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Women and Change in Cyprus

Feminisms and Gender in Conflict

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To my children Yiorgos and Christina

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AKEL	*Anorthotikó Kómma Ergazómenou Laoú* (Progressive Party of Working People)
AWID	Association of Women's Rights in Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
EDEK	Movement of Social Democracy
EOKA	*Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston* (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters)
EU	European Union
GOED	*Gynekeia Organosi Enomenon Dimokraton* (Women's Organization of United Democrats)
HAD	Hands Across the Divide
IOM	International Organization of Migration
IR	International Relations
KATAK	Institution of the Turkish Minority in Cyprus
KISA	Centre for the Support of Foreign Workers
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOW	National Organization for Women
NUP	National Union Party
PEO	Pancyprian Federation of Labour
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
SEK	*Synomospondia Ergaton Kyprou* (Confederation of Cypriot Workers)
TMT	*Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı* (Turkish Resistance Organization)
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

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Introduction

The inner lines express who we think we are, and who is not us, whom we trust and of whom we are afraid.

(Cynthia Cockburn, 2004)[1]

We lost all our property and home in Kyrenia in the 1974 war. I have nothing on this side (the south). I went with my daughter in May and visited my house. A Turkish Cypriot family from Limassol (south) lives there now. They were very nice to me. I told them I am the owner of the house. They offered coffee. … Now that I have seen the house it is impossible to live there, it feels as if it is not mine anymore. The Turkish Cypriots cannot live in their house in Limassol which was turned into a factory.

(Eleni, Greek Cypriot, 2003)

My father was killed by the Greeks in Limassol when I was 17 years old in 1974. Thirty years later I cannot forgive them for killing an innocent man. I grew up without a father. I still remember the scene of his killing. I avoided Greeks all these years. … I don't want to live on the other side but I still want to see my old neighbourhood.

(Nahite, Turkish Cypriot, 2004)

Yes, my parents want me to get married to an Armenian. I have been hearing this since I was a little girl and I know inside me that I will marry an Armenian. I do not blame them because we are a small community.

(Mariam, Armenian Cypriot, 2006)

When I came back to Cyprus, after I finished my studies abroad, I decided against my mom's wishes not to marry. I

> started work, got my economic independence and decided to stay single. This was something my mum could never understand … because I stand outside the socially expected roles for 'a normal' woman.
>
> (Zehra, Turkish Cypriot, 2004).

The above extracts taken from Cypriot women in focus group discussions raise a number of the questions I discuss in this book. These questions touch on nationalism, militarism, violence, displacement because of war, fear of the 'enemy', male dominance, oppression, militarism, and women's roles, especially as mothers. Cyprus has been the site of such phenomena since the 1950s, which saw the rise of ethnic nationalism and the male-dominated national struggle for 'self-determination'. Under such conditions, the traditional right to choose a lifestyle that differs from the socially prescribed one is considered 'out of line'.

The gendered aspect of the national question has never been raised or discussed publicly. Women's issues or viewpoints are considered unimportant. The dominance of the 'national question' has left no space for Cypriot women to become involved in their own struggles for women's rights, liberation from patriarchy and to acquire public visibility. Cypriot women have been trapped in a nationalist patriarchal agenda and later in party politics, which can explain the lack of feminist activism and the absence of women's independent movements. This, however, has slowly started to change.

Some of the questions I address in the book include: what happens to women's lives and roles in armed conflict and post-conflict situations? How do ethnic divisions affect women's lives and roles and how does this relate to other divisions? What intra- and inter-differences exist among women from different communities? What is it like to 'cross' to the other side and meet the 'other', the perceived enemy? How do women recognize their victimhood in male-driven wars and move beyond that position? How do female Cypriot professional employers treat the female migrant domestic workers who cross the borders on both sides of the divide and what are the implications for female migration in a globalized economy and in a context of conflict? Could the development of a feminist conscious-

ness lead to new conversations about women's issues? And could the establishment of participatory and representative democracy with equal rights for men, women and others help eliminate gender discrimination and hegemonic discourses?

In one of the above extracts, Eleni, who has been displaced since 1974, directs her anger not at the Turkish Cypriot family – with which she in fact empathizes – but at the Greek Cypriot politicians' false promise that her home and property in Kyrenia will be returned to her once a solution (which men again will negotiate) is reached. In her view, she was being fobbed off with male political rhetoric and a ploy to keep the refugees passive. All politicians know that in the event of a negotiated settlement Kyrenia (Girne) will remain part of the Turkish Cypriot constituent state and a number of refugees will not be able to return. She confirmed this when she and her daughter crossed the border in 2003 to see her house in Kyrenia. The changes she witnessed convinced her that 'there will be no homecoming'. She acknowledged that the displaced Turkish Cypriot family would also not be going back to its ancestral home in Limassol, which Greek Cypriots had turned into a factory. Ethnic conflict and violence had changed what used to be each family's 'birth home'. In a matter of fact way, Eleni acknowledged that 'we have to see the reality', meaning 'we have to say goodbye to the past' and move on to whatever different options a negotiated solution to the property issue might propose. Some 35 years later, this testimony both complicates the hegemonic nationalist narrative of 'I do not forget the occupied lands' and severs any sense of belonging and attachment to the land.[2]

Nahite, who was also displaced and whose father Greek Cypriot fascists had killed in July 1974, was still fearful of the Greeks and would not forgive them for the loss of her father and for the pain they caused her family. She does not want to live on the other side – thus challenging the official Greek Cypriot position, which prevailed for decades, that if people on both sides were left alone they would return to their homes and live peacefully as they did prior to 1974 and upholding the view 'that we were friends' until the Anglo-Americans divided us. On Nahite's side the official narrative had been 'don't forget what the Greeks did to you, but forget your homes on the other side'. Memory thus serves to erase what needs to be forgotten. Despite

her trauma, she told me that she felt nostalgia for her old neighbourhood and would go to see it. When I saw her again some months later she had been and felt saddened that her neighbourhood had changed beyond recognition. Like Nahite, many Cypriot women 'visited' their homes on the other side only to realize that the old community they had known no longer existed and would never be reconstituted.

Other issues emerge from the same conflict, such as Mariam's 'mission' to get married to an Armenian man, which she sees as necessary for her community's social cohesion and cultural survival; a year later she told me that her family had arranged her marriage to a Cypriot Armenian. Women from small communities internalize and rationalize such covert oppression as a service to the 'common good'. Zehra, on the other hand, who chose to be different and take charge of her own life, faced family and communal disapproval and often felt an outsider. 'What I desire collides with what my community expects and dictates' and she laments that the two cannot coexist. Women living in a patriarchal, nationalist and militaristic environment, especially mothers, need to recognize their share of responsibility in shaping the dominant types of masculinity and femininity. Young Cypriot women who exercise their right to choose their own lifestyle are caught between traditionalism and modernity; the tension between the two worldviews often leads to social alienation.

In this book I bring together women's voices from all Cypriot communities situated in the ethno-national conflict – Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Maronite and Latin, as well as migrant domestic workers. This is the first attempt to raise the broad range of issues that Cypriot women face and to invite discussion of the various feminist theories. In this book I challenge the 'bicommunality' concept upon which the politics of confrontation and dualism have operated for decades, making invisible all the other smaller communities and silencing a diversity of voices. I introduce an inclusive understanding of a society that is 'multicommunal' and 'multicultural'. Although there are now many newer communities on the island than the five I mention in this book, I have consciously chosen to focus only on those that existed prior to and during the island's independence in 1960. I am aware that in the post-1974 period many newer communities have become estab-

lished on both sides of the divide. While the Turkish nationals in the north, in the internationally unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), came mainly from the Anatolia region, they also include Kurds, Laz, Bulgarian Turks, Romas and other so-called 'settlers', whom the hegemonic political and economic elites have often used and manipulated.

In the south, in the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), there are large numbers of migrants from Asian countries like Sri Lanka, the Philippines, India and Pakistan; in the late 1990s others came from eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics and they all contribute to the labour force and to the larger economy. The social and cultural landscape on both sides of the divide has been changing and a large number of mixed marriages have taken place. Such changes push us to rethink what constitutes 'Cypriotness', who are the Cypriots, and how can these new communities be situated both locally and in the context of global migration.

The ethno-national conflict in Cyprus has persisted in its present form since the 1974 fascist *coup d'état* and the Turkish military intervention. The origins of the conflict, however, go back to generations of mistrust and fear between the Greek- and Turkish Cypriot communities over such issues as attachment to 'motherlands', the rise of ethnic nationalism and foreign involvement and interference. Dominant narratives on both sides of the divide have excluded the smaller communities' stories and sufferings. The decade from 1963 to 1974 was a difficult period for the Turkish Cypriot community as it was for Armenian Cypriots, but this has not been recorded. For the Greek Cypriots it was a period of modernization and economic prosperity and this overshadowed the other divisions.

