought in the war and was wounded, an injury from which he still suffers. One of his cousins who fought with him is believed to have died and is still on the missing persons' list. Although Roula only spent a few years in the home from which she fled, her experiences during the war and her categorization as a displaced person have marked her life path and that of her family since.

In 1974 Roula was living in a row of newly built houses and remembers that there were 'old houses' opposite, the ones from which the Turkish-Cypriots had left.

'There was no Turkish-Cypriot there by the time we went and before the coup, only an old man who used to make kouúpes [bulgur-covered meatballs]. He was a very good man, that man. He used to come and bring kouúpes for the children, take them for walks.'

Roula's memories of the house are intimately tied to the violence she experienced later.

'When the Turks came the parachutists were falling almost into our yards. My son was young and playing outside and he used to collect the bullets that were falling to bring them to me. I was shouting, telling him not to touch them, he thought it was a game. "This one came too" he used to say. Until we left.'

Roula stayed in the house with her family through the coup and through the first days after the Turkish landing. She refused to be taken to the village as her husband suggested, because he would be returning to fight and she wanted to stay with him.

'I left in such haste, it was all chaos. I remember I was confused, turning my head around all the time looking here and there. I did not have time to pack. I never expected I would never go back again. Just imagine that the second day after we left it rained and I was relieved thinking that my flowers would not dry out... Even my purse I remembered I had thrown on the couch and left it there – not that there was much money in it, but even that was left. I still think about it – "how could I not have thought I might never come back?" But I didn't. It did not even cross my mind. I left and I remember locking the gate so that nobody would come in.'

When the ceasefire was signed a relative who had come from the village to look for their elderly parents took Roula and the kids back with them. By that time she had lost contact with her husband who was fighting in the war and had in the meantime been injured and taken to hospital.

'On the day we left he was injured... They had gone to save an old man who was stranded and could not walk. They took him in their hands to carry him to the ambulance and there was machine-gun fire which raked across both legs. They put him in the same ambulance together with the old man and took them both to hospital. He was operated on several times, it took him five months before he was able to put on trousers again. It was after he was taken to a sanatorium that a Greek doctor insisted to keep the leg, otherwise, they would have cut it off.'

Rebuilding their lives was especially difficult for the family, already having no savings and having lost whatever they had owned. Roula's husband could not work for the first year and they lived on relatives' charity and Roula's daily wage as a house cleaner, a job she was forced by circumstance to take up.

'We came to Nicosia after a few months and lived in one room – the bed, the television, the fridge, everything around us... we lived like this for seven years. The bathroom did not have space for me to even stand properly.'

For the first five years her husband received no benefit from the government for his injury and then got 12 CYP per month.

'What can you do with 12 CYP? I will say this: some people they gave lots of benefits to, others nothing... We suffered a lot... I had to work, mostly to buy my daughter a doll. She had had a doll which walked and talked, it was a huge thing for that time. After we came here and because our relatives were near our old neighbourhood she used to threaten me that she would go home "just for two minutes" to bring her doll and come back. She knew the way too, so I was scared. I promised her I would buy her a new doll so I had to do it to keep her from going. But with what money? And so I took up a job.'

Roula lived on the assumption that they would stay in the refugee settlement until they could return home, their title to the new house not having been issued until four years ago – they will only be able to pass on the title through inheritance or sale after five years. But it is an assumption she never really believed, she says.

'I do not believe we will go back, I never did. I would go, but I don't believe it. If I went and knew I would be safe I would return, but to go and then have them come again to take us, no. If I am safer here, I don't mind not going. But if there is safety there I do not mind going either... I still cannot bring myself to go and see it.'

Iro (F), 47, Morphou - Limassol

Iro was seven years old in 1974. She lived with her family in the town of Morphou until the outbreak of the war, when the family was forced to leave. They eventually settled in Limassol, where she spent the rest of her childhood and where she still lives. Her father, already having taken work abroad as a construction engineer, migrated more permanently to the Middle

East and North Africa, along with many other Greek-Cypriots in the 1970s and 1980s. The family lived a relatively comfortable life based on his remittances, but Iro still feels regret for growing up without her father around. With her own daughter now a teenager, Iro shares a new house on the outskirts of the town that her father only recently built using his savings. She cherishes the memories of the life in Morphou, and in contradistinction to the trauma that older interviewees verbalise, she speaks without bitterness about the past.

Iro remembers her Morphou life through the child's eyes that she was then, primarily as a life centred around the relationship with the land and the work in the fields.

'I have good memories – of my father's orange groves, my granny's, my grandpa's, I remember playing in the ditches where the water ran with my father when we went to water them, when the family went out on Green Mondays. It was good times, in the outdoors, we used to sell the cut oranges in front of our house. I remember my great-grandmother, my grandfather and his feasts, where he would prepare little meze dishes and salads and have them with ouzo – even though I was seven at the time he would give me some to drink! I remember also when my great-grandmother died and according to custom we kept the body in the house for the first night.'

Iro also has memories of the house through the games she played with her brother.

'I remember the pond we had in the yard, the fields at the back, and the stream that ran at the back which was a branch of the Serráhis river. I remember a snake that used to come to drink water from the pond and had my parents so worried that they dried it out. I remember throwing my brother's toys down from the balcony and into the stream and then we'd fight. I also remember a hedgehog my father brought me once, which I loved a lot and how it used to go and crouch behind the TV set we had in the kitchen. It was a good, happy time.'

The day they left is equally vivid in her memory, again shaped by her age at the time. The family fled during the second offensive, in mid-August.

'I remember the upheaval and a sense of fear, but because we were kids we didn't feel the responsibility or the level of fear that my mother or grandmother felt. I remember getting our things together to leave and what stayed with me is this sense that we were only going for a few days and we would come back. There was no sense that we would leave and that it would be forever. We put the things in an old car, I remember and we went to Kakopetria [a mountain village]. From there I remember seeing the planes and the bombing. We would huddle in basements designated as the 'safe places' where we would run as soon as we heard the alarms. My grandfather had some relatives in another village nearby and we went there. There was a sense of fear there as well, but it is strange how as a child you have a different conception of danger and you enjoy everything. I remember the excitement, for example, of putting mattresses down on the floor to sleep, the excitement of the fact that we were all the cousins together and we would sleep altogether.'

Where she does mention bitterness, is when Iro speaks of the new beginnings they had to make in Limassol.

'The thing I remember making my mother and my grandmother bitter is the way people treated us in the 'free areas' I will call it, who were not refugees, and for whom we were those who – refugees, how shall I put it? Second-rate people. For example, when we were looking to rent a

house they would not rent us a house, thinking we would not be able to pay, they preferred to rent their houses to the British then, more than the refugees. We rented some backyard rooms at first, then a flat and we moved out of the flat because they forced us – they used to come at night, the locals, and shine the lights through the house to make us leave so that they could rent the house at higher rates to others. This made an impression on me because even though a child I could understand certain things. I would think to myself “but before we left we had a big house, we had fields, all these things, and now they are throwing us out. We are not like this, we are not lesser people, we won’t take their money away.” My father was working to send back money and we lived in a way that nothing was lacking.’

Iro rationalizes her father’s absence from her childhood but is also regretful of it.

‘It was people like my father, who went to find jobs abroad, that supported the Cypriot economy. We missed our parents, children like me, but it is them who did it. It’s all these things that I thought about as a child and which I still think about when I go back to those times. It was slightly unfair this view, the treatment of refugees by the non-refugees at that time. At the same time what I also clearly remember is the help of other people, from Greece, for example; in our case there was a woman called Mrs Martha, who saw my name and liked it and took care of us and used to send us food, things, toys, used to be friends with my grandmother, and they kept up the relationship, my grandmother went to see her. When my grandmother died it was the end of the correspondence and I regret that I did not keep it up, perhaps with her children. Nevertheless it is the kind of thing you appreciate, this care by someone you never knew before.’

Iro has visited the house after the opening of the checkpoints in 2003. The experience was important for how she sees the complications entailed in the possible solutions of the problem, both on an individual and social level.

‘I went to the house and to the school where I had gone to first grade. I saw the furniture in the house which was our own furniture that I remembered and because my father’s shop downstairs was built into another house for the parents [of the people living there now], I saw the furniture there and identified them. I was told I could take them if I wanted, but I didn’t want to. Yes, it was ours, but I think it would have been very small of me to take the furniture that is ‘ours’ that is now ‘theirs’ – it’s a convoluted story, you say you will take ‘their’ furniture, but it is not ‘their’ furniture, it is ‘your’ furniture, but out of dignity you don’t want to upset them to take the furniture which is in ‘their’ house, which is actually ‘your’ house, it’s a very tangled psychological situation [laughs]!’

Expanding on this conceptualisation of the things left behind in their value as property assets, Iro thinks of her current social situation.

‘Because my children are now at school, I would not return to live there permanently. If there was a settlement, if I believed there would be a settlement, I would keep it as a country house and I would utilize the fields, which are 3 km from the beach, I would probably build something there as a house where we could spend our summers, so that the children would also keep their links with their lands [ton tópon tous]. It is along these lines that I would imagine it.’

Putting the possibility of a settlement in the context of 'justice' is for Iro a social issue.

'A just settlement should not be thought about in terms of personal interest. If a settlement that is just in its totality provides that we would not get the house back but would be compensated for the work of the people, our grandfathers, our fathers, who built them, I would still consider it just because we have to look at the whole. I would not mind not going back to the particular house, for God's sake. We have grown up on this side [apó dho], house-wise, how often do we change a house, sell it, buy a new one, we should not be emotionally tied the particular house because in the course of our lives things change. I believe that a just settlement is just from the moment that the correct level of compensation is granted and from the moment that the whole of the population contributes equally to the burden of what half the people have been forced to experience.'

Alexia (F), 55, Varosha – Limassol

Alexia was born and raised in the Varosha region of Famagusta, which in 1974 was a bustling suburb of the town, depending mostly on the large tourism industry that had begun to develop around it. The town is now known as a 'ghost city', and Alexia has not had access to her home post-2003. She has a dislike for discussing 'politics', a view that is shared by many Greek-Cypriots, feeling that the sphere of high politics is little related to their everyday experiences.

Alexia lived in Varosha until the age of eighteen, at which point the war took place.

'At that stage you mostly have happy memories, but at the same time becoming a refugee at that age is also something that scars you... I remember everything about the house that I still miss. And my grandmother's house at the back, I used to spend a lot of time there with her. And I also remember the house of my music teacher to whom I was very close. Whenever I dream of Famagusta I am in this house. I rarely see my own house in my dreams, if you can believe it.'

Alexia's family fled their home during the second offensive, on 20th of August.

'From the 15th [when the offensive began] until the 20th we used to leave the house almost every night. We used to go to villages nearby. In the first phase of the invasion [July] we wouldn't leave. We only used to go to a neighbouring house that had a basement during the bombings. In the second phase of the invasion, perhaps because they had information that the Turks were getting nearer, the army used to tell us to evacuate. So we used to leave and on the third day we left and never came back, unfortunately. We were one of the last ones to go and I remember the desertedness of that day. It was us, our parents, and my grandmother and a neighbor- we went to stay at one of her relatives... I do not remember packing because we were used to going and returning – one day we simply did not return. The only moment it was mentioned, I remember, we had a small tree in the yard and chairs where we would sit out in the breeze in the summers, and I remember as we left my sister saying "might there be Turks sitting here tomorrow?" I do not believe she meant it at that point, but it became reality... The next day we couldn't return because they were bombing the whole morning. Our neighbour had small children and so her husband went with her father to bring clothes for the children. They never came back, they were taken prisoners. Her father was released the same day and he returned late in the afternoon... on foot, he returned. As soon as we saw him we said "we thought the Turks took you" and he responded

“this is exactly what happened”. He told us that they kept his son-in-law. At that point we realized that the town was taken... His son-in-law returned after three months. By then I had returned to my studies.’