I am also a product of the Cyprus conflict and its ethnic divisions and I too have experienced many of the above issues. I researched and wrote this book as a Greek Cypriot woman, Cypriot scholar, peace activist and feminist. These four intersecting identities (apart from others) have situated me in the relevant scholarship and influenced my perspective as I studied the impact of the protracted ethno-national conflict on ordinary citizens, originally in the two communities.[3] I have been living within these structures and experienced intimately the impact of gendered conflict and hierarchies. As a scholar, I have tried

to step back from these local experiences and connect them to a regional and global context. In British and American universities I have studied conflict resolution, among other subjects, and have applied its perspective to the Cyprus conflict. In the 1980s and 1990s nationalist political elites and other sectors of the society regarded this perspective as 'unpatriotic' because it held both sides responsible for creating and perpetuating the conflict and dealt with both sides' truths and sufferings, thus 'spoiling' the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy. As a peace activist and feminist, I have tried to apply the tenets of conflict resolution to these structures and to promote *rapprochement* and peaceful coexistence among communities across the dividing lines.

By defining myself as a feminist I mean that I am conscious of patriarchy as a power structure that excludes and oppresses women locally and globally and I am concerned with smoothing out hierarchies of power that run across gender, ethnic, racial, class and sexual divides. As a feminist I am aware of the differences within my own gender and how difference is perceived and invoked in a conflict system to exclude others. Asking feminist questions has helped me develop a new kind of curiosity and has made me more realistic and more of an activist on issues of peace, female solidarity, violence against women and gender equality.

In *Women and Change in Cyprus* I set out to place women's experiences in the context of feminism and conflict and, in so doing, contribute to the literature of gendered ethnic conflict and especially to the literature on Cyprus. Specifically, I make three contributions. First, I demonstrate the fundamental ways in which ethnicity and gender penetrate ethno-national conflicts and how gender roles cut across ethnic divides. While women are often represented as the symbol of the nation, as Anthias and Yuval Davis have shown in their pioneering volume, and although they engage in the biological and social reproduction of the ethno-national agenda, ethnic conflict often strengthens patriarchal institutions and ideologies.[4] I explain how this situation is challenged when women's groups engage in activities and dialogue that go beyond ethnic and social divides and promote their own agency. The international community has recognized this challenge in the international women's decades, the 1995–2005 Beijing Platform for Action, UN Security Council Resolution

1325, the agendas of the European Women's Lobby, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and in many other forums.

Second, in *Women and Change in Cyprus* I challenge the hegemonic narrative that defines the Cypriot experience as a bicommunal one of Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Previous studies of Cypriot society and of the Cyprus problem have emphasized the bipolarity of Greek/Turk or Greek Cypriot/Turkish Cypriot, unwittingly excluding other complexities in the social fabric such as other smaller communities and migrants.[5] I reveal how official narratives on both sides of the divide employ the 'Cyprus problem' in silent collusion to cast aside or deem irrelevant a host of other significant issues, including women's ones. In contrast, the analysis in the book is focused on a multicommunal and multicultural Cyprus, located also in the unparalleled movement of people in the twenty-first century. In Chapter 7 I show how the 'liberation' of professional Cypriot women is made possible through the employment of female migrant domestic workers in their households. Gender oppression in this context is particularly revealing, for it illuminates significant issues of inclusion and exclusion, visibility and invisibility and issues of exploitation and marginalization of women by other women. Feminisms tell the stories that remain untold in mainstream 'histories'. According to Sloberg, feminisms look to politics at the margins to find women and to see realities about their lives, their actions and their suffering. 'Feminists speaking women's lives make it more difficult for mainstream politics to ignore them.'[6] I hope this book may serve such a purpose.

Third, I explore the specific 'transformative' methodology I employed with my partners (five non-governmental organizations) to carry out the part of the research on women in all the Cypriot communities presented here. Through this we demonstrated that knowledge can be produced in the activist arena as well as in academia. With this research methodology we were able to highlight relations between research and social change as these unfolded from personal stories and relationships built among women from different ethnic communities.

In conflict cultures there is a tendency to homogenize communities, to fail to acknowledge their complexity and, thus, to prolong misperceptions, stereotypes and misunderstandings between and among conflict groups. In the interests of building a multicultural/multiethnic society I try to allow heterogeneity and multiple voices to emerge. Each issue incorporated into the study of conflict and gender has been deconstructed into its specific expression within the five communities. These issues are also studied as they refer to both the private and public domains and how the former refers to women and the latter to men.

Why only women?

In the book my focus is on women. Why only women? I chose to listen to women because, as Belenky and her associates remind us in *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 'the male experience has been so powerfully articulated that we believed we would hear the patterns in women's voices more clearly if we held at bay the powerful templates men have etched in the literature and in our minds.'[7] One of the practical aims of this research project was to develop a safe thinking space in which women from all Cypriot communities could articulate their opinions, concerns, values and voice, in addition to realizing their intra- and inter-differences. Another aim was political, namely raising awareness of the right of women to participate in a world shaped by both men and women. Women need their own space in which to listen to each other and to affirm that knowledge is also produced through reflecting on our experiences, which produces the data upon which to construct our realities. The level of commitment among women increased as we built trust and psychological safety and the project moved ahead. We also wished to develop among the working groups the values of cooperation, tolerance, empathy, support and respect for differences, values we aimed through this project to legitimate and transfer to our society. I believe we succeeded at the level of relationship building among more than eighty women from all communities who actively participated in carrying out the various phases of the project (more on this in Chapter 2 on 'transformative methodology').

Another reason to engage only women was that I wanted to develop gender consciousness – an awareness of what it means to be a

woman and to live in a male-dominated world in which the separation between private and public spheres still prevails, and in which women's presence in decision-making processes is unsatisfactory and undemocratic. Cypriot women often feel like outsiders, marginalized by patriarchal forces, including the social stigma and practical difficulties encountered when they invoke their human right to choose an 'untraditional' lifestyle. Cypriot women's struggles are part of regional and global women's struggles.

Sex-role stereotypes and sexual divisions of labour still prevail despite the many worldwide resolutions, conventions and programmes designed to bring women's issues to public attention. Cyprus has signed the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as well as all the relevant international conventions to prohibit discriminatory practices, be they in marriage, family, work, employment, education or politics. Women's oppression and the inequality between men and women still continue.[8] In the 1970s and 1980s, despite the increase in gender and women studies programmes in many countries in the West, the impact on the mainstream curriculum and academic programmes still leaves much to be desired. Feminist scholars believe that the accepted and articulated conceptions of knowledge, justice and truth have been shaped throughout history by the male-dominated majority culture and need to be challenged.[9] Also, as Belenky and her co-authors inform us, 'drawing on their own perspectives and visions, men have constructed the prevailing theories, written history, and set values that have become the guiding principles for men and women alike.'[10]

In the last thirty or so years special attention has been given to modes of learning, knowing and valuing that may be specific to or at least common among women.[11] Historically, the commonly accepted stereotype of women's thinking as emotional, intuitive and personalized has contributed to the devaluation of women's minds and their contribution, particularly in the technologically-oriented cultures of the West, which value rationalism, competitiveness and objectivity.[12] Many feminists have argued that there is a masculine bias at the heart of most academic disciplines, methodologies and theories.[13]

For decades, Cypriot women from all the communities have participated in and contributed towards making civil society – both in

the private and public arenas – but their presence and achievements have still not been acknowledged and, more importantly, they have been given no space in which to articulate them or resources with which to record them.[14] In the public sphere, women's experiences, local knowledge and insights have not adequately been included in the official peace negotiation processes or in policy making.[15] In Cyprus women are marginalized at every level of the political and peace processes. No woman, from any of the communities in Cyprus, has ever been appointed to the high-level negotiating team that discusses the future of the island. The absence of a woman's viewpoint and dismissal of the gender perspective reveal shortcomings in the democratic participatory process that will certainly influence the content of a future political solution and the composition of institutional structures. This remains true despite the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) which, among other things, 'urges member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels, in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict'.

Previous studies[16] tell us that the social and psychological obstacles to women's participation in high professional positions, in politics and at the decision-making level, include a social attitude that 'women's place is primarily in the home', inadequate education and training, few positions allocated for women, lack of support from other women and the family, and a fear of handling power. The promotion of traditional gender roles in conjunction with the cultural focus on the national question, limits not only women's growth as citizens and autonomous individuals but also the development of the society as a whole.

Much of the quantitative research (the sample comprised 1697 women) was devoted to discussing themes such as women's issues in civil society; female participation in social organizations and activities; women and the European Union; the Cyprus problem; social identity; women's attitudes to sex, contraception, abortion and marriage; and women's gender consciousness. The qualitative focus group discussions dealt primarily with subjects like the 'self and the other'; discrimination and exclusion; violence; and the 'crossings' to the other side of the divide. Differences on a number of issues among the communities are highlighted.

Through investigating these intersections of gender, conflict and ethnic identity, this book becomes more than simply a case study of the Cypriot female experience. The forces at play in ordering the particular Cypriot hierarchy of gender and ethnic identity are active in ordering every society, both those torn by conflict and even those enjoying times of stability and peace. The investigation of these fundamental societal structures, however, is crucial to our understanding of how every culture is constructed and reproduced. Because of the inter-ethnic tensions and chronic grievances inherent in a conflict-ridden society, gender roles are exaggerated and become more rigid. Gender dynamics become narrower and less flexible as the community retreats into traditionalism, puts the dialogue about gender roles on hold, and turns its focus entirely to the 'national problem'.

The structure of the book

The book contains seven chapters. In Chapter 1, 'Gender, Feminisms and Conflict', I discuss and define gender analysis; refer to feminism and different feminist perspectives and theories; and look at how a feminist analysis of conflictive societies helps us ask different questions about the impact of the conflict. Questions about male/female roles, gendered expectations and community structures within a globalized world are important in determining the quality of life for both men and women. Feminist theories provide a critical framework with which to approach these personal, political, cultural and social issues.

Gender 'essentialization' is part of the nationalist narrative that women often reproduce; they also participate in various significations of the divide and in the militarization of the state (through supporting defence doctrines on security grounds, complying with the duty to 'give' their sons to the army, accentuating the 'respectable' motherhood syndrome, and narrating the 'glorious past' or the 'injustices done to our side'). While women participate in the reproduction of the nationalist narrative, they are not part of the decision-making process when it comes to determining war or peace. The values of such a system are based on separation, hierarchies, use of violence (covert and overt), and the construction of 'us and them' dichotomies.

In Chapter 2, 'Transformative Methodology and Social Change', I discuss the specific methodology I employed with my partners in

carrying out the research on women in all Cypriot communities. In researching this book I acted as an 'insider' and 'outsider', a participant and observer. In this chapter I explore how our methodology bridges the divide between quantitative and qualitative methods and incorporates strengths from both perspectives. In emphasizing the participatory process, we promoted the view that knowledge can be produced in the activist arena as well as in academia. During the study we confronted our ignorance about collective struggles in each other's communities. Every question in the final questionnaire contained a range of interpretations depending on the social and cultural history of the different communities. The method we used and the involvement of more than eighty Cypriot women in the different phases of the research, created a new community. I hope to show that there is a relationship between research and social change, which I consider to be progressive and transformative.

In Chapter 3, 'Multiple Divisions and Lines of Separation', I give a brief history from a feminist and conflict-resolution viewpoint of the ethno-national conflict in Cyprus (from the 1950s onwards). I look at the many significations of the ethnic separation, including different collective memories and narratives constructed by each side. This provides a context for subsequent chapters and informs the unfamiliar reader about Cyprus.

In Chapter 4, 'The Private and Public Domains: Contradictions and Desires', I explore public and private female Cypriot experiences as they emerge from the quantitative data on personal and collective identity. I look at the personal choices women make about sex, contraceptives and divorce, as well as subjects like alienation from other communities, access to resources, equality of opportunities and political participation. I examine the root causes of the Cyprus conflict, and look into how well democracy works in Cyprus and how well-informed Cypriot women are about the European Union and women's issues. The data bring out, in a comparative way, similarities and differences among the women's groups, thus contesting homogenization, essentialization and 'bureaucracies of oppression'. From this data there emerge the tensions between modernity and traditionalism, and between the private and the public.

In Chapter 5, 'The Self and Other: Discrimination, Domination,

Hegemony', I examine different forms of oppression and violence as well as women's agency to overcome them. In most Mediterranean cultures, including Cyprus, voices of women are often silenced or subdued and women are encouraged to view themselves as care-givers and nurturers of others (whether fathers, brothers, husbands, children, the community, the state or the nation). The discussion here is based on qualitative interviews among the five Cypriot communities. The comparative approach reveals different commonalities and struggles that cut across ethnic background, class and age.

In Chapter 6, 'The Crossings', I discuss women's experiences when, in April 2003, Cypriots were allowed to cross to the other side for the first time after 30 years (for some Turkish Cypriots it was 40 years) of geographical, political and socio-psychological separation. In societies undergoing conflict, divisions deepen and discrimination intensifies because territorial separations embody and reaffirm violence and other oppressions. When this physical division (what in Cyprus came to be known as the green line, the Attila line, the dead zone, the demarcation line, the ceasefire line, or the border) was 'lifted' in certain locations, the easy association of physical division with the construction of the enemy 'was violated' and to some extent disrupted. For the first time Cypriots from all communities could no longer look at the geographic division and claim 'we are divided and thus delineated as Greek and Turkish communities.' The 'us' and 'them' dichotomy became more complex and opened new spaces for interaction. Furthermore, personal experience of 'crossing' brought back memories and allowed feelings of nostalgia, pain, departure and ambiguity to emerge. Despite the profound societal alterations introduced by the 'crossings', the authorities and police on both sides not only disrupted and marginalized the importance of such emerging realities, but also (through their checkpoints, searches and harassments) cultivated a culture of phobias and persecutions. The policed monitoring of the 'crossings' was partly a result of the militaristic patriarchal mentality and was thus further related to oppression.

While these 'crossings' take place at the micro level among the different communities, other 'trans-border crossings' happen. In Chapter 7, 'Trans-border Crossings: Liberation and the Margins', I discuss the relationship between professional Cypriot women and female migrant

women (Asians, Eastern Europeans, Bulgarian Turks and Turkish nationals) whom they engage as domestic workers (*oikiakoi voithi*) in Cypriot homes on both sides of the divide. Issues of exploitation, abuse and oppression as well as of co-dependency are raised. I contend that, to pursue their personal interests (career, job promotions and travel), Cypriot women (especially economically well-off ones) are obliged to employ 'other' women to do what they are still expected to do in a patriarchal household where the structures and roles remain intact. Thus, employing migrant women in their households assists the Cypriot women's 'liberation'. The 'margins' become indispensable in making visible this 'false liberation'. I propose a struggle of 'sisterhood and solidarity' among these groups of women who all share the impact of patriarchy and globalization on the choices they make.

In the concluding chapter, 'The Challenges and Beyond', I deal with what lessons we can draw from the Cypriot experience that may be applicable to other societies in conflict. How can the debate among feminisms and other struggles be integrated to highlight different forms of power asymmetries? How do hegemonic discourses overshadow differences and undermine women's social issues and minorities' concerns? How possible is it for political parties and their women's party organizations to become gender sensitive and broaden their political agendas to include debates on different forms of oppression, exclusions and hierarchies. The chapter brings all the thematic threads and their connections to issues of participatory democracy, human rights, differences and gender equality. I suggest that changes in the sex and gender ordering in Cyprus will also ideally affect conceptions of democracy, human rights and gender equality. This change may develop a feminist movement of women from all Cypriot communities that will be connected to regional and global struggles on issues of oppression, marginalization and racial discrimination. Being aware of feminist activists' interventions will challenge the 'naturalness' of gender separation and develop spaces for women's various voices. Such a movement could also reform men's voices and position them in a culture of alliance-building so that they and women can question the patriarchal order in Cyprus with a view to bringing about a more egalitarian and fair society.

Chapter 1

Gender, Feminisms and Conflict

> Contemporary feminist debates over the meanings of gender lead time and again to a certain sense of trouble, as if the indeterminacy of gender might eventually culminate in the failure of feminism.
>
> (Judith Butler, 1990)[1]

When I teach the course 'Gender, Power and Politics' at the undergraduate level I ask my students on the first day of class to respond to four questions: 'What does it mean to me to be a woman or man in Cyprus? What is expected of me as a woman or man? What does feminism mean to me? Am I a feminist? Yes/no, and why?' The students' spontaneous reaction is that these are irrelevant questions because today men and women in Cyprus are the same, go anywhere they want and do whatever they like; there is no difference and no inequality. Most of them laugh at the concept of feminism, or say it is an extreme manifestation of women hating men, or of tough, uncompromising women who are against the family as an institution. Very few perceive feminism as carrying a positive connotation, as a women's movement for equality.