After this incident, the group left for Limassol, where they had received a message through the radio¹¹ from an acquaintance that had offered to put them up. They were then accommodated at the house of one of Alexia’s father’s colleagues who had gone on a trip abroad. Alexia returned to her studies late that year but was able to make up the classes. Alexia regrets that she has nothing from the house with her, since they never packed to leave.

‘I only have the key, which mum gave me of course. I keep it just in case. She gave it to me years ago, saying “take it so that I don’t lose it”. Fortunately, I also have photos because I took them when I went[abroad] to study and I did not bring them back [to Famagusta] that summer.’

Alexia has a strong sense that her parents had a difficult time resettling in Limassol but is aware that they tried to shelter her from it as much as possible.

‘I was abroad and my parents were people that did not show the pain very much, they wanted to be strong for us. I remember I had suggested to postpone some of my classes so that the fees would be less and they did not let me. Considering that my father had lost his job, now that I am older I understand how difficult it must have been for them to make ends meet and make the money to cover my fees as well.’

Alexia received moral support from her friends and teachers at university. Her parents lived in rented accommodation for two years until they were able to benefit from a refugee grant that allowed them to build their own house. They received the plot and a little money for that house.

‘The house was built very slowly as they did not have money beyond the grant. I remember the first time I came to it after my studies the floor was not tiled, it was cement. Then my sister went into work and she began contributing to the costs and they managed to make it livable.’

Alexia crossed the Green Line after 2003, but was not able to go to her house.

‘I was not able even to see it. But I passed by my old school, the church, and so on. At the beginning I did not want to go but a friend convinced me, to go to Apostolos Andreas [monastery] as well. We went, we got as close as we could because the area is fenced, and I felt, how can I explain? Can I say that a dumbness came over me [vouvamára], I felt a bit... [silence]. It was the leaving that was the problem. At that point when I turned my back to leave I felt bad. And I remember feeling like this every time I used to go to Derynia [southern viewing point facing Varosha] when I looked over and then when I used to turn my back to leave I used to feel very bad. I felt as bad this time.’

¹¹ As part of the humanitarian relief effort, the national broadcaster relayed messages from individuals looking for relatives and friends.

Alexia went to Derynia seven or eight times during the 1980s and 1990s on occasions when the Famagusta refugee association organized events to remember the town and protest against its occupation. But after the experience of failing to see the house she has stopped going.

'If they asked me to go now I would not. If I would have been able to go to the house I would though. Just to see it, once. Not to go again. And not to go for the sake of going. Somebody said, and I agreed with him, that maybe it was not good that I went. Before I had a memory of Famagusta the way it was before. Now that I went, when I think about it, I think of the barbed wire, the barrels, all these things. It has spoiled the nice picture I had.'

Asked about the prospects of a settlement, Alexia says she does not want to think of the possibility of going back.

'I think that something might happen again. And also the difficulties of beginning anew.'

She does, however, have a concept of what a settlement might entail.

'A just settlement, which I think will not come, would be if all refugees would go home – if we are talking in terms of pure justice. But I do not think this will come. Let's hope it will, but I don't think so. After all this time that has passed, I don't expect so.'

Rethinking about how her life changed after the displacement, Alexia underlines the big mark that it left on her and the family.

'I constantly think about how my life would have been otherwise. Not the course of it, but in terms of what we carry inside... I remember before my father died of a stroke, on that day we had lunch together and as we were leaving he grabbed my husband by the arm and told him "I want you to take me to my house". This experience was very moving for me. My mother replied "but this is our house" and he responded "no, it's not this one". And after two hours he had the stroke.'

Arpik (F), 60, Nicosia – Nicosia

Arpik was born in Nicosia and raised in one of the neighbourhoods in the north of the town. Her parents had themselves moved to Cyprus as children, after being displaced from their native town in the Turkish region of Anatolia during the onslaught against Armenians by the Ataturkist forces in the beginning of the 20th century. As members of the Armenian community as it was classified in the 1960 Constitution, they also became members of the Greek-Cypriot community upon Independence at the end of the British colonial period. Arpik's family lived in a neighbourhood which fell in the Turkish sector after the separation of municipalities of 1958 until 1964, when inter-communal violence broke out. At that point, her parents joined other Armenian neighbours who were moving out and into the Greek sector of Nicosia. As their displacement took place before the massive displacement of 1974, Arpik and her family are classified not as 'refugees' (*prósfyies*), but *Tourkóplikti* ('those struck by the Turks'), under official categorization language. To Arpik, this difference signals a qualitative separation in the mentality of both the state and other Greek-Cypriots in the conceptualisation of her displacement experience.

Arpik remembers the neighbourhood as changing in make-up from an early age.

'After the genocide Armenians thought it natural to settle in Turkish areas because this was the language they spoke, they did not know Greek. In our area there were Armenians but also [Greek-] Cypriots -it had a Greek bread-maker, a flour mill, a cigarette business, big enterprises, not small shops. Then slowly, whoever sold, the Turks would buy. By 1963 there were almost no [Greek-] Cypriots. But the bakery was there.'

Arpik remembers moments of that happiness that would become materially impossible after their flight.

'I remember in the house that we used to sit around the table at dinner times and talk, my grandmother would share stories from life in Turkey, my father from his job, and now I realize that this is something we did not do afterwards. We didn't have conversations because first of all we did not have space to fit. We would eat one at a time and in a hurry so that the next person could eat.'

As inter-ethnic violence escalated in 1963, Arpik's parents decided to move out of the neighbourhood, initially on a temporary basis.

'My parents would leave us with my grandmother in the morning and go to look for a place. They would go and come back not finding anything because my father thought it would be a month-long arrangement and then we would return, so he did not want to draw up [long-term] contracts... We left on 6th January, Christmas day I remember. We brought clothes, our carpets, some furniture of value and such things. And we sold them all. Because financially, between the rent and the school fees, it was impossible. My mother took up sewing full-time – she used to do it for family and friends up to that point. As long as my father could pass, with UN permission it was, he would go back to the house and bring stuff. Then one morning they told him he could not go any more. He then took everything out of the house, packed it neatly in the garage, which he first cleaned well, and locked it up. There is of course no garage left now. But that's why, for example I don't have anything to show myself from my life there – that I can say this was my toy or something. I have nothing from there. Everything brought was sold.'

The financial difficulties the family faced at the beginning marked Arpik's late teenagehood.

'We rented some backyard shack at the beginning and it didn't fit much. We were six people in two rooms with a corridor in the middle. It was very difficult to make ends meet but my father sent us to private schools to give us the chance in life he did not get. But I understood the circumstances under which we ended up there and why we were there, so I sympathized.'

Arpik feels bitter about the meager support the family received from the state.

'My mother received some support for the rent at some point, but I cannot remember when it began. It was 50 CYP. It was not immediately after, it was later...perhaps after 1974... Unfortunately we are not considered prósfíyes. We are Tourkóplikti. Those from 1963 are Tourkóplikti, 1974 prósfíyes. And we did not receive any of the advantages, whereas for you [Greek-Cypriots] there are various options. Sometimes I hear Greek-Cypriot refugees talk about 1974, especially younger people, and I tell them "hey, I've lived this since 1963!" and they get surprised, they don't know... Mrs Anna, from Kyrenia, when we said to her that we lost too, she used to say "this is different [állon doúdon!] We did not understand at first, then we realized she didn't count our loss as much as hers. What does this mean? Property is property!'

With personal lives slowly having been rebuilt by then, the war of 1974 had little effect on Arpik.

'By 1974 we were all married, the children growing, the family was developing. How did it affect us? It did not affect us. Because we had nothing else to lose. And this is not nice to say, but in 1974 they got a taste of their own medicine. Because from the Greeks, in 1963 there was no sympathy for us. No housing, my mother was eventually offered a house in Latsia where she had no connections. In 1963 they used to tell us "you came over from the genocide and you went to live with the Turks again?" They did not understand us.'

Arpik is not hopeful about a settlement and has no trust in politicians. She no longer visits the house and has slowly come to understand the financial stakes for her family.

'The old man [now living here] once said to me "we bought this house". I explained to him that I was not out to get his house... But I don't go anymore because they get upset. What should I go and say, "hallo and how are you?" over and over again, enough is enough!'

Arpik nevertheless has many good friends in the north. One of them helped her arrange her mother's last visit to the house.

'Even though she was in a very bad shape she really wanted to go... We arranged with a friend who picked us up and took us around the whole neighbourhood with the car and we found all the old neighbours, those who had moved as well, one by one. And then he took us to eat, we came back, and she never went back again.'

Sonia (F), 77, Kyrenia – Nicosia

Sonia was born in the US and moved to Cyprus in childhood. She lived in Kyrenia with her mother, siblings, and grandparents; she went to school there. After marriage, she used her dowry to set up house with her husband close to her family's home. She worked with her husband to set up their business in Kyrenia and raised her children there. When they fled in 1974, she was already an expectant grandmother, and the primary caretaker of her mother. Now a great-grandmother, Sonia divides her time between different places around the world, where her children have settled. She laments the loss of her sizeable property in Kyrenia, but is most regretful of the loss of community life she grew up with.

Thinking about Kyrenia, nature is one of the first things that comes to Sonia's mind.

'Most of all I miss the sea, the shores, the sunsets. The sunset was unbelievable. The whole of Kyrenia turned golden at sunset... The house itself was warm and beautiful. I lived in it and enjoyed it. It was full of antiques.'

On the day of the landing of the Turkish troops in Kyrenia (15th July 1974), Sonia's husband took the family away from the centre of town for protection.

'My daughter was hours away from labour. I was a US citizen, and because of that the UN came and told us that they would be evacuating us. They moved us to the Dome Hotel first. The Hotel was packed and my daughter just sat on the floor and kept asking for water. This went on for two days, two very difficult days. Where did we find the courage, I still wonder, and strength, to accept this move? ... It was such a tragedy that first night at the Dome Hotel. To wait in line for

hours to get a cup of boiled water, it was supposed to be chicken broth, and I was thinking that the night before I was in a restaurant being served by two waiters.'

The next day the evacuees were informed to have their cars ready and cover them with white sheets on which red crosses were marked. Sonia ventured out to arrange transport for her mother, who had refused to leave her house.

'I explained to her that as a foreign citizen she had the right to be evacuated. She refused, saying she would stay with the simple people (don gósmo don apló) and suffer with them what was coming, in Kyrenia. I said to her "mum, the way things are developing, there will be no more Kyrenia. Come with me." Afterwards the neighbours brought her to the Dome Hotel and she would leave during the day and walk back to the house to check. There was a Turkish [-Cypriot] soldier she knew from before, she used to pay him to lock it for her and keep it safe [laughs]. The third time she went it was all looted. That was the last time and she was not allowed to return again.'

By that time Sonia and her family also left, having been evacuated on a British ship that took them to the Akrotiri base.

'I took very little of my jewellery with me. I chose each one thinking that I would never be able to buy these things again, I would never have that financial security again. When we boarded the Devonshire at Pachyammos, I stood on the deck and told my daughter "come and see, our mountains are burning from one end to the other. Come and see because we will never see them again." The fire was unbelievable.'

Sonia continued to Dhekelia base, while her daughter and her husband were evacuated to London.