Two to three weeks into the course, however, the majority of students start to challenge their preconceived notions about their sex and gender identities, understand how these are constructed socially, historically and culturally and how these permeate all aspects of their lives – the choices they make, the opportunities they have, the social expectations with which they comply, and the constraints they have to address and with which they have to deal. Gradually, as difference and

inequalities become new realizations they start to examine their daily lives through a gender lens. They start asking questions about the positionality of men and women in the social, political and cultural life around them and in other societies. By the end of the course they are inundated with different feminist perspectives and theories, each trying to explain the causes and cures of women's inequality, oppression and subordination, as well as feminism's contribution to political theory and international politics. In their course evaluations, almost everybody says how the course changed their view of themselves, how they viewed social relationships, especially in their family and among friends, and how their newfound knowledge and understanding has shaken the traditional gender order because they had never before questioned what they had always taken as a natural state of affairs. They now saw feminism as a subject (voice, theory) and object (social and political movement) that calls for our attention in the twenty-first century.

On the occasion of international women's day in March 2008, the three trade unions representing the employees of the Electricity Authority of Cyprus invited me to give a talk on the status of Cypriot women. On welcoming me before the event started, the director general of the authority (needless to say a male) pointed to a large gathering of women and remarked:

> You see, we have hundreds of women working here and fewer men and this creates a serious problem which we shall have to reckon with in the near future. You see, women study more and pass the exams with better grades and that is why they get the positions, but this is not good for the Electricity Authority.

When I asked why, he explained, 'you see women get pregnant and want maternity leave or they may not check and read household electricity meters because the place is dirty, or covered with rubbish.' I commented that this was not a female employees' problem but an issue of safety, a social and health problem related to how Cypriot households should learn to keep their electricity meters clean and accessible for checking. He reluctantly agreed, but then said 'we also have many conflicts and competitions among the women, as when the

one gets jealous of the other.' I asked him how many directors were in charge of the different departments and he told me there were more than twenty and all were men.

It was time for my presentation. For a moment, I thought of using this conversation with the director general as the starting point in my talk and of analysing his implied stereotypical assumptions, gender divisions and expectations. His lack of awareness of his own gender discrimination in trying to control female recruitment, and of how biological differences are invoked to justify exclusion of women (women get pregnant and need maternity leave, as if motherhood were the sole responsibility of the woman) were striking. He saw women's pregnant bodies as creating 'trouble' at the workplace and stereotypical women's traits like jealousy and lack of solidarity as inferior to and distinct from male values of a sound work ethnic and pride in achievement.

The above experiences are examples of how the processes of socialization, the power of tradition and gender and employment politics form part of the structure of a society and its institutions with specific expectations related to men's and women's position in the family, schools, church, the workplace, parliament, the state and the nation. Through such institutions these expectations are learnt, internalized and reproduced.

The above anecdotes also show that gender relations enter into and are constituent elements in every aspect of human experience. In the twenty-first century, in Cyprus and elsewhere, gender issues and women's rights are highly significant not only in terms of equality but also in terms of participatory democracy and social justice. Most people are unaware of the effects of a gendered understanding on the development of a society and country as a whole. It is often said that the position women hold in a country is an illustration of the level of that society's social development. That gender socialization and gender role separation prevail can explain why women often consent to their own oppression and why, if sex discrimination remains unchallenged, equal opportunities are not enough to create an equal society.[2]

In this chapter I deal first with the concepts of gender relations and gender/sex, private/public, equality/difference and the category 'woman' and how different feminist perspectives have theorized them.

There follows a section on classification of feminisms and different feminist perspectives – liberal, socialist, radical and postmodern. Dialogues between these different feminist perspectives inform the analysis of the Cypriot women's experiences in the chapters that follow. In the final part of the chapter I address gender, nation, nationalism and conflict with specific reference to Cyprus. The chapter ends with reflections on a 'holistic feminism'.

Gender relations

The interactions of gender and other social relations and divisions such as race, class, age, ethnicity and sexual orientations and the structure of gender as a social category shape the experience of gender relations for any person. MacKinnon defined gender as:

> an inequality of power, a social status based on who is permitted to do what to whom. … One of the most deceptive antifeminisms in society, scholarship, politics and law is the persistent treatment of gender as if it is truly a question of difference, rather than treating the gender differences as a construct of the difference gender makes.[3]

Gender relations are not fixed but change over time and vary within and across cultures. A fundamental goal of feminist theory is to analyse gender relations, how they are constituted and experienced and how we think or, as important, do not think about them. The study of gender relations includes, but is not limited to, what are often considered distinctively feminist issues – the situation of women and analysis of male domination. By studying gender we hope to gain a critical distance from existing gender arrangements that can help clear a space in which to re-evaluate and alter these arrangements. Feminist theory *per se* cannot open up such a space; it needs feminist political action, without which the theories remain inadequate and ineffectual.[4] Contemporary feminist movements are in part rooted in transformations of social experience that challenge widely shared categories of social meaning and explanation. Such transformations may include changes in the structure of the economy and family, the declining power of social institutions and the emergence of new groups with

new ideas and demands for equality, justice, social legislation and the proper role of the state. Gender relations are a category meant to capture a complex set of social processes. Gender both as an analytic category and a social process is relational, that is gender relations are complex and unstable processes constituted by and through interrelated parts. As Flax reminds us:

> The study of gender relations entails at least two levels of analysis of gender as a thought construct or category that helps us to make sense out of particular social worlds and histories and of gender as a social relation that enters into and partially constitutes all other social relations and activities. As a practical social relation, gender can be understood only by close examination of the meanings of 'male' and 'female' and the consequences being assigned to one or the other gender within concrete social practices.[5]

Of course, such meanings and practices vary by culture, age, class, race, ethnicity, politics and specific socio-historical period. Feminist theorists proposed a variety of explanations about the causes of women's subordination and oppression. Despite disagreements among them, they have identified some common ground, as on gendered power, namely the victory of certain ideas over others in social interactions because they are associated with valorized gender, patriarchy, the private/public divide, equality and difference.

Sex and gender

For anti-feminists, biology is destiny and they consider gender divisions as natural, that is women and men merely fulfil the social roles nature designed for them. A woman's physical and anatomical make-up (to bear children and breast-feed) suits her to a subordinate and domestic role in society. In fact, patriarchal ideas blur the distinction between sex and gender, and assume that all social distinctions are rooted in biology or anatomy. Feminists, who make a distinction between sex and gender, contest this position. Sex refers to biological differences between females and males and is natural and therefore unalterable, whereas gender is a cultural term that refers to the

different roles society ascribes to men and women that are imposed through contrasting stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. Feminists argue that biological facts neither necessarily disadvantage women nor need they determine their social destiny. Feminists deny that there is a necessary or logical link between sex and gender and emphasize that because gender differences are socially and politically constructed they can be changed. Radical feminists specifically argue that gender is the deepest and most politically important of social divisions, thus feminists have advanced a theory of 'sexual politics' in much the same way that socialists have developed the idea of 'class politics'. They also refer to sexism as a form of oppression, drawing a conscious parallel with racism or racial oppression.[6]

Some feminists such as Fausto Sterling[7] and Butler[8] question the sharp distinction between sex (as given) and gender (as constructed). Judith Butler, for instance argued that sex is a social construct and therefore neither natural nor biological: 'gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also (*sic*) the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or a "natural sex" is produced and established as "pre-discursive" prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.'[9] Thus, for Butler, gender is an apparatus of cultural construction that purveys sex as natural, but that sex is a social construction that presents itself as natural.[10] Alison Jaggar (1992) offers a dialectical conception of human biology, which, she argues, allows us to avoid not only biological determinism (nature) but also the environmentalist (society-culture) denial that human biology has any relevance at all:

> there is a dialectical relation between sex and gender such that sex neither uniquely determines gender, as liberals and environmentalists believe. Instead, sex and gender create each other. … Women's biology is clearly relevant to the sexual division of labour in which their subordination is rooted, but it does not cause women's subordination.[11]

A further implication of the dialectical conception of human biology according to Jaggar is that no social activity and social organization is any more natural than any other. She notes that political theory completely ignored questions of sex, gender and procreation and

believes that a dialectical materialist conception of sex differences can allow us to reflect systematically and constructively on the political significance of human reproductive biology and bring childbearing and childrearing practices within the domain of political theory and social control. Among the radical feminists, Shulamith Firestone, in her work *The Dialectic of Sex*,[12] argued that the sexual division of labour has a biological basis and, unlike Jaggar, she believed that the ultimate foundation of male dominance is human reproductive biology and that women can be liberated when they conquer human biology and one way is through technology, that is the development of artificial means of reproduction. It is important to mention the use of female bodies in order to rationalize women's exclusion from the pursuit of knowledge and from the exercise of power let alone their use by the enemy in times of armed conflict when they are turned into 'battlefields'. Power, as Michel Foucault said,[13] is not only 'held' but exercised relationally in many interpersonal and group relationships. The biological/social divide is complex and misleading since we can only experience, describe and understand these bodily states within specific social/ historical contexts employing the political and cultural meanings available to us.