'We were put in a shelter and given a mattress to sleep on. When I asked where the sheets were the British officer threw the sheets at me saying "what do you think you are? You are a refugee now." At that point I realized that this was the beginning of our troubles.'

In London Sonia looked up contacts she had made in Cyprus and they helped her find jobs, first in England and then in the US. Thinking back to these adventures, Sonia declares that she does not regret it.

'I have not given in to depression or hopelessness, I still remember it... We may have lost a lot but with the experiences we have gained we have become new people... You become simpler, more approachable, you see life in a broader context, and you start enjoying every single thing... A lot of adventures – but no bad feelings, you see? That is what saved me.'

Sonia has not visited her property since 2003 but has thought about it.

'I have not been and will not go back for the moment. I will go when I start feeling frail and realizing my time has come. At that point I want for one last time to go to Kyrenia and sit on Katsellis's [the family that owned the Dome Hotel] porch and watch the sunset. I want this to be in August on an afternoon, like I did a few days before the war and I told my brother-in-law sitting next to me "what a beautiful thing this is, it's too good to be true" and he agreed.'

Sonia has not received government support.

'I say that whatever a person can do on their own, they will manage. They surface. I may not have the riches, not be what I used to be. But in this little house I survive. I had a good life.'

Michel (M), 41, Kormakitis – Nicosia

Michel was born in the village of Kormakitis, the centre of the Maronite community on the northwestern tip of the island. His family was displaced when he was only four, and he remembers little of that move. However, Michel's family has kept contacts with the village, and especially with his grandparents who had stayed behind. Following the war, a cluster of three villages around Kormakitis where significant numbers of Maronites lived, came under special status as 'enclaves', i.e., areas where Greek-Cypriot community members became enclaved under the administrative structures that developed in the north. In this area, as well as in another village cluster on the northeastern tip of Karpasia, many of the inhabitants refused to leave and remained with their families for the following decades. For Michel, this meant that he was able to visit the village with his parents every now and then, after securing special humanitarian permits from the Turkish authorities through the UN. The same applied to the Greek-Cypriot enclave of Karpasia, although as Michel is now able to understand, Maronites did receive a slightly more favourable treatment. This, in turn, rendered them slightly 'suspect' in the Greek-Cypriot view, thus placing the community in a rather precarious position between the two larger ethnic groups. Michel has since grown up negotiating his own lived experience of division and refugeehood and that communalized within the Greek-Cypriot nationalist rhetoric he encountered in school.

Michel remembers very few things prior to 1974 except leaving the village during the war. Return became possible for Michel's family about three years after the war, when they were allowed to cross under a humanitarian regime to visit enclaved relatives. These visits, limited to once a month and for a maximum of three days, created a new frame within which Michel's memories of the village were shaped.

'I remember the difficulties in crossing. You had to apply a month before, check up whether the application had been approved, there were customs checks on both sides, and there used to be checks at various points en route where the times were checked [to ensure visitors did not roam around in the north]. And this procedure also had its side-effects. For example, you had to take things to give to people on the way. Dixan [washing powder] and coffee I remember, you had to give such things to the Turkish-Cypriot policemen to be let through. At that point Turkish-Cypriots faced a huge economic problem. Or if you were taken off the [visiting] list you would give something to be put back on it, and so on. Queues I also remember, of the enclaved at the checkpoint, where they would be made to wait for 5-6 hours in order to see their close family.'

Michel's family left the village during the second Turkish offensive and headed first for the Troodos mountains, then for Limassol where they settled for the first few years before ending up in Nicosia.

'One reason they went to Limassol was the existence of a Catholic nunnery there which also operated a school and people went there to find support.'

Michel's parents rented a small house at first, sharing with other people.

'We were about 15 of us in one house and I remember we had problems with the landlord. He did not like having so many people.'

Instead, it was the happier memories that seem to have stuck more for Michel.

'My father was working in the stadium at some point, which had become a sorting centre for the humanitarian help arriving from abroad. I remember that stadium well. I remember the toys. They used to hide them from me so I would not find them.'

As individual community members rebuilt their lives in the south, children of enclaved individuals were a particular group of concern.

'There were some families who originally came to the south but then the parents went back to the village and the children stayed in the south for schooling. They used to have special permissions to spend many days with their parents during summers... Soon after a boarding house was set-up for the Maronite students, where the Maronite Archbishopric now is, and there was a point when up to fifty boys stayed there. It was only for males, the girls stayed at relatives' houses. It was not acceptable at that time to have it mixed. If you ask people from this cohort they will have a lot of stories to say about how they upset the neighbourhood [laughs].'

Michel's grandparents remained in Kormakitis until their old age, crossing to the south only when they were no longer able to care for themselves and had to be placed in care. With the opening of the checkpoints in 2003, visits to the village became more frequent and freer, and his parents have been able to repossess their house and use it. In fact, Maronites who stayed in Kormakitis had citizenship of the TRNC as well as of the RoC.

'We also have two different village heads [muhtáries]. There are two sets of elections, one in Kormakitis, and one in the south... It is a special kind of citizenship, I think it is the last one from the bottom in terms of rights, just above those who enter the TRNC for the first time. We are not allowed to take part in elections, for example, except the local village elections.'

Under a recent scheme, returnees receive a monthly grant from the RoC for living in the enclaved regions, and this has encouraged people to return to Kormakitis, Michel declares. This may have also been facilitated through the repeated experience of 'return' through the decades. This also seems to have facilitated the lack of substantial change in the village's ethnic make-up. Recently, Michel notes, there have been a few property sales of village land and houses.

'The number is definitely below ten. But there was also a sale of a large property by the beach to a foreign national, I am not sure about the details – a huge green area.'

Looking back, Michel feels that refugeehood has affected the Maronite community in one specific way.

'Even though the Maronite representative kept asking for one refugee settlement to be reserved only for Maronites this was not done. This was probably because it was not done for other communities either. They probably did not want to create a 'New Kythrea' and so on. But for the Maronites it should have been done because the Maronites are so few. As a result, the Maronites dispersed and the result is that today there are 80% mixed marriages, so the community is disappearing. In the past because they were concentrated in those particular villages mixed marriages were the exception. Also there was no attention paid to other ways of keeping the community together, through its own cultural spaces.'

Thinking back to his own experience, Michel notes the effect of nationalist education on his experience of the division.

'Greek-Cypriots would consider us some kind of traitors for going back... I remember the sense of hatred for the Turks that was inculcated. I remember going back to the village and hearing people speak in Turkish, including my father, and I used to get angry... My views of course changed afterwards, in London, and after the Annan Plan, when I met Turkish-Cypriots... The first time I crossed after 2003 was the first time I actually felt able to travel elsewhere other than the village and meet Turkish-Cypriots. Even though we could have done it before, we wouldn't do it, as if it was forbidden... I felt the same surprise as everyone else after the Annan Plan when I saw restaurants and shops. Before we used to go to the village and pass through abandoned villages, just like we were told at school.'

The referendum of 2004, as much as the opening of the checkpoints a year earlier, had a huge impact on the experience of refugeehood for Kormakitis villagers, and underlined the positive effects of a future settlement on the community.

'After the Annan Plan many things changed. For one, all the houses were fixed. People from the first day began going back, about 15 families have now returned, yet with a lot of questions, and some young people, who work in construction and help out in the village... For us, whichever settlement is a good settlement, even a simple officialisation of the current situation. Because at this stage nothing is certain, there can be no development – going back, how does one do it? Under what status? It's difficult. So whichever settlement – the Anna Plan was a good settlement for us.'

Dimitris (M), 35, Nicosia – Nicosia

Dimitris was born two years after the 1974 war. He does not have a direct experience of his family's flight from their house in one of the northern suburbs of Nicosia but has heard many stories about it while growing up. As a second-generation refugee, he has the RoC refugee identity card. Dimitris' parents are in fact not only refugees, but also *Tourkóplikti*, having been forced to flee the first house they had settled in when they moved from Paphos to Nicosia in the 1960s, after the eruption of inter-communal violence. His family is left-wing, and his father had been targeted during the coup by the nationalist forces, luckily escaping capture and possible torture and imprisonment through being absent from the house when coupists came to the house to arrest him. Through his childhood and adulthood, Dimitris has therefore striven to square the officialised rhetoric of displacement and loss being propagated through the post-war educational system he grew up in and the personal experiences that his parents and relatives recounted.

Having no experience of life before 1974, Dimitris has memories only of the way in which that life was recounted.

'What I know about Trahonas is that it was an upcoming area, with industry, where people came for work. Turkish-Cypriot areas like Omorphita were near-by and people had relations across these areas... They worked together in the carpenters' shops for, example; my father spoke about this a lot. Then a Greek-Cypriot sentry post was erected in Omorphita and the Turkish-

Cypriots left immediately... With the inter-communal troubles [tarahés], when the Turkish-Cypriot enclaves were formed Greek-Cypriots were displaced from them. This happened from one side of Trahonas to the other, so Greek-Cypriots, like my father's family moved from one side of the river to the opposite one.'

After the family moved across the river, they built a new house and some of the children moved away into their own accommodation with their families. His father was still commuting between the new family home and Strovolos in 1974, when the family fled once again.

'To hear my relatives talk about this loss is – so much pain and sense of being wronged. They explain how they built and then lost it all... They do not complain to officials or the government or anything, but my father tells me, for example, that the Paphiotes, from where he originally hails, are now rich, their land has acquired value, and he received nothing despite all he lost... Three camp-beds is what they got, I still remember them clearly, wooden folding frames with a canvas because the one that my father got ended up in my grandmother's house and I slept on it on visits. And I used to be told "this is one of the few things that your father got from all this [pou toun' tin istorían oullin]."

Dimitris has not felt like a refugee and felt a disconnection from refugee identity through schooling.

'We would learn all these songs and poems by heart and sing them. OK, they are nice, but it's something that does not relate to you directly, you have not lived it. Maybe Famagusta was indeed the best place on earth, yes, it's in pictures though. And you may have been a millionaire too, and perhaps this is more important at the end of the day for some people. It becomes staged at some point. And some people sell this [plasároun tou'n' to práma] - but if you have not lived it you do not feel the same as someone who has. Someone who has lived it will go and sit at the checkpoint for hours to cross because they have certain life experiences, a particular sense of nostalgia. Someone who was born two years later, or fifteen years later and acts as the passionate nostalgist of return [éthermos nostalgós tis epistrofís] - there is no logic in some things. You hear soundbites of people who were born after [the war], for example... I won't call it cheating [siké], I will say trite [tetriméno]... I can say it now, that I felt this whole experience was alienating at school.'

Commenting about the picture hanging behind his desk of the Kyrenia harbor he repeats this differentiation from the hegemonic rhetoric of loss.

'To me it is significant because it was painted before 1974 and it shows Pendadhaktylos as a green mountain. This is a very different picture to what we grew up with of the mountain there [pointing out of the window], bare, and figuring in these songs of return. In this picture it is something different, with a small harbor with five fishing boats in it. Much simpler, as if it could be anywhere.'

Dimitris relates these experiences to the way in which his friends and acquaintances discuss the prospects of settlement.

'Perhaps other people do really feel more strongly. I talk to people for example from Kyrenia, which is not likely ever to be returned, who do verbalise this sense of injustice that "I will never get to enjoy my house". What does this mean? It means you will not enjoy it under your terms because

of your own issues... I hear all this empty rhetoric, which is actually not empty at all, it has a very specific content: division. Either on our own here, or on our own everywhere. And since we cannot throw the Turks into the sea, thankfully, it's us here – but pure, right? All Greek-Cypriots, and us here, you there [emís bodhá, esís bojí], with some minor land adjustment, us in our schools, you in your own, we hating you, you hating us, and that's it.'

Jeanette (F), 78, Varosha – Larnaca

Jeanette was born in Nicosia and moved with her family to Famagusta when she was still a child. She remembers her time in both towns well, but feels that Famagusta is her home. When she married a French national they built a house in the area of Varosha, which is now fenced-in and as a result she has had no access to her house after 2003. However, Jeanette was able to access her home in the months following the war and salvage some of her property from the house. Later, she also discovered that it was her membership in the Latin minority group that catalysed their permission to carry out those crucial visits.

Famagusta for Jeanette was the location of the best years of her life.

'Where do I start? The beach, the sea, I remember, and how much my daughter used to enjoy the sea and the home we had. Our life changed completely afterwards. There were also cultural events, lectures, Famagusta itself. There came the troubles afterwards with the Turks though, and Famagusta was closed, so we could no longer go in... It was a good life. The people were different. Perhaps this is the same everywhere, that people changed. But in Cyprus the change was more rapid. Perhaps many people were not ready to go into the cities and when they did, coming from the refugee settlements, they put on airs [apóthiken o kósmos]. How many of them lived in towns then? They lived in villages.'

Jeanette lived in various areas of the town, both within and outside the currently fenced area. Her last house, where she lived with her husband and daughter, was a simple, three-bedroom house on two floors with a small yard.

Jeanette's family was one of the last to leave the neighbourhood. On the day of the Turkish advance, she was in the town distributing supplies with other women.

'An acquaintance saw me and asked "what are you still doing here? Everyone from your area has already gone". I stayed on, brushing it off at first but then I thought about it and realized it was perhaps time to leave ... We got in the car and drove off, my daughter with a small bag she had packed with all her dolls inside, she was almost ten... For many years she did not go anywhere without her case. She also could not look at soldiers. She still cries when she sees Turkish soldiers. It has affected these children a lot.'

The family eventually ended up at the Dhekelia base.

'People, so many people there. There were showers, thankfully. The food I didn't eat, I used to get up at dawn and go to the canteen and ask for hot water in which I added my own instant coffee. This was my food I think for the whole day. They used to give food, but it was awful.'

Jeanette also found herself helping with the humanitarian effort at the Achna camp, where the tents had been set up to accommodate the arriving refugees.

'We helped with the messaging. That was a dreadful situation. I saw people going like this [putting her hands together in the shape of a cup] to receive food because there were not plates to put it in.'

The family ended up in Limassol, where Jeanette had to come to terms with the perceptions developing around 'refugee' identity.

'There I saw the difference. The Limassolians were regretting the cargo they had lost in the ships in the port, they complained about the refugees, saw us as intruders who threw out the British tenants and they had to rent to us instead, and so on. Nicosia was not like this because Nicosia, well half of it suffered it itself...'

Shortly after the war, she was able to return to her house and collect some of the valuables left behind.

'In order for the Turks to let us pass to get to our house, it was my identity that counted. The Turkish soldier told me personally "I know you," he said, "that is why I am allowing to pass. You are the daughter of Mrs. so and so. You are Catholic, that is why you will go." You see? It's them that drew the distinction.'

The possibility of recovering valuables has been important in shaping Jeanette's attitude towards loss.

'We knew a British officer who, a few months after the war, was arranging vehicles to go and get things from the houses of the British... We were warned that we were only allowed to take clothes and personal belongings, not valuables. We had a portable television that we took, and some books... Later on we got another permission... This time the Turkish officer escorting us complained to me "you keep coming and going for your things, you have just one piece that is worth all the others". He was talking about this one [pointing to a chest]. He understood about value, this guy. On the way back I pointed out that I had a vacuum cleaner that was lost. At that he said "come, I have a storehouse full of them, you can take what you like". "No, I said, if I find my own, fine. But I will not take another person's."'

Looking back, Jeanette points to the gap between things that she has salvaged and the 'feel' of a home, which was lost forever.

'OK, so I got all these things back. What did I understand? Most of them withered in the meantime and were thrown away anyway. Sometimes I search for pictures, or other small things, your sense of place, where things were, is lost. Some people don't even have that of course. I know people who buried their jewellery in the ground, under their trees, and of course lost it forever.'

This 'feel' was lost for Jeanette when she saw her house ransacked on her first visit back.

'When we entered, the whole house was on the floor. Everything from within the drawers, lots of things had vanished, everything else was dirty. That year it rained a lot, and they had left the windows open. Outside the house I saw photos that weren't mine. They must have swarmed through looking for things.'

Jeanette has a refugee identity card and votes in the Famagusta district. However, she has received very little government support through the years.

'There was no kind of compensation for the middle classes. There was some for the peasants, some for the big hotel owners. We did not see anything. They gave me 1000 CYP for this flat... Whoever had the connections got things. There has not been a fair distribution. Only those whose fields gained in value won out. They should have given us something as well. Perhaps if we had gone to beg we might have got something, but we didn't. What I know is that in the same way that the tax comes and finds you, the benefits should have found us too. I'm not one to beg. Perhaps other communities were better organized – because they have common origins too, the Armenians and the Maronites. We do not have anything in common amongst us. The Latins come from everywhere... Here in Larnaca, the refugees in the settlements are all AKEL, the Turkish houses were given to the right-wingers who did not have the government connections [after the war].'

Becoming involved in refugee associations was one way in which Jeanette found that she could connect with her old social circle.

'Whatever has to do with Famagusta, I try to help. Forty is a crucial age. You are already middle-aged. You start over of course, I am not saying you can't, but it's not like leaving at 15, when you'd be starting your life anyway. So I maintain the contacts with people from there.'

Jeanette has never considered her home in terms of its value as property.

'We built our house to live in it for the rest of our years. This was it. This is why all this bartering [ta pazárka oúlla] sickens me.'

At this juncture, Jeanette feels there is little hope for a settlement, either regarding the property issue or the Cyprus problem in general.

Nadia (F), 56, Varosha – Nicosia

Nadia lived in Famagusta until her early teens, when she went to live with her father in the UK. In the summer of 1974, she had returned to Cyprus for a customary long holiday and became caught up in the war. Because of her British citizenship, she was airlifted to London where she immediately entered university. During her student years, she became involved in campaigns for Cyprus. Nadia remains an activist for reunification and rapprochement. Nadia lived in the UK and Greece before returning to Cyprus to settle. She now lives in a Nicosia flat and she often thinks of what her life might have been like had the war not happened. For Nadia, displacement has left a big scar on her sense of self and identity and it is this that she mostly mourns.

Nadia lived in Varosha from age three to fifteen. The urbanity of the place, its advancement as an up-market global tourist destination, is ingrained in her memories of that life.

'I remember it from then as a town that was far more advanced than others. There were high-rise buildings, the hotels right on the beach (you might with hindsight think it is a disadvantage), the nice cafes and restaurants, which weren't this nice elsewhere... I remember the orange festival, the flower celebrations where kids were dressed up and paraded, myself included.'

At the same time, Nadia underlines the neighbourhood feel of the place that distinguished it.

'Playing in the empty plots, making cars and having them roll down the hills, gathering the neighbourhood kids and putting up a shadow theatre... I remember everything about the house.'

The verandas with flowerbeds that my grandmother used to plant with lilies... Citrus trees in the garden and two fig trees, one with big figs, one with small, a vine, and mulberry branches hanging over from the neighbour's garden where the kids used to gather to eat the fruit. We had this neighbourhood feeling that was almost like a village.'

For Nadia, the flight was particularly traumatic because of the life stage she was at. She speaks of those moments with clarity and detail. There had been a series of bombings prior to the advance of the Turkish army to Famagusta, during which Nadia and her family hid with other neighbours in the basement of a concrete building.

'What stayed with me is that we left in the clothes that we were wearing. I was in shorts, a T-shirt, and clogs... The packing we did consisted of throwing a few necessities into a bag, toothpaste and suchlike. I then remember mum going inside for two minutes and coming out with a small bag containing her jewellery. I got angry, pulled it from her hand and threw it under the sink. "We are not taking jewellery", I said. "Why take jewellery?" "To sell," she answered, "in case something happens". "Nothing will happen," I insisted. "It's only for a few days and we are coming back". I was in denial. I could not believe that we were leaving for good. Because during the first invasion we had also left and stayed at some relatives and come back.'

The family went to a village close to the British bases, thinking it was safer. They stayed in a small house of distant relatives that Nadia did not even know.

'They took us in, shared everything they had with us, which was very basic because a lot of people ended up in their house. They gave us a double bed to sleep on, and we had to lie sideways on the bed so that we all fit... During the night I got up and saw my mother crying at the window. I could hear the sobbing. I asked her why she was crying. "Look," she said "those are the British bases and they are all lit up because their petrol tanks are there and they are foreigners on our land and they can have all these lights without worry and we here have to hide like rats."

The next day they went to Dhekelia base and were given a tent.

'We were feeling very uncomfortable by then because we realized that something more final was going on. My mother decided that when the British would send a plane, I as a girl should go. I refused, not wanting to leave them behind and without knowing what would happen to them. She said, "I can't handle you by myself, a lone woman, with a teenager whose priority is whether she will be able to shower in the next few hours or not". It was not like that, of course... Later my mother confided in me that that was not the main reason. She had heard stories about rapes, and such things, so she was too scared to have me there.'

The stories coming through were not only about rapes but a range of atrocities.

'At some point an acquaintance who had joined the army came and reported horrible things that were happening on both sides. This somehow comforted me in the sense that it was about the war doing horrible things to everyone. He was not out to blame the Turks, as the others were doing. He said "war is a terrible thing because I saw Greek-Cypriots do things that I did not believe humans could do". We asked him what, and he said he'd seen a Turkish Cypriot old man being tied to a jeep and being dragged along the ground until he died, he described atrocious things.'

Nadia got on an army plane and left for Luton. The majority of evacuees were Cypriots on British passports.

'We sat on the sides of plane, there were children crying, mothers crying and so on... We arrived and my father was in tears, having watched all that was going on in Cyprus. Stepping off the plane was the Salvation Army Charity handing out second-hand coats for the cold. I did not like that at all. You might ask why, because we were from an urban class, and we had all the things we needed. We had never imagined we would be given someone else's coats and pants and be handed oxtail soup in plastic cups.'

Nadia is conscious of the long-term psychological impact of displacement and of the central role that lack of access has played in perpetuating this impact.

'I was never able to go back and until today I have a recurring dream that as if by magic the fences open up and I find my house. In another dream I am allowed to go up to a point but not beyond and this affects me much more... I feel I lost part my life for which I never stopped mourning. I may have grown up, got married, lived in another country, but I have always felt that something happened to me about which I was completely unable to do anything, that they stole a part of my life. Being an adolescent at that point, was an important life stage, we leave childhood to enter the world of adults, and we passed this stage just like this [sto ndoúgou], because we were so injured and traumatized by this thing that all the movements happened quickly and mechanically. We went to university quickly, we quickly latched on to the first guy that came along, and many of these children may have made the wrong choices because of this. A long time passed until you could find your feet again and be able to laugh in the way that you used to laugh before and then you never laugh with your whole being because a part of you still hurts for this loss. I am now 56 and I still wonder whether I will ever see Famagusta again. And it's not about the houses or the wealth that my family lost. I lost my memories, the smells of my city, an integral part of my life... You know, you say where are my things, my albums, my notebooks from school? You'll say "are these things important?" It seems they are. The things that make you feel there is a continuity, it's as if this continuity does not exist. It's as if you were here and suddenly you found yourself here, and there is a huge gap in between. I feel as if I have lived all this time without a sense of belonging, for I don't feel I belong in Nicosia. And I am a flexible person otherwise, but there are people who are imprisoned in this, in this feeling of loss.'