Thus, gender is not merely the sex role stereotyping or set of attributes connected to individuals that was prevalent in the 1970s, but a wider understanding of gender as a set of meanings and discourses.[14] This shift is a result of the interest of post-structuralists in the social sciences and humanities and of some feminists in issues of power, plurality and the breaking down of oppositional categories as those used to define 'women'. Yuval-Davis proposes to analyse both gender and sex as modes of discourse, with different agendas and meanings. Sexual differences should also be understood as a mode of discourse, one in which groups of social subjects are defined as having different sexual/biological constitutions. 'The insistence on the discursive construction of meanings and the insistence on the non-natural, non-essentialist nature of both "sex" and "gender" have brought about a blurring of the boundaries between these two constructions.'[15]

Patriarchy

Another debate in feminism that has been widely discussed is patriarchy. There are different viewpoints on what patriarchy is and

does. In general, we can say it is a system of social organization that advantages one gender over the other and that this has been the male. Cockburn[16] also argues that patriarchy as a system, structure and set of institutions is in continual cyclical interaction with gender relations as a process and praxis. For men as a social group, patriarchy has been important in retaining supremacy over women, as they have done for the last 5000 years and has been important for the constitution of femininity and masculinity.[17] In the 1970s and 1980s feminists developed the term 'patriarchy' to refer to the systemic nature of men's power. The gender power continuum relates different masculinities, but places femininities as invariably subordinate to masculinities. 'In the social process of gendered power, the hegemonic masculinity is at the top of the social pyramid, governing through socialization both its members and its subordinates.'[18]

Hartmann defined patriarchy as 'a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which though hierarchy, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women'.[19] Feminists use patriarchy in various contexts, for instance in the family to describe its structure, which is hierarchical, and the dominance of the father. This aspect still prevails in Cyprus, despite economic and employment changes in the lives of women. In fact, radical feminists regard patriarchy as a systematic, institutionalized and pervasive form of male power that is also rooted in the family where women's labour is exploited, oppressive gender identities and behaviours are learned, and men's sexual power is often violently expressed.[20]

Others, for example some liberal feminists, draw attention to the unequal distribution of rights and entitlements in society such as the under-representation of women in business, politics, certain professions and public life, whereas some (but not all) socialist feminists tend to emphasize the economic aspects of patriarchy. In the socialist feminist view, patriarchy operates in tandem with capitalism, gender subordination and class inequality – all interlinked systems of oppression.[21] Marxist feminism was attracted to various versions of structuralism that stressed the determining characteristics of the system rather than the actions of individuals and emphasized that events and phenomena can be explained by sets of structures and

relations that lie beneath the surface. Thus, structuralism stresses that it is the system as a whole that needs to be analysed, and not its individual elements. Marxist and socialist feminisms were thus concerned with identifying the structures of patriarchy and specifying their relation to capitalism.

A number of different analyses of patriarchy were developed; some emphasize the economic basis of male power (control over women's labour), while others stress the ideological level or the sexual control of women. Sylvia Walby, in *Theorizing Patriarchy*,[22] for example, attempted to develop an analysis of patriarchy as a system similar to capitalism, unlike Juliet Mitchell[23] who saw patriarchy as located primarily at the ideological level and capitalism at the economic. Feminists disagree over whether patriarchy is analogous to a mode of production or whether it is part of that mode of production. Cynthia Cockburn[24] posits that the relationship between patriarchy and the sex/gender system and modes of production (slavery, feudalism, capitalism and 'state socialism') is far from being understood. William Connell[25] suggested the term 'patriarchal dividend', by which he meant the advantage that men as a whole gain from living in a patriarchal gender order. But of course, says Cockburn,[26] patriarchal systems do not involve only hierarchical relations between men and women. They also involve massive hierarchies ranking men themselves, to the disadvantage of some of them. In other words, not all men receive the same share of the patriarchal dividend. The cultural process of masculinization not only produces men as different from women, it produces men as different from each other.[27]

Although major changes have taken place in the West, which have improved the social position of women considerably, patriarchy still assumes a cruel and inhuman face in many developing countries where 80 million women, mainly in Africa, undergo the practice of circumcision; there are thousands of bride murders in India, the dowry system and 'honour' killings of women persist, unwanted female children are often put to death and the recent phenomenon of sex trafficking brings billions of dollars in profit. According to Cynthia Cockburn, the notion of 'honour' is something that links men and patriarchy in the family, with men and patriarchy in the nation and state.[28]

Private and public

Dualisms and binaries like mind/body, nature/culture, emotion/reason, subject/object, individual/social, concrete/abstract and public/private are common motifs in Western social and political thought and are conceptually mapped onto the fundamental male/female dichotomy. For instance, the 'belief' persists that women are all body and no mind, closer to nature than culture, more emotional than rational, and located in the private rather than in the public realm. The notion of public and private being separate spheres has a long and contested history, which has been important since the development of industrial capitalism and urbanization in advanced economies resulted in the separation of men's and women's lives. This separation was most marked in the middle class (working-class women had always worked both outside and in the home). The assumption, however, that 'a woman's place is in the home' had an impact on all women because of its embodiment in social and political theory and practice. Appeals to women's professed irrationality, special responsibilities, and intuitive and caring nature kept many women out of work and formal politics.[29] This exclusion also applied to the 'rights' of citizenship and to the ideology that men will 'govern the world' and women 'the homes within it'.

The binary 'private/public' has for a while, some feminist theorists believe, been universally important in organizing gender. It is true that through the gendering process, women and men have different experiences of domestic life (women spend more time than men in sustaining it), at work (where sexual divisions still occur), and in war (where women rarely formulate war policies or command armies). The experience of disadvantage usually brings women together to see a connection between violence, militarism and certain masculine cultures in which men learn violence and bond together as men, around disrespect for women.[30]

Politics has usually been understood as an activity that takes place in the 'public sphere' – in government institutions, political parties, pressure groups and public debate. Family life and personal relationships have normally been seen as part of the 'private sphere and therefore were thought of as non-political'. To include women would mean a real change of direction for the discipline. 'Social and political

theory is part of the praxis of men. It is both indicative of, and an agent in the suppression of women by men.'[31]

Feminists have redefined politics, as they did power, as an activity that takes place in both spheres of life – private and public. The radical feminist argument that the 'personal is political' makes the point that what goes on in the home and in the bedroom are political and should be of concern to decision-makers and civil society. According to radical feminists, female oppression operates at all levels and walks of life. Some feminists have argued that what is 'political' is not merely of academic interest but that sexual inequality has been preserved precisely because the sexual division of labour that runs through society has been thought of as 'natural' rather than 'political'.[32] The 'politics of everyday life' includes the process of conditioning in the family, the distribution of housework and other domestic responsibilities and the politics of sexual and political contact. This reflects on the phenomenon that 'women do not vote for women', very few women run for elected office and even fewer are given decision-making roles. Radical and socialist feminists have for decades wanted to break down the private/public division on the grounds that the state and public institutions provide services for child-rearing and child protection as well as rights for maternity and paternity leave. Liberal feminists, however, are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of politics in the private sphere because they view the private sphere as a realm of personal choice and individual freedom. In our research in Cyprus we found that the private/public divide still prevails and defines male/female choices and opportunities for personal and professional advancement.

To encompass the diversity of women's positions, we have to recognize that different groups of women experience oppression in different ways and that white middle-class women's particular experience of sexism is no more definitional of women's oppression than any other. Black women's perspectives are as varied as those of white women; the experience of racism, like that of sexism, does not define a single black woman's perspective, though it forms a common theme, which different women experience differently. The concept of difference was sometimes used to root out differences among women in the name of unity, rather than to recognize that patterns of oppression

have been internalized and used to divide women.[33] Women position themselves in a network of relations not because their innate capacities are being stunted but to claim that their position within this network lacks power and mobility and thus requires radical change. In this respect the concept of 'positionality' invites us to remain in dialogue with others and with the historical and social circumstances that give rise to the fluid identity of women, thus escaping essentialism. We need to recover and explore aspects of social relations that have been suppressed, unarticulated or denied within dominant male viewpoints and locate women's positionality in socio-historical contexts. The category 'woman' is not a unified type but a fluctuating identity that is historically and discursively constructed in relation to other categories that also change.[34]

Feminisms

There have been different suggestions about categorizing and classifying feminisms. We thus speak of a plurality of feminist schools of thought. Some speak of different 'waves' of feminism and others of feminist perspectives. Not all agree on the number of 'waves' and time frame for each. Some locate the 'first wave' in the establishment of women's movements in the mid-nineteenth century when the focus was on campaigns for female suffrage:

> This period is usually referred to as the 'first wave' of feminism and was characterized by the demand that women should enjoy the same legal and political rights as men. Female suffrage was its principal goal because it was believed that if women could vote all other forms of discrimination and prejudice would quickly disappear.[35]

This of course was not the case. Women's movements were strongest in the West where political democracy was advanced, as for example in the United Kingdom, the United States, France, New Zealand, the Scandinavian countries and others. Heywood claims that the 'second wave' started in the 1960s and that by the 1970s feminism had developed into a distinctive and established ideology.