This feeling of loss informs Nadia's expectations for a future settlement, which she is not hopeful about.

'I have not thought about compensation because for me that would not be compensation. For me, it's only the idea of being able to go back that would be restitution. Anything else is fake. And it hurts me a lot because there is a finality to it, claiming the compensation. I want to live with the sense that if not me, at least my child can go back and do something. I don't mean selling, but building it up as whatever. You tend to idealise things, so for me even if I was given ten times the value of the house it would not be the same. I want my house back, I want my city back, I want my neighbourhood back, I want my smells back, I want to be able to run again on the beach, where I used to run as a child. Can you understand this, without having lived it?'

COMMUNITIES



Part of the cemetery in Akanthou which has been razed.



The Armenian primary school and Archbishopric tower built in the 'new' Armenian area developed after 1974.



Busts of former Maronite leaders in the yard of the Maronite Archbishopric (dedications containing a prayer for return to the occupied villages).

PART THREE: LITIGATION STORIES

Meletis Apostolides, 2004

Meletis Apostolides is a property litigation pioneer in Cyprus as he is the first Greek-Cypriot to have sued individuals instead of the Turkish state, and to have pursued the action in local courts instead of the ECtHR. The case began in 2004, when shortly after the opening of the Green Line Meletis Apostolides, a middle-aged Greek-Cypriot architect who is a refugee from the village of Lapithos in the Kyrenia region, visited his family home. Although he developed friendly relations with the Turkish-Cypriot family now living in the house, he also discovered that the plot next to the house, also owned by him, had been sold to a foreign couple, David and Linda Orams, pensioners from England, who had constructed a villa on the plot as a retirement residence.

Meletis Apostolides claimed his rights to the property through a different course than what had been the case with previous claims at the ECtHR. This was enabled through the easing of restrictions on crossings across the Green Line in 2003. Thus, in 2004 he applied to the Nicosia district court accusing the Orams of usurpation of his property. A decision was issued in his favour in the same year requesting the Orams to abandon the property and return it to its original state. Following appeals, the Supreme Court upheld the decision. As the execution of the decision could not be pursued in the North of the island, the case was transferred to the UK, on the basis of an EU-wide execution of judgment agreement, with the request that the British High Court implement the Cypriot Court's decision. From there, the case was referred to the European Court of Justice on the question of applicability of decisions taken by Republic of Cyprus courts in the North. A final decision was taken in 2010 confirming the decision of the Cypriot courts.¹²

The *Apostolides v. Orams* case was the first property case in Cyprus related to the conflict that pitted individuals against each other. Its landmark status was argued to have opened the way for possible inter-communal suits that might displace the adversarial nature of the conflict

¹² The decision of the Cypriot Supreme Court is available at http://www.cylaw.org/cgi-bin/open.pl?file=apofaseis/aad/meros_1/2006/1-200612-121-05.htm (accessed 19 June 2011). The decision of the ECJ can be accessed at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:153:0007:0007:EN:PDF> (accessed 19 June 2011) while the British court decisions can be found through search at http://www.bailii.org/form/search_cases.html (search performed on 19 June 2011).

from the person-to-state level to the inter-personal level. Aware of these arguments, Meletis Apostolides explains how his quest for re-unification of the island, and not the attempt to foster enmity, informed his actions throughout.

Displacement

In 1974, Meletis Apostolides had been serving his military service after finishing the first stage of his studies.

'In the division where I had served 18 people of 50 came out of the war alive. It was an intense and dramatic experience. Most of them were lost in Lapithos. I left immediately after. By September I was already in London. I left in the military shirt and boots I was wearing and with an intense feeling of depression. I thought I would never again be able to laugh for as long as I lived. I did not return for another two years, for a couple of weeks. My parents left for Nicosia in a family car driven by a neighbour.'

The healing process that came with time was catalysed by his acquaintance of a Turkish-Cypriot who had also fled to London.

'We met on a Greek evening, both of us having been dragged there by friends who wanted to give us some respite from our misery. We recognized this misery in each other and started talking, only to discover that during the invasion we had been fighting 200m apart from each other. This led to a processing of this depression all over again, through the questioning of what led us to a situation of nearly being killed. This understanding was the catalyst for working through whatever misconceptions I still carry – people would like to think they are not prejudged, but as the saying goes, "if we knew where the stones were, we would not keep tripping over them". In London we began a process of trying to understand the Cyprus problem, at a time when it was not even thought possible to think through this problem... We then met again in Ledra Palace together with a group who sought interpersonal contact.'

This dialogue with Turkish-Cypriots over the years was significant in the formation of Meletis Apostolides' thinking in regard to the political issue and his own losses. It also formed a key point of concern in deciding to go ahead with litigation. He spoke to a number of people about his thoughts, including Turkish-Cypriots, and eventually decided to go ahead. His primary motive, he emphasizes, was the need to do something about the unbridled development that took hold in the north after the failure of the Annan Plan, and which seemed to be pushing the prospects for reunification of the island into impossibility.

'On a personal level, I want to go back. If at the end the concept of 'return' has no relationship to 'my roots', which is also always connected to the concept of 'property', what will the meaning of 'return' be? Property, for me, and Cypriot refugees in general, is not only material – it is about connections to homes that stretch back for generations, for example, my mother's home was built by my grandmother in the 1860s. Therefore for me it is a crucial point, this connection between reunification, return, and the property issue.'

This point seems to have been understood by his Turkish-Cypriot friends.

'The first congratulations I received were from Turkish-Cypriots. They understood that it was not an act directed against them.'

Litigation

A key point in deciding on litigation was the identity of the Orams as non-Cypriots.

'From the first instant, I declared that I could understand Turkish-Cypriots living in my home, because they need a place to live too. But I cannot understand a foreigner who comes to invest in this land cheaply and who, by acting so, contributes to the worsening of an already complicated problem.'

This thinking also guided the claims made by Meletis Apostolides in the case, which did not merely request the Orams to abandon the property, but to demolish everything they had built on it.

'I did not intend through this suit to say, "I am here to take over the investment you have made". What I was saying is "leave and take them with you". It is for this reason that I did not at first request the British High Court to confiscate their property there ... By the same token, I am not now going to pursue compensation against their claim that they are not allowed by the occupying regime to demolish the house. I will not persecute people who cannot act.'

In saying this, he is also aware of the political intricacies surrounding the handling of the case in the North. He notes that the Orams have stated that they received aid to fight the case, as this is a case that affects many more foreign investors in the North, whom the authorities would like to appease against threats of similar fates. In the itinerary of the case from Cyprus to Britain and then Luxembourg, Meletis Apostolides traces a route for justice.

'At the British Court we essentially failed when they decided that execution of judgment could not apply to the North, due to the suspension of the acquis. But in Luxembourg we were eventually vindicated.'

One of the important outcomes of the case, he notes, is the decision 'that courts in the Republic of Cyprus can rule on things that go on in the occupied areas, including the property issue'. A year after the end of the case, Meletis Apostolides feels vindicated.

'It showed that European laws and institutions have a practical application. If we consider that our common house is the EU, for both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, this is a common gain for both sides. And I consider it a gain also for the EU ... that some values are safeguarded.'

Future Expectations

What he now expects at the conclusion of the case—which remains partly unimplemented, as the demolition of the villa is not authorized—is to go to his house. 'Return', for Meletis Apostolides is a complicated and difficult issue, nevertheless.

'Return is inextricably linked with the concept of time... what 'home' means to me is slowly being transformed into 'property deeds' for future generations. And those who live there now are different people. And unfortunately this seems to be taken seriously into account more generally. From this point of view I believe that we urgently need to find solutions so that we retain the possibility for reunification... I do not know if the current generation is willing to go back and live in those 'homes' when they have nothing apart from deeds and indeed even more so when they do not even have these, to connect them to the occupied areas.'

The extent to which his particular litigation solution can be generalized is thus understood as having its own limits:

'I do not believe that political matters will be solved through the courts. It is a struggle that is important, which helps the case, even more so that it is European courts that stand outside and apart from the involved parties that give the solutions... but you see that when you pursue things in different ways other solutions are also found through the courts. I believe that what we have achieved should have happened, for me it was a process that I needed to pursue.'

His case is therefore imagined as opening a path towards a new beginning rather than closing a process:

'From here on the thing we have to do is enter negotiations with a spirit of cooperation and agreement, looking at our common house, which is Cyprus, aiming at reunification within the EU and with implementation of its justice principles. I do not believe there are ideal solutions... what we have to try and find are solutions to implement commonly in a common path... to slowly put things behind us, like Europe did after WWII... for future generations as well.'

Conclusion

The *Apostolides v. Orams* case is undoubtedly a landmark in property litigation in Cyprus. Yet from the perspective of the litigant who initiated it, it is of utmost importance to view the case in the non-adversarial terms (in an ethnic sense) it initially began from. In this sense, Meletis Apostolides recognizes that the pervasive nationalist rhetoric propounded on the two sides, often more forcefully in the media than on the official level, has at times tended to ethnicise the case, rendering the Orams as 'proxy-Turkish-Cypriots' and himself as an emblematic figure furthering an ethnically determined and ethnically exclusionist 'Greek-Cypriot cause'. Meletis Apostolides emphasizes untiringly that his motives have been and continue to be far from nationalist. His aim is a reconciliatory one and his vision one of reunification. Bearing this in mind renders the paradoxes of political interpretations of the case a symptom of the paradoxes that mire the property issue.

Mike Tymvios, 2005

Mike Tymvios has become known in connection to the Cyprus conflict through his case lodged at the ECtHR in 1990, *Eugenia Michaelidou Developments Ltd and Michael Tymvios v. Turkey* (Application no. 16163/90).¹³ In lodging the case, Tymvios claimed the right to enjoy a property he owned in the area of Tymbou/Ercan (and then registered under a company he owned with his wife), a right which Turkey denied. The case was declared admissible in 1999.

¹³ Details of judgements may be found at <http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/Case-Law/Decisions+and+judgments/HUDOC+database/> (accessed 18 June 2011).

The Court ruled in October 2003 in favour of the applicant and awarded costs and expenses but reserved its decision regarding the claimed amount of c. 270000 CYP inviting the parties to attempt to reach an agreement.

While up to then the case followed the precedent of *Loizidou v. Turkey*, it would be its following phase that catapulted Mike Tymvios, known amongst Greek-Cypriots as an Olympic medalist who did the country proud, to notoriety as the first well-known person to have accepted an offer from the IPC in the North in exchange for his property. In an April 2008 judgment the ECtHR confirmed the conclusion of the case in a friendly settlement in which the land in question was exchanged for land under the authority of the IPC and an additional 1 million USD. Notably, the decision made reference to a third party in the case, the RoC, of which Mike Tymvios is a citizen, and which had in the meantime declared him bankrupt, subsequently calling on the Court to nullify the agreement on the grounds that domestic law forbids a bankrupt person from entering into financial agreements. The claim was rejected.

Three years after the conclusion of the case, Mike Tymvios has found himself under the media spotlight on a number of occasions, all related to his attempts to take possession of the property for which he had exchanged his land with the IPC. Legally, the execution of the settlement seems to stumble on RoC law, which has placed all Turkish-Cypriot properties under the administration of a special department within the Ministry of Interior known as 'the Custodian for Turkish-Cypriot properties'. This includes property owned by the Turkish Cypriot Communal Chamber (effectively disbanded with the onset of ethnic strife in 1963), which the land in question formerly was, before passing under Tymvios's ownership.

Displacement

Mike Tymvios lived in Nicosia at the time of the war. The land he eventually inherited belonged to his grandfather, who came from the village of Tymbou. This differentiates him from refugees who have lost their homes in the war: what he has lost in displacement is valued in economic terms as sizeable property.

'Emotionally I did not have special bonds to Tymbou. My father and grandfather had already left the village and I had not grown up there.'

In this way Mike Tymvios delineates the differences between his own losses and the affective frames in which the experience of 'refugees proper' is normally recounted.

Litigation

On finishing his studies abroad, Mike Tymvios returned to Cyprus in 1980 and joined a group of displaced Greek-Cypriots (*ektopisthéntes*) and owners of property in the North who were seeking ways of claiming their rights.

'At some stage we discovered, speaking to a number of lawyers, that Turkey had ratified the ECHR... the first who went ahead and applied was Titina Loizidou and immediately after her we went ahead, a group of 32 people... The decision on my case found Turkey in breach of Article 1, i.e., the right to property... we then waited for the decision on compensation. In the meantime,

Turkey set up the IPC in 2005... from 2003 to 2005 we kept going back to the Court demanding the decision. In 2005 Turkey approached me via the Commission... this was the time at which no action was being taken on the case. Turkey wrote a letter to me asking if I was interested in a friendly settlement and inviting me to meet the Commission. ... The process took a year and a half during which time I found myself under attack from the [RoC] government, as you probably know from the media. To cover myself I sent a letter to Tassos Papadopoulos [then President of the Republic], explaining what was happening and what offers I had had, and asking for the involvement of the government on the economic plane (keep in mind we are talking about a property worth €30-40m). I was asking for a governmental guarantee of a sum in order to transfer my legal rights to the government so that I would not need to agree to a friendly settlement and pursue the case in the Court... anyway, in the end we agreed with the Commission in 2007 for exchange of part of my property with a property belonging to the Turkish Cypriot Communal Chamber in Larnaca... worth 25m Euro, plus a sum of money, about 1mUSD for loss of income from my property.'

Although the total value of the agreement falls short of the estimated total value of the land in question, Mike Tymvios recognized that 'beggars cannot be choosers' and therefore took the rational route of 'taking the money and saying thank you'. The case was then sent to ECtHR for ratification and the RoC was informed accordingly.

'The Republic reacted violently to this, claiming that this land is under the Custodian, that the agreement would abolish the institution of the Custodian, is unacceptable and so on. The Court rejected all this and ruled in my favour.'

Turkey paid the sum of money agreed but until today the RoC government refuses to implement the agreement and has blocked the transfer of title.

'It uses the land illegally as schools, exploits it illegally, and I have now filed a case against the Republic at the ECtHR, asking for compensations, punishment, and the expulsion of the Republic of Cyprus from the Council of Europe... I also took the case to local courts asking for the transfer of property to be concluded and the schools to close... the Republic does not want to create precedents, but this is not my concern. A decision of the ECtHR will sooner or later be implemented.'

Although political concerns may have been the main motives behind the government's attempts to thwart the ratification of the friendly settlement, Mike Tymvios also concedes that this political argumentation rings hollow.

'My thinking is this: the government is worried about setting precedents for the eventual solution of the property issue in comprehensive negotiations on the Cyprus issue – what precedents? When we see the negotiations going backwards instead of forwards, and when we know that exchange will form part of the solution to the issue, how will it set a precedent? Exchange will be given as one of the options, together with compensation. The leaders agreed that they will start with exchange and for whatever is left, money will be given.'

On this basis, Mike Tymvios believes that his case has made a difference to the political framing of the issue.

'My case, together with Titina's and all the others, has achieved one thing that nobody else had achieved up to then. Turkey recognized our right to property, which it had not accepted up to then. Until that point it was saying that "whatever we took is ours and nobody will get anything back". This was the most important thing. And the 1000 people that are now on the application list of the Commission, that's why they went to the Commission: because their property rights are recognized and they will receive compensation. Regardless of the fact that the compensations received will be far below the value of the properties, their property rights are being recognized. They are recognized as the rightful owners of these properties. This was very important to establish. And we opened the way for all the other property owners.'

The criticism that he has subsequently received on settling the case with Turkey is, Mike Tymvios believes, unfounded.

'When I was declared bankrupt for a sum of €700,000 and I presented the court with a collateral of property in the occupied areas, which, had I owned it in the free areas would be worth 100 million instead of 40, I was deemed 'not worthy of credit' (mi axiόhreas) because this property was in the occupied areas and had a value of 0. When the state values your property at 0, why do they complain that Turkey has put a value on my property? ... Because the Turks happened to have entered from Kyrenia, are we simply the unlucky who have to lose our properties? This is the question... When a person in Paphos has a small plot and makes 2m off it, and my property is considered as having 0 value, where is justice?'

Future expectations

Thinking about the possibility of a just settlement to the property issue, Mike Tymvios is rather pessimistic:

'We made serious mistakes, we gave the pretext for them to take our properties, to take 30 or so per cent of Cyprus, and this will not be given back in full. If there is a solution it will be a compromise solution, and it will not allow for the properties to be returned. The Annan Plan provided for the possibility of achieving the reunification of Cyprus after some years. It did not pass and the fact that it did not pass has made our situation worse. It has almost extinguished the possibility of a just solution. What people did not understand then was that this plan was not for us. It was for the people that would have come after us. After 20-25 years. And this is the important point. That they did not understand.'

In relating to others who have in recent years filed applications with the IPC, he notes a change in approach, which nevertheless provides little hope for improving their predicament:

'The change I see in people's mentality is regarding their properties. They apply to the Commission thinking that it is better to get 1/3 of the value of the property than get nothing at all. And you see that whenever there is an indication that things are moving forward the number of applications drops. When there is stalemate they rise again as people see there is no settlement. In addition, the Commission has a deadline of ceasing its work at the end of 2011. What will happen after that? Will they lose everything? Because the ECtHR route will no longer be an option after 2011.'

This pessimism also applies to his evaluation of his own situation:

'I regret that I was forced to sue the RoC at the ECtHR. I am sad because I see that it will have repercussions on other fields as well. Because the Republic cannot demand of Turkey to fulfill its obligations while it [the RoC] does not. It will also have repercussions on the people because it is the people that will end up paying the fines, not the government.'

Conclusion

The extent of Mike Tymvios' success in navigating the increasingly complex entanglement of law and politics on the property issue is yet to be decided. His case is as iconic of this entanglement as it is of the bitterness that the pursuit of 'justice' has left in many Greek-Cypriots' experience. At the same time, it is also indicative of the space left for individual agency in the absence of any effective political solutions as yet. While such agency, of people, as he put it, 'taking their fates in their own hands', might seem to answer individual needs for liberation from the burden of the Cyprus conflict that nearly all Cypriots carry on their shoulders, his access to the right of enjoyment of property still remains elusive. This elusiveness is in many ways the bind that many applicants to the IPC may see themselves facing as a comprehensive settlement continues to evade the leaders. In recognizing that, Mike Tymvios is also cognizant that more than 30 years after the event 'justice' seems impossible even in that much-awaited event of settlement. His narrative is a stark reminder that such 'justice' is as much a matter of inter-communal negotiations between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaders, as it is of intra-communal negotiations between those who lost more and those who lost less, those who did not lose, and those who gained.

Thomas Kaoulas, 2007

Thomas Kaoulas is one of the lesser known litigation cases regarding property rights in Cyprus. This is largely because Thomas Kaoulas has not only pursued his property rights in the Cypriot domestic courts, but has also sought them from the RoC itself. In a legal suit claim lodged by himself and his wife Eleni Kaoula at the Famagusta District Court on 9 October 2007, Thomas Kaoulas claims that the Republic has failed to effectively compensate them for property they have lost in and around the town of Famagusta due to the occupation by Turkish troops, amounting to 109m CYP.

As they were forcibly driven out of this property in the war of 1974, and since their property had no special characteristics to differentiate it from properties not occupied, Thomas Kaoulas's claim is based on the view that the state has failed to adequately protect them from the adverse effects of this loss (mainly loss of income through the properties) in the years and decades that followed the Turkish invasion. The argumentation of this claim draws on the differential treatment by the state of those who have been displaced vis-à-vis those who have not, since refugees and non-refugees alike are expected to contribute to the 'public burden' in the same way. This, according to the suit claim presented in October 2009, violates articles

23, 24 and 28 of the Constitution of the RoC, pertaining to rights to property and contribution to public burden respectively. The Public Defender particularly rejected the argument that the Republic has failed, despite having the ability to do so, to impose special taxation and benefits so as to ensure that the losses incurred by the displaced through loss of use were adequately compensated. In 2011, court hearings are still ongoing. Thomas Kaoulas, who runs a small printing business in the town of Limassol is struggling with debts and looks to the case as a way of having his struggles to raise his family under adverse conditions not of his own choosing, recognized.

Displacement

Thomas Kaoulas feels that after the war, the state provided refugees with only minimal benefits to alleviate the losses they had suffered.

'The benefits now provided are not enough compared to the losses suffered. For example, I was given 6000 CYP, with which I bought a flat, which was too small, so I now rent both the house in which I live and the premises I use for my business. I have already paid 200,000 CYP in rent for these. This was difficult and I appealed many times to the government for help, asking concretely in one instance for a property I own in the north to be exchanged for a property here so that I could stand on my own two feet. I paid a lot of money so far, and I am still paying to raise my family of three children, and now with three grandchildren. They all refused, telling me it is a political issue. I am now 65, and I am still struggling and I will not stop the struggle until I feel vindicated, until I have my financial solvency recognised.'

Through the suit, Thomas Kaoulas cites the failure of the government to act as guarantor when he asks for bank loans against the mortgage of his abandoned property, as an example of discriminatory treatment.

'The Limassolian can go to the bank, put down his small plot and get a loan, while my property is not eligible.'

Such discrimination feels to him unjustified, considering what he had before his displacement and the difficulties he has faced in the course of it.

'I was retired at 27 when I left. I stopped my studies in law in Greece to start the company that did very well... We came here and on the first day we sat on the floor and my wife was breast-feeding my first-born son and the woman who rented us the house did not come to ask us "guys are you OK? Here is a chair to sit on". I will not forget this... We ended up in Limassol and I am here on 'stand-by mode' for 37 years.'

This adverse condition that characterizes his refugee experience is now also affecting his children, who have a different experience.

'Our children feel the injustice when they keep hearing about all the property that their parents lost, when they see their Limassolian friends go out and have fun, have their parents help them out, buy them cars, live without financial worries. Even though my son also works at the bank, there is still a difference with his friends who inherited property from their parents. I gave whatever

I could give them in terms of property, and even more than I was able... My son bought a flat of 70sq.m. They cannot understand my experience, but they know their father has property that could have afforded them an easier life.'

Litigation

Before applying to the RoC courts, Thomas Kaoulas had applied to the IPC and refused to settle on compensation for part of his property in the north, in order to alleviate some of the financial strain he was under at the time.

'I humiliated myself and went to the IPC and offered a land parcel of 13 skáles I had – they offered me 48000 [CY] pounds for a plot that is valued at over 2m [CY] pounds. I refused, but this was a humiliation and it is a humiliation for all of us who go to the IPC. I left feeling humiliated not because I did not want to sell my land, but because this was going to be giving it away, not selling it... I went to the IPC with a lot of indignation and when I went my indignation was with the government here... I paid €700,000 in taxes over these 37 years, without any deductions, I was even arrested for owing €2000 one night and had to fight to be released, and nothing was recognized as mitigating circumstance.'