The 1960s and 1970s brought new questions about the personal,

psychological and sexual aspects of women's oppression. The legal changes and political reforms were inadequate to meet 'women's liberation', so they argued for a radical revolutionary process of social change. By the 1990s feminist organizations, as well as women's studies and gender studies programmes, were developing in most countries, making more visible women's contributions to the arts, sciences and development, raising their voices on issues of war, anti-militarism and peace. New feminist theories have also developed with the rise of feminism in various developing nations.

Others classify feminism with reference to ideology, attaching prefixes like Enlightenment, liberal, cultural, radical, modern Marxist, socialist, black, third world, lesbian, postmodern, eco, or post-structuralist to define their specific brands of feminism.[36] These different ways of classifying feminisms runs the risk of excluding many other feminisms, like third world feminism in India, the Philippines, Egypt and Morocco. Despite all their differences, however, the fact that all these feminisms focus on women arises, according to Thompson,[37] from a shared view that male supremacy is harmful to them. The aim is to provide women with the means to take control of their lives while recognizing the constraints and limitations placed on them by male rule of the world. Feminism in all its guises provides a way of looking at the world that recognizes the inequalities between men and women as central political issues and, as such, provides a fundamental challenge to dominant assumptions about the scope and nature of politics. Feminism posits that 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are not 'natural' but constructed, as is sexual identity, which is complex and unstable.[38]

A feminist movement never emerged in Cyprus as it did in other Western societies in the 1960s. In fact, as in many third world countries, the struggle was against British colonialism, and in this case shaped and led by mainly right-wing Greek Cypriot men and the Greek Orthodox Church, both imbued with romantic Hellenistic ideals of union with 'motherland' Greece. Thus, anti-colonial struggles were not matched by women's struggles for women's rights and gender equality.

Though I am writing this book as a feminist, I am not aligned with one particular school of feminism. I use concepts and propositions

from different feminist perspectives to approach questions of gender and women in conflict-ridden societies. I see myself more as an advocate of 'holistic feminism'. Most feminisms, despite the fact that each originates from different assumptions, provide us with a wealth of concepts and tools useful to women's struggles for a just, peaceful and egalitarian society (more on this later on in the chapter). I agree with Sjoberg[39] that feminisms create a counter-discourse against gendered subordination.

Below I discuss certain feminist demands and, in so doing, point out strengths and differences useful to the discussion in the chapters that follow. I refrain from using traditional classifications and instead refer to different prioritizing of oppressions as these were addressed by different feminisms.

Second-class citizen feminism: addressing rights

Liberal feminism is the 'common-sense' application of existing values to the situation of women rather than a theoretical innovation and, as such, it had an impact on the political agendas of many countries. Modern liberal feminism is based on the premise that women are individuals possessed of reason and, as such, are entitled to full human rights and 'should be free to choose their role in life, and to compete equally with men in politics and paid employment'.[40]

In the United States Betty Friedan's best-selling book, *The Feminine Mystique*,[41] claimed that women had been socialized and manipulated into believing that their only fulfilment lay in the home, and that the purpose of their life should be 'to catch and keep' a husband, and to serve his needs and those of his children. Despite this 'fulfilment', millions of American women (especially middle-class ones) experiencing unhappiness, frustration and despair believed that the fault lay in themselves and not in their situation. This condition was labelled 'the problem that had no name'. Friedan believed that the gains feminists had earned earlier meant that the door to freedom had been opened and that women could join men in pursuing careers. However, despite the legal gains discrimination against women continued.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) was established in the United States to act as a pressure group using the law and existing political processes to challenge discrimination and the assumptions of

traditional gender ideology. Friedan, who headed NOW, called for more state childcare provisions, greater involvement of men in domestic work and child rearing, as well as a basic restructuring of employment to allow men and women to combine domestic responsibilities with a career. More than forty years later the European Union guidelines on gender equality and the European Women's Lobby advocate and call upon their member states to adopt these guidelines. Other NOW campaigners also advocated gender equality in schools and positive measures, including 'positive discrimination' in employment and political appointments, the rationale being to compensate women for their disadvantages.[42]

Decades later, in 1993, in *Fire with Fire* Naomi Wolf[43] restated the liberal approach in which she argued that women must refuse to see themselves as victims and embrace what she called 'power feminism', which meant that women must realize their right to determine their own lives and overcome their fear of success.

Anti-feminists and some other feminists have criticized liberal feminism. The former defend the status quo and the latter claim that liberal feminism does not understand women's true interests and does not provide a strategy for their liberation. According to Bryson,[44] their criticism focuses on five areas. First, liberal feminism has failed even its own principles, for there is no real equality at the workplace or politics; men continue to dominate positions of power and authority and women's earning power remains less than men's. Second, its goals speak more to middle-class women and ignore the realities of a competitive and hierarchical society in which many women and men are oppressed because of class and race. Third, liberal feminists are confused about the nature of state power and gender interests and believe that a just society is in the interest of all, implying that both men and women can be feminists. Fourth, the liberal perspective on power and politics is based on an uncritical acceptance of male definitions that conceal the real roots of women's oppression. It accepts the artificial distinction between public and private worlds and what this implies for gender relationships and fails to recognize that in the private realm of family life issues of sexual politics, domestic violence and rape are related to macro-level power structures. Furthermore, it fails to conceptualize the value and importance of women's

work in the home. Finally, it is difficult to reconcile the individualistic assumptions of liberalism with a feminist politics based on shared gender interests, namely the liberal belief that it is up to each person to make the best of his or her own life. This position clashes with feminist awareness of the need for collective action.

Unpaid and underpaid: feminism addressing capitalism

Women have also struggled against unpaid and underpaid work. Socialist feminism links the oppression of women to Marxist ideas of exploitation and the workings of the capitalist economy. A feminist critique of Marxist theory rests on the fact that Marxism focused solely on class stratification and the overthrow of capitalism as a way of liberating everybody. It left aside the issues of gender and women's different oppressions. The notion of 'consciousness raising', which contemporary socialist feminism adopted, is rooted in Marxist theory. 'Materialist determinism' (or historical materialism) holds that culture and society are rooted in material or economic conditions that in turn shape ideology. Marx believed that the governing ideology in a society is determined by the economic interests of the capitalist ruling class, which he defined as 'the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.'[45] Marx proposed a 'revolutionary praxis' through which consciousness of true class interests will be awakened. Socialist feminism is concerned neither with the difficult realities of our bodies, particularly sexuality and violence, nor with how the patriarchal system defines and separates male and female roles, choices and rights.

Both feminists and socialist educationists adopted the idea of 'praxis' as an educational tool for increasing groups' awareness of their oppressed conditions as a precursor to changing their circumstances. It appealed to women in trade unions and political parties and its relevance to feminist theory is obvious. Some socialist feminists assume a connection between women and the proletariat and advocate developing a 'true consciousness' of their oppressed condition and, in the process, getting rid of male identified ideologies that serve male, ruling-group interests.

Another concept that Marx developed and that is relevant to feminist theory is 'alienation', which refers to the modern experience of being cut off from one's self, from others and from a sense of meaning. It implies a dissociation of subjective and objective, private and public, spiritual and material. Feminism tries to integrate these different levels of existence. The specialization of labour and allocation of certain groups to certain tasks is fundamentally alienating – a primary division of labour occurs in the family, which created the first form of ownership of one person by another. Marx saw a husband's enslavement of his wife and children as the first form of private property. With the development of the nuclear family came the privatization and denigration of household labour and, according to Engels:

> Household management lost its public character. … It became a private service; the wife became the head servant, excluded from all participation in social production. The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the wife. … The spouse who owns the property rules the household.[46]

The solution to end women's oppression was to enter the public workforce and so eliminate confinement to 'private domestic labour'.

The 'domestic labour debate' was first taken up in 1969 by Margaret Benston who, in her book *The Political Economy of Women's Liberation*, argued that housework should be taken seriously in any analysis of the workings of the economy, and not relegated to a marginal or non-existent status. She wrote:

> Women's work is not worth money, is therefore valueless, is therefore not even work … this fact constitutes the material basis for the inferior status of women. In a society in which money determines value, women who do this valueless work, can hardly be expected to be worth as much as men who work for money.[47]

Later on Heidi Hartmann points out that the 'material base upon which patriarchy rests lies most fundamentally in men's control over

women's labour force'.[48] Women as temporary workers are conditioned to accept poorly-paid, low-status jobs that help to depress wage rates without posing a threat to 'men's jobs'. Furthermore, socialist feminists have argued that it is the unwaged nature of domestic work that accounts for its low social status and leaves women financially dependent on their husbands, thus establishing systemic social inequality.

Modern socialist feminists have found it increasingly difficult to accept the primacy of class politics over sexual politics – in part this was a result of the disappointing progress women made in state socialist societies, showing that socialism *per se* does not end patriarchy. Sexual and gender oppression is as important as class exploitation, they say, and it is naïve to think that when class oppression is overcome, gender oppression will vanish too. Ehrenreich[49] identified the intersecting forces of class and gender in oppressing women, and found points of common frustration in women's experience to support the socialist feminist framework. These feminists promote modern Marxism, which looks at the interplay of economic, social, political and cultural forces in society.

On the whole, we can say that socialist feminism focuses on broad, collective change affecting society as a whole and not simply on the individual level as propagated by the liberal feminists. Making this kind of distinction, namely individualist versus collective feminisms, with the former referring to liberal feminism and the latter to socialist feminism, may no longer be helpful because we need both. For instance, it was 'rights feminists' and NGOs that struggled to get UN Security Council Resolution 1325 passed in 2000; it was a very collective activity and, in that it calls on states to include women in all peace building processes, it constituted a landmark.

Used and abused: feminism addressing the body and violence

With the rallying cry 'the personal is political', radical feminism legitimized women's individual experiences of oppression, thus empowering them to see their personal experiences of humiliation at the hands of the male power structure as evidence of a systemic problem of the power structure. Mainly coming from the left and disappointed by the way male New Left radical organizations (mostly

in the USA) treated them, they were determined to establish that their personal 'subjective' issues were equally as important as those the New Left addressed, such as social justice and peace. Eventually, some radical feminists came to believe that all these issues were interrelated, that male supremacy and the subjugation of women was indeed the root and model oppression in society and that feminism had to be the basis for revolutionary change. Roxanne Dunbar, in an article written in 1968, urged women to form an independent women's movement to project their grievances, which were not 'petty or personal' but constituted a social disease. She argued:

> [that all people live] under an international caste system, at the top of which is the Western white male ruling class, at the very bottom [of] which is the female of the non-white colonized world. … The western nation-states which have perfected colonialism were developed as an extension of male dominance over females and the land.[50]

The early works of Eva Figes and Germaine Greer[51] drew attention not so much to the familiar legal or social disadvantages women suffered but to the fact that patriarchal values and beliefs pervade a society's culture, philosophy, morality and religion. In all walks of life and learning women are portrayed as inferior and subordinate to men, a stereotype of femininity that men impose on women. Furthermore, Greer suggested that women are conditioned to accept a passive sexual role, which has repressed their true sexuality as well as the more active and adventurous side of their personalities. Kate Millett and Shulamith Firestone developed a systematic theory of sexual oppression in their books published in 1970,[52] which were a significant addition to liberal and socialist traditions. A central feature of radical feminism is the belief that sexual oppression is the most fundamental feature of society and that other forms of injustice can be secondary. Gender was thought to be the deepest and most politically significant cleavage. Some also promoted the view that women's oppression is rooted more in psychological and less in economic factors. Millet sees the family as the main source of ideological indoctrination. It socializes 'the young … into patriarchal ideology's prescribed attitudes toward the categories

of role, temperament, and status'.[53] Thus, radical feminists stress the role of the family in reproducing patriarchy whereas the Marxists focus on the role of the family in the ideological 'reproduction' of capitalism. In addition, radical feminists brought to the public agenda the issue of rape, which should be regarded as a political crime, an issue of power, and a terrorist act that keeps women subordinate. They also challenge all the social myths about 'the powerful male impulse that must be satisfied with immediacy by a cooperative class of women … this is part and parcel of mass psychology of rape'.[54]

Feminists of colour challenge white Western radical feminists for ignoring their experiences, priorities and differences and the variety of stereotypes and myths attributed to black women.[55] Hooks believes that white men and in some cases white women not only oppress black women but also that 'black men were able to use the matriarchy myth as a psychological weapon to justify their demands that black women assume a more passive subservient role in the home'.[56] Since the 1970s black radical feminism has been portraying sexism and racism as interlinked systems of oppression and has been highlighting the particular and complex range of gender, racial and economic disadvantages that confront 'women of colour'. A suggestion has been put forward to replace the radical feminist call for 'sisterhood' to one of 'solidarity'. Such an approach, to which I adhere, would allow women to unite on some demands and would also give them scope to ally themselves with men of their own race, class or other minorities and disadvantaged groups.

Struggles for meanings: feminism rewriting discourses

A major contribution postmodern feminism has made is its focus on representation and discourses, thus introducing individual subjectivity or subjectivities and the multiple meanings this entails. Diversity, fragmentation and transience characterize societies today and, according to postmodern feminism, such labels as 'woman' or 'working class'only conceal the multiplicity of particular experiences, so no category can legitimately be treated as stable or separable. The fact of differential historical experiences means that each 'woman' differs from every other and it is impossible or meaningless to talk of the 'authentic woman' and so to unify different individuals under the

specified 'woman'. As a result, it is difficult to make sense of feminist projects of collective emancipation. After all, who is to be emancipated and from whom? The sort of perspective in question leads to a view of the world only of differences, an individualistic perspective in which it is impossible to make sense of any system or collectivity, whether oppressive or otherwise.[57] Because postmodern feminism deconstructs the location and specificity influenced by ethnicity, sexual-orientation and class identity, and recognizes the role of language in constructing social reality, nothing remains static and unchanging. As Donna Haraway reminded us,[58] all knowledge is 'situated knowledge', that is it springs from a particular situation and each voice speaks its own truth, which means the 'self is always situated' too.[59]

Adopting a post-modernist perspective and including Maronite, Latin, Armenian, and migrant women in the study enabled me to observe differences and multiple meanings between and among communities other than the dominant Greek and Turkish Cypriot ones. Although the Cyprus conflict touched on all the women interviewed for this book, their experiences of it were often divergent, divisive or even contradictory. I am aware that ethnicity can be intransigent or relatively flexible, permeable or impermeable. It may be sharply dichotomous, a matter of 'us and them' or involve pluralities so that one sees oneself as belonging to more than one community. These lines of differentiation were particularly apparent with regard to issues of identity.

Facing armed patriarchy: feminism, nationalism and militarism

> As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country.
> As a woman my country is the whole world.
>
> (Virginia Woolf, 1938)[60]

Most theoreticians on 'nation and nationalism' have ignored the gendered aspects of these phenomena.[61] Feminism challenged the private/public dichotomy and proposed that the public cannot be understood without recourse to the private realm, but, according to Yuval-Davis, 'as nationalism and nations have been discussed as part of the public political sphere, the exclusion of women from that arena has affected their exclusion from the discourse as well.'[62] McClintock

said, 'all nationalisms are gendered' and are exclusive and selective, polarizing people into 'us' and 'them', constructing otherness in the context of the enemy.[63] I would add that not only women are being excluded but other collectivities as well. In Cyprus, for instance, Greek Cypriot ethnic nationalism excluded not only the Turkish Cypriots who developed their counter ethnic nationalism, but also the communist party (AKEL) and other smaller communities, whereas women were mostly invisible. The Greek Cypriot anti-colonial project was conceived, directed and executed by males. There is sexual division in all wars and women are not at the forefront when policies are made and armies commanded. Thus, ethnic and gender divisions construct an ethnic nationalism that draws sharp lines about who will participate and in what roles. The script for these roles are written by men, for men and about men and women are by design supporting actors whose roles reflect masculinist notions of femininity and of women's 'proper' place.[64]

Much feminist scholarship has been produced in the last two decades, in the late 1980s and 1990s, which has prompted us to rethink and revise male-conceived theories on ethnicity, nation, nationalism, militarism, conflict and international relations from a gender perspective.[65] 'Premordialist' theoreticians insist on the 'naturalized image of the nation', which means they view the nation as 'eternal' and universal and a natural extension of the family and kinship relations. 'The family and kinship units in these constructions are based on natural sexual divisions of labour, in which the men protect the women and children.'[66] According to this theory, membership of a nation is 'natural', not chosen, so people become 'disinterested', which means that the nation, like the family, can ask for sacrifices, including the ultimate sacrifice of killing and being killed.[67] Other scholars, like Gellner[68] for example, explain the development of nationalism as modern societies' need for cultural homogeneity in order to function smoothly. Militarism and militarization are closely linked to the nation-state – few try to present their armies as peacekeepers with a humanitarian goal. The maintenance and exercise of statehood *vis-à-vis* other nation-states often takes the form of armed conflict.