Once filed, it took over two years before the case was admitted to Court in 2009.

'After the interim decision which came after 3 years, the case began and we were asked to evaluate our losses of income. Our side estimated the loss of income at €10m and the government's side at €8.5-9m... On 23 February the two sides presented their arguments... We also filed 12 objections that the government presented to our claims.'

In 2011, the judge's decision is still pending, but Thomas Kaoulas is hopeful that his claims will be accepted. Yet, he also points out that this is a bigger issue that affects many refugees.

'They [the government] know I am right, but they fear that if they compensate me, even in part, then they will have to do it for all the cases... Whether I win my case or not does not solve the problem. There are lots of people who are suffering.'

Future expectations

Thomas Kaoulas contextualises his claims not only within the Greek-Cypriot refugee community but also within the context of the Cyprus conflict more generally.

'It is the fault of the state for cultivating hatred between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. They should have cultivated love, so that Turkish-Cypriots would not be hugged by Turkey... I was in a house in Nicosia once, and a high-class lady asked me "so you go over there? Why do you go?" I said "look, because this is a dinner meeting I will reply gently even though now you are provoking my human emotions. But I will say only one thing. I go because I have a painful wound, because I left my place against my will and I will continue to go, even if I die without returning, I will continue to go. And don't ask me again why I go. I went 350 times and I will keep going. Because I have an open wound, I go to my house, I cut my flowers, and I leave, I come to Limassol and I do this with pain in my soul. You cannot feel this", I said to her. And she was silent. There can be no empathy towards the refugee by the non-refugee. Even if I had no property I would want to go to my place.'

Return, for Thomas Kaoulas, is a possibility he would seize without second thoughts. *'I'll return before I return [can't wait]. As soon as it opens I'll go. I would go walking.'*

Conclusion

As the first refugee case to be filed in local courts against the RoC, Thomas Kaoulas's case still awaits a decision. In the meantime, Thomas Kaoulas continues to visit his house regularly. Even though he is cognizant of the fact that winning the law suit will not allow him to return home, his claim is motivated by a sense of injustice that the post-war situation and the diachronically stalled negotiations have deprived refugees of a standard of living they might have had under a settlement, or which they might also have attained had they received more financial support from the state. Even though Thomas Kaoulas has been branded a 'traitor' in the press for applying to the IPC and then suing the RoC, he does not view the first with any less frustration than the second. His settlement with the IPC that prefigured his suit in fact increased his sense of injustice in having been forced to 'give away' property that under different circumstances would have ensured him a secure retirement. Seen in the adversarial terms in which the two systems operate in Cyprus, it might be concluded that the IPC can in fact function in a way that its own failure to satisfy claims delegitimizes in Greek-Cypriot refugees' eyes not the TRNC, but their own state. However, seen from a perspective that prioritises individuals' needs, this case exemplifies the bind that Greek-Cypriot refugees find themselves in, battling unsympathetic administrative structures on both sides.

Eleni Meleagrou, 2009

Eleni Meleagrou is a lawyer practicing in the UK and specializing in human rights. She is associated with the AIRE Centre (Advice on Individual Rights in Europe) and is represented by AIRE in an application at the ECtHR that she filed in May 2009.

Her application resulted from her dissatisfaction with the ability of the IPC to resolve her property claims. Eleni Meleagrou applied to the IPC after the *Xenides-Arestis v. Turkey* case pointed to it as a possible domestic remedy, wanting to test its effectiveness.

Originally requesting full reinstatement of 18 pieces of property, including a family home on the Kyrenia coast, Eleni Meleagrou applied to the IPC in November 2006 and engaged with the IPC in negotiations for three years before having many of her claims thrown out and offered compensation for the rest. After appealing the decision of the IPC announced in October 2010, the case was put in front of the High Administrative Court of the TRNC and the decision upheld in June 2011. Having already filed the case at the ECtHR, Eleni Meleagrou waits for the Court to consider her application.

Displacement

Eleni Meleagrou is not a refugee under RoC law, but feels that the Kyrenia holiday house her parents had built in the 1960s was as much home as their Nicosia one.

'We spent every single weekend there and the whole summer. My mother would write there, my father would see patients there, the [extended] family would gather for celebrations and parties... I would dream about it for years... But my dream was not a nice one at all. I would be in the house and the sea was underneath and the rocks, and we would go down to have a swim but in the place where we descended there were a lot of dead people buried. It was a macabre atmosphere.'

Having been in the house, which was located right on the spot where the Turkish army would later land, on the day of the coup, Eleni Meleagrou left it for the last time in fear of the coming war.

'I was studying in the UK and came for the summer, so I was spending it with my grandmother in the house. My parents had come on the weekend and left. On Monday, my grandmother came and said something happened and we should listen to the news, so we learnt there had been a coup. I was very politically alert and two weeks before we had come very close to a coup, so we had been discussing it. When I heard it I immediately thought that an invasion was coming. The phones had been cut and we could not contact anyone. That night I stayed up looking over the sea, because on clear days you can see Turkey, the Kahraman area [din Karamanyá]. I was thinking if there is an invasion, they must come from somewhere. I didn't know it would take a week. The next morning my parents came and took us. We had a gardener who offered to load some things in the car from the house; my mother refused.'

Even though the family had feared what would come, they did not prioritise the loss of property as their immediate concern.

'It was a horrible situation. Apart from the fact that what we had been terrified of had happened, we had more immediate concerns, which was my uncle, who needed to go into hiding [for being a left-wing activist]. Because all these "brave men" [pallikaráes] were looking for them, and they had already killed various people. We went home and I kept listening to the BBC. On the evening before the invasion, I was sitting at home and suddenly got a sense of movement around the house and people running. They knocked on the door and it was a group of coupists who had surrounded the house and wanted to search inside for weapons. I got very angry and spoke back at them, they were nudging me with the gun. My mother told them to leave the girls alone and she would help them.'

As soon as the port at Limassol opened, after the Turkish invasion, Eleni Meleagrou and her uncle were put on the first boat out for Greece, from where she flew to London to continue her studies. There, she became politically involved with the Cypriot student movement. She considered leaving her studies 'because nothing really mattered', but pressed on and finished her degree. Asked, she is uncertain 'if any of us ever recovered' from the war experience.

Litigation

Having worked in the City [London] as a lawyer, Eleni Meleagrou began cooperating with the AIRE Centre in 2003 and focusing increasingly on human rights cases. As part of that work she also began to look at the ECtHR cases relating to Cyprus and studying the litigation history since *Loizidou v. Turkey*. Eleni Meleagrou expected the announcement of a new Commission, which came on the very day of the judgment on *Xenides-Arestis v. Turkey*.¹⁴

'I then began discussing with people about it. I was of the opinion that this domestic remedy needed to be tested, to see whether it was effective or not. I started looking up our title deeds, opening my father's drawers, which he had kept very tidy, finding title deeds and maps and things. I had never before been interested in title deeds and papers. My mother had no idea about where things were, my father though had also taken out certificates of ownership, because after 1974 the land registry offices for Famagusta and Kyrenia were lost [íne hasimýá]. I spent hours trying to understand what matched with what and in the end I discovered that there were 18 different parcels, which were all over there [in the north]. I wanted to claim these and claim them for restitution, since the IPC declared that it would restitute property.'

In consultations with friends and acquaintances, Eleni Meleagrou received mixed responses.

'I engaged in discussion upon discussion with people; they were telling me that if you go it will be treason, it will mean recognition of the occupying logic of Turkey, but I didn't care about these issues. I only cared about the fact that this was a domestic remedy and I had to exhaust it. My uncle was very supportive and suggested I speak to a friend of his from Morphou who was a lawyer.'

The connection with the specific Turkish-Cypriot lawyer is something that Eleni Meleagrou cherishes the most about her litigation experience. Although she started off the case representing herself, this lawyer was formally assigned in the case file as 'her lawyer' when she gave him power of attorney to act for her when she happened to be in the UK.

'Hakki is a person who I loved and still love very much. I met him in 2006 and we began working together. Hakki did not speak much English, and my Turkish was weak, but he spoke fluent Greek in the Cypriot idiom, the way he had learnt it playing in the streets of Morphou as a child. In the beginning, trying to communicate legal terms to each other in the Cypriot dialect, I thought we would never get out of this mess [laughs]. But he was very smart, and dedicated. I guided him through the ECtHR system, and he guided me through their own system, which I had no idea about. We became close friends, with his wife as well, I used to sit in their kitchen eating sausages and drinking zivania ... it cost me a lot when he died recently.'

The IPC came back with an initial decision rejecting the application, on the basis that Eleni Meleagrou was not recognized as the rightful owner of eight of the properties, because she had inherited them via a company her father had set up under the family's name and this was not accepted under the IPC law. Nevertheless, they engaged in compensation negotiation with her on all the pieces, which she rejected.

¹⁴ See also Erdal, 2011: 253-256.

'It was completely arbitrary this valuation [gudurú endelós]... I explained that I was not interested in this, compensation was not my concern. I also explained that I was planning to go to the ECtHR and I wanted them to provide explanations of the reasons why they were not reinstating the properties... in the end they were forced to submit documents tracing what had happened to each piece through the point system – that some were allocated to specific people, some were military zones, some were forest. And I was also offered reinstatement for a miniscule piece that I managed to prove was outside the forest boundary. These assignments would also change during the course of the discussions. It was not a serious approach to things.'

The IPC's final decision in the end reverted to their original one and was upheld by the High Administrative Court after an appeal. In the meantime, Eleni Meleagrou had already filed an application to the ECtHR before the decision was announced, upon realizing that her claims would not be satisfied.

'After five years I became exasperated [ídha k' abóidha] and I filed an application, having consulted AIRE as well, telling the Court I would inform them of developments.'

Future expectations

Although the application was motivated by Eleni Meleagrou's interest to test the IPC as a domestic remedy, the outcome of this 'test', she explains, was not predetermined.

'I went to try and see if it was effective. And I was perfectly prepared to consider reasonable responses to my demands... Of course I knew they weren't going to tell me "take the 18 pieces" or "take your house"... It's difficult to say what I was expecting as a just decision. I am not a fool, I understand that people cannot be forced from their houses. But on the other hand they did not give me an offer, for example, saying "OK, your house we cannot reinstate but these plots behind the house we can". If they had said that, I would have felt bitter [tha egístiza], but I would have considered it. Or in front there is another small plot under a separate title deed. They refused that because it was seafront. Or pieces given to settlers that are not lived on, they are empty, they were simply assigned. For me the whole process was so unfair, so I was bitter because I could see they thought they can fool me [na me beribézoun]. I felt I was being taken on a ride. I felt like Alice in Wonderland sometimes. If they had negotiated seriously I would have been prepared to consider all sorts of things. But they never did... I was a lot more optimistic than I should have been.'

Her case, Eleni Meleagrou feels, is indicative of the wider politics of the Cyprus issue.

'Having read the [IPC] law, I could see that it's a law that cannot be implemented properly. There are a lot of generalizations and it is built in such a way as to allow them to do what they like. There are no criteria for determining compensation, no formula, there was no logic in anything. It would have worked if the people on the Commission were experts, not necessarily in law, but it would be good if they were lawyers so as to be independent of the Attorney General. They are not independent people, who can look at things in an impartial way... It is a domestic remedy of Turkey, but it is not Turkey's, it's the TRNC's. And it suffers from the corruption and incompetence that a state suffers from that has been illegal for 40 years... That's how I felt going through it actually. That I was in a statelet which is under military occupation, it's under the military, and

they would tell me as well “we need to ask the army people on this piece” and so on. I think by its nature it couldn’t work properly.’

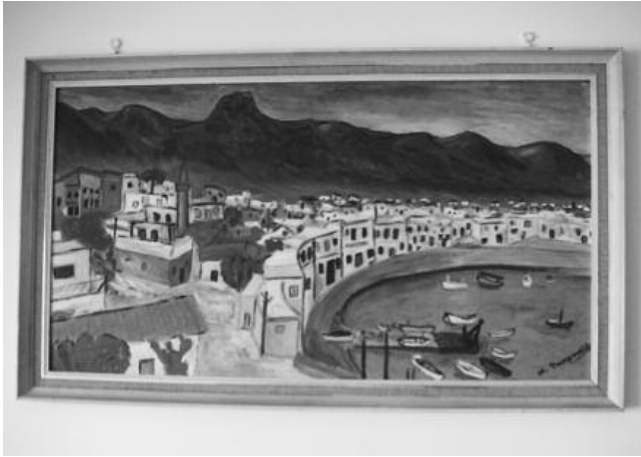
In her expectations of the political future, Eleni Meleagrou is pessimistic about reunification, but continues to imagine a reunification of people if not land.

‘They have built a life there and we cannot go and undo it... It’s in fact more complicated than that and I was lucky to have seen this through Hakki ... I felt empowered by the access I had and this cannot be taken away, even if nothing is returned in the end... Sometimes I think I hope I don’t die before this ends, like Hakki. I want to see it through.’

Conclusion

With her ECtHR case still awaiting admission, Eleni Meleagrou’s litigation story is still to begin in one sense (the international level), yet finished in another (the local level). While her negotiations with the IPC may have left Eleni Meleagrou bitter about the extent to which property claims can be satisfied within local systems, the experience of navigating the complex and arbitrary bureaucracy she encountered in the course of it also made her more aware of what a future settlement might entail, both on the communal and on the individual level. Her conclusion from this experience is an indication of the space left to individuals to negotiate their own solutions, even in the case where what many people on both sides fear most, i.e., a second partition, actually takes place. At the same time, it underlines a definition of ‘justice’ that has been prominent in many of the litigation cases presented: that it is more about the recovery of one’s dignity as a person than it is of recovery in material terms.

RENDERINGS



Painting of Kyrenia harbor on an office wall in Nicosia.



Sketch of Kyrenia harbor underneath a decorative shelf of a living room in Nicosia.

CONCLUSION

This report has sought to provide an overview of how displacement has been experienced amongst members of the Greek-Cypriot community. The stories summarized herein point first and foremost to the variability of such experience and underline in this sense the impossibility of framing such experience in generalized and unified terms.

In cognizance of this, the introduction has sought to outline some of the variable aspects of this experience by way of relating how different factors may have affected individual experiences. Gender, age, class and other identity traits have been undoubtedly of high relevance to the shaping of these experiences. Other factors have also seemed determining, however. The time and details of one's flight, the quality and area of the property, as well as the particular links to it are some of these factors as well. These interrelationships have been the focus of the introductory section in part one of the report.

Part two has then turned to summaries of interviews carried out with persons affected by displacement to the southern part of Cyprus. In the selection made of the ten summaries included in the report, the factors mentioned above have been a guiding point. Apart from these aspects, another aspect that seems to be determining of the way refugee identity is conceptualized is a person's position vis-à-vis others, which seems to operate on two levels: the first is the level of officialdom and the second the level of social relations. Because these others are mostly viewed in adversarial terms, this could be identified as the political domain of refugeehood. One characteristic of relevance here is the categorization used by the state to organize refugeehood and the welfare and other rights that are connected to it. Thus, while some interviewees in the sample are officially recognised as 'refugees' and hold the 'refugee identity card' issued by the state to prove it, others do not, even though they contend that their experience is no different to other refugees. In other cases, especially of second-generation refugees, the document may be possessed, but it is inversely not attended by a feeling that one is indeed a refugee. In still other cases, owners of property which has been occupied may feel a sense of refugeehood, but due to their living circumstances at the time of displacement they may not have been recognized as refugees and treat this as a matter-of-fact bureaucratic identification process. On the level of social relations, interviewees dwell significantly on the relations between refugees and non-refugees following the displacement. Most of their comments reveal a mixed attitude, recognizing both the help extended by friends, relatives, and strangers mobilized under civil society and governmental structures, but also the distrust, discrimination, and disdain exhibited by those with whom they found themselves in a relation of dependence (e.g., landlords).

In turn, the ways in which this political domain is described in the interviews is tightly connected to interviewee's discourses of 'justice', which in some cases also connects to the highest level of politics, their views about a future settlement. In these discourses of 'justice', one important element is the sense of communal sharing of refugee losses. The terminology used in many instances to relate this is the 'sharing of burden' for those losses across the entire Greek-Cypriot population. This mirrors official terminology used in institutional language to describe, for example, the workings of the 'Central Agency for Equivalence in the Distribution of Burden' (see Introduction) and in legislation and policies instituted in the 1990s and 2000s towards alleviating the problems connected to refugee temporary housing and financial insolvency. In the discourses employed by the interviewees, such measures are largely criticized for their inadequacy and the 'sharing of burden' gains a wider potential that relates to the relative gains and losses accentuated by recent property valuation dynamics between refugee and non-refugee populations. Moreover, this discourse also becomes linked to the higher-level political discussion regarding compensation options for properties and the legitimacy of the IPC as a mechanism for delivering justice through compensation. On another level, the issue of justice is also tied to ideas about refugees' access to rights and welfare. A number of interviewees mention, for example, the unequal distribution of this welfare amongst the refugee population, which they see as tied to the system of political clientalism, as determining both access and its absence, as well as the quality of those rights (e.g., in the type of alternative housing offered).

One aspect in which the political domain is also referenced in the interviews is in views of ethnic others and particularly Turkish-Cypriots. On this point, some interviewees dwelled at length on the relations with particular Turkish-Cypriots as part of their memories of life before displacement, while others have pointed out their connections to Turkish-Cypriots and the north at the present moment. Still others make no mention of such connections. Most, however, significantly verbalise a sense of alienation from official and less official nationalist rhetoric perpetuated through the educational system in the presentation of the north as a communally 'lost land' and in politicians' pronouncements about 'liberation from enslavement' of those lands. Thus, the majority of interviewees underline the lack of enmity towards Turkish-Cypriots in qualifying their views about loss and their future expectations, something which also parallels aspects of official rhetoric that projects enmity towards Turkey and Turks instead of Turkish-Cypriots.

Also connected to the political domain of discourse is the dichotomic separation between concepts of 'home' and concepts of 'property' as a means of describing the relation to what one has lost. Items from within one's home are thus recalled in detail in some cases and within a frame of accentuating the feeling of loss and injustice. In other cases, the distinction is drawn between particular items and the holistic sense of home and neighbourhood in one's communal relations that were broken off and irreparably severed at the point of displacement. Distinctions are also drawn, for example, between the legal domain of title-deeds and the personal sense of ownership not fully captured by them or at variance with them (when title

deeds may not have been transferred to children, or treated as ‘pieces of paper’ by second-generation refugees). Such distinctions may also refer back to the higher plane of politics through references to the IPC and compensation.

A different but related aspect of the implication of the political domain in the formation of displacement experiences is provided through the litigation stories presented in part three. In addition to particular points made in the conclusion section of each story, some more general comments are in order.

Overall, the litigation stories exhibit important similarities with the life stories of part two, which are mostly related to the framing of these stories within a political discursive framework. In this way, the stories of part two illuminate aspects of those in part three and vice versa. Thus, for example, in litigants’ comments, the visibility of Turkish-Cypriots is heightened and feeds into efforts to communicate their alienation from the nationalist rhetoric within which the media presentation of these legal cases is often couched. The relevance of their categorization within official categories of refugeehood is also important, as many litigants dwell on the ways in which their own perceptions of refugee identity differ from the identities conferred on them by the state or the benefits and support enjoyed or denied through this categorization. A number of litigants thus verbalise a sense of injustice not only in terms of what they lost to the Turkish army (which, via the state that commands it, is the party being sued in most cases) but also in respect to their own state’s ability to properly acknowledge and alleviate their loss. Thus, although in terms of the litigation routes and political effects the cases presented may differ widely and even clash,¹⁵ the litigants’ stories converge on a sentiment of unfair treatment by the political powers that be.

Finally, the centrality of trauma as the defining characteristic of refugeehood is apparent in all the stories.¹⁶ This is an anticipated feature, confirmed by other researchers (Agathangelou and Killian, 2009; Evdokas et al., 1976; Galatariotou, 2008) as well as earlier research on this and other aspects of Cypriot political subjectivity (Demetriou, 2007a; 2007b; Demetriou and Gurel, 2011). This is the main reason for including ‘flight’ as an integral feature of the interviews. These experiences of flight provide an instance in the interviews for dwelling on the violence experienced first-hand as well as that communicated through other people within that environment of collective victimization. This victimization is a feature that persists in the descriptions of the process of rebuilding one’s life, where the narrations often call forth the

¹⁵ For a detail analysis of the relevance of these differences on the questions of sovereignty especially as relates to the political negotiations for a settlement see Erdal (2011).

¹⁶ This centrality has also given cause for critical approaches, which reject the use of ‘trauma’ as applicable to refugees / IDPs (Loizos, 2008). In relation to this critique, I should note that my use of the word here is rather loose, intending to reflect the gamut of meanings attached to the use of the word in lay and political discourse, more than the clinical psychoanalytic implications of permanent incapacity.

pathological aspects of such rebuilding (e.g., descriptions of long-term effects of trauma endured during one's flight both on themselves and on those around them). At the same time, it is important to note that distinctions are drawn between these pathologised states and normalized ones, where agency and subjecthood are asserted in the same process of rebuilding lives. Significantly, trauma emerges at instances of death and near-death experiences and is communicated as something that may underlie the semblance of normality as people go about their everyday activities. In this respect, it may be claimed that such discourses and affects of trauma are being sustained by the political rhetoric developed by the Greek-Cypriot authorities over the decades. This point may be valid to a degree, but the interviews leave no doubt that these structures of sentiment are highly individualized and have developed even in distinction from this highly spectacularised political rhetoric. For example, one may communicate the pain of not being able to visit one's home but the specifics that distinguish this pain from the general one are equally emphasized.

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Life Stories: Greek Cypriot Community

This report presents a selection of life stories from people displaced to the southern part of Cyprus at various points during the conflict. This selection aims to reflect the variety of experiences of refugeehood. Drawing on these experiences, the report emphasizes the wide range of interpretations, feelings, discourses, expectations, and individual actions that they have informed over the years, in people's attempts to reconstruct their lives after the progressive division of the island. In these terms, the aim of the report is not to factually support a particular perspective or course of action, but rather, to evidence the multiplicity of such perspectives and actions. In this sense, the report shows that an eventual settlement of the property issue must be attentive to the wide variety of experiences of loss, and integrate both material and affective senses of restitution.

The report is divided into four parts, which centre around the presentations of life stories in the form of interview summaries, conducted with displaced individuals during the length of the project. It also includes interviews focused on litigation actions following the displacement. This part is considered a crucial section of the report because of the strong focus on litigation in current discussions of the property issue, on the levels of high politics, public discourse and everyday conversation. Overall, it is hoped that the report will enable a fuller appreciation of the complexity of the refugee and property issues, including their linkages and divergences within conceptualizations of displacement.

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