A response to the 'primordialist' view came from the constructionists who base their theory on the notion that the nation is

neither eternal nor universal but an 'imagined community' and it is a modern construction, a direct result of European history. Nations were created when print technologies developed and people (apart from the elites) started reading in their own languages, thus establishing, according to Anderson, their linguistic national 'imagined communities'.[69]

As gender is intrinsic (though often politically invisible) in the production of nations, it is not surprising that women are frequently invoked to symbolize 'the nation'. Though the iconography of the 'motherland', 'nation', is almost invariably female (Mother Ireland, Mother Russia, Mother India, Mother Hellas, but not mother Cyprus), the state is almost exclusively male.[70] In the Greek Cypriot community many posters used in public spaces after the 1974 Turkish invasion depicted Greek Cypriot refugee women weeping and holding terrified babies or photographs of missing loved ones, all embodiments of the collective pain and suffering of Greek Cypriot refugees. Men were represented as fighters and heroes, with statues and war monuments erected in public places to honour them. We saw the same images of women in Chile during the Pinochet regime when sons and husbands 'disappeared'. In Palestine we see posters of mothers who are proud of their sons becoming martyrs and give their blessing to young male suicide bombers. Sometimes a whole industry is produced with such images in the form of DVDs and tapes one can buy in kiosks. These nationalist practices become part of the instrumentalization of female pain and suffering, which the state often engineers, as if suffering were exclusively female.

Elizabeth Porter (1998), writing about nationalism and women in Northern Ireland, but it could equally as easily have been Cyprus, observed that while women are active participants in ethnic and national struggles, organizing, campaigning, attending to others' need and sometimes participating in armed struggle, it is the men who act as agents and the women as symbols to reinforce existing gender oppressions. This is achieved through the cultural transmission of myths, stories, collective trauma and communal symbols; women, as the prime socializers of children, impart much of the national heritage, including perpetuating sectarianism and glorifying men as national heroes. At the political level, masculine agency and feminine symbolic

representation reinforce cultural influences. No one admits that war is fought over masculinized spaces. The nationalist rhetoric instead promotes the view that citizens fight for their 'mother country' and women provide the 'mother's milk of citizenship'. Irish and other literatures on conflict provide ample material on this. Consequently, says Elshtain, 'we are all marked, deeply and permanently, by the way political life gets embodied in images of motherland and fatherland, so much that the human body is politicized.'[72] Porter quotes the Irish poet W. B. Yeats who offered the myth of 'Mother Ireland as symbolic compensation for the colonial calamities of history'.[73]

Cynthia Enloe observed that 'nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope.'[74] She argued that women are relegated to minor, symbolic roles in nationalist movements or conflicts either as icons of nationhood or as booty or spoils of war, to be denigrated. The real actors are men who defend their freedom, honour, homeland and women. There is a close connection between Western masculinity and nationalism:

> By definition nationalism is political and closely linked to the state and its institutions. Like the military, most state institutions have been historically and remain dominated by men. It is therefore no surprise that the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism.[75]

Women occupy a distinct, symbolic role in nationalist culture, discourse and collective action, a role reflecting a masculine definition of femininity and of a woman's proper role in the nation.[76] In conflict situations women's bodies are often used (or abused) in nationalist ideology – symbolically they may be honoured but also, as Cynthia Cockburn would say, that is 'bad news' because it means that men's honour gets invested in it and women are liable to be raped, enslaved or prostituted by the enemy to destroy men's honour. All the recent conflicts we witnessed on our television screens, says Cockburn, contained traditional images of women being expelled from their homes and men in combat bearing arms. Both are acting out their age-old 'trans-historic' roles. This tells us that ethnic wars are also gender wars.

> The communal power these political movements, armed with guns, seek to establish or defend is (among other things) gender power, the regimes they seek to install are (among other things) gender regimes. As well as defining a relation between people and land, they shape a certain relation between women and men. It is a relation of male dominance, in some cases frankly patriarchal.[77]

Similarly, in Lebanon, patriarchal cultural norms define both Muslim and Christian women. However, during political crises like the 1975–90 civil war, women from all religious traditions moved into the public sphere to participate in the combat, support various initiatives or engage in employment outside the house. They also played a role in trying to resolve the conflict and promote non-violence, especially in the 1980s. Once the civil war was over, however, the society reverted to its traditional conception of womanhood and conservative hierarchies prevented women from challenging the social order. Such a challenge would be seen as a betrayal of the nationalist cause, so women's rights had to be postponed: 'in practical terms this meant for instance that after laying down their arms Lebanese women until 1993 still required the signature of a male parent to obtain a passport or open a bank account. Moreover, Lebanese nationality is passed down only through the father.'[78]

Since women are often the producers, reproducers and bearers of the collectivity, gender shapes culture and defines national identity. The gendered imaginings of the national, maternal image of the nation and the male figure of the state play a vital role in the conscious/subconscious envisioning of the nation/homeland for which nationalism proclaims its loyalty, and the production of the nation's culture. In addition to symbolizing the nation, embodying the essence of the nation, women bear each new generation and are usually assigned the role of teaching and transmitting the cultural identity. Floya Anthias, Nira Yuval-Davis, Cynthia Cockburn, Cynthia Enloe, Laura Sjoberg, Rhoda Ann Kanaaneh, Simona Sharoni, Elizabeth Porter and others have explored the gender consequences of troubled, conflict-ridden societies. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis[79] have convincingly shown that in times of conflict, women's roles as reproducers of

culture, sexual beings and symbols of the homeland become sharply defined and maintained, and that their sexual activity can delineate ethnic or racial boundaries. In studying the rise of nationalism, Anthias and Yuval-Davis say that women are the invisible yet crucial elements in defining and maintaining national collectivities and states.

Nationalism, particularly if exacerbated by violent conflict, subjugates women in three ways. First, by reducing their relevance to the role of mother and wife, it exalts masculinity and marginalizes or demonizes femininity, particularly feminine sexuality. Second, because women are the child-bearers, it controls female sexuality to protect cultural boundaries and to ensure that they, as mothers, remain pure to perpetuate the nation, ethnicity, race, or point of cultural identity. And third, with the notion that women are the vessels through which a nation is preserved, it equates violence against the nation with violence against women; it rallies to control women to counter the fear that they are going to be corrupted, stolen, or seduced by the enemy.

Conflict-ridden societies define and monitor narrow boundaries of morality, particularly sexual morality, and concurrently develop inflexible definitions of 'us' in opposition to 'them'. As Sharoni has shown through her analysis of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, protracted war homogenizes the entire culture as it defines itself in contrast to its enemy, and this newly imposed homogeneity is of a particularly gendered brand. As the tension between 'us' and 'them' demands an answer to the question 'who are we?', 'the rigid distinction between "us" and "them" … overlooks differences within each community and other possible answers to the questions "who are we?" … These answers always involve, explicitly or implicitly, particular assumptions about masculinity, femininity, and gender relations.'[80] The gendered answer, defined as it is in opposition to the enemy, makes female adherence to the rigid gender roles critical to national, cultural or ethnic identity, and the foundation of conscious resistance to the enemy. In the same manner as women's sexual behaviour becomes a matter of patriotism (virgin as national virtue and purity, mother as nation, slut as traitor and villain), women's adaptation to the more narrow gender roles also is portrayed as fundamental to 'the war effort'.

In nearly every nationalist or ethnic struggle of independence women are forced to choose to assert their rights as women or to

participate in a gendered capacity in the collective struggle. The difficulty of being challenged with this explicit choice has been voiced by women within almost every modern struggle for independence or equality, including the civil rights movement in the United States, female peace activists in Ireland, women combating colonialism in India or Cyprus, and struggles organized on every continent of the globe. There are certain moments when women espouse some forms of nationalism, as with Palestinian, Basque and Catalan women who struggle for the creation of their autonomy or state, and see nationalism as a transition to democracy. Yet, as Enloe argued,[81] women often succumb to the pressure to hold their tongue about problems they face with men in nationalist organizations and, therefore, nationalism becomes that much more masculinized.

> Women who have called for more genuine equality between the sexes – in the (nationalist) movement, in the home – have been told now is not the time, the nation is too fragile, the enemy is too near. Women must be patient, they must wait until the nationalist goal is achieved, then relations between women and men can be addressed, 'not now later' is the advice that rings in the ears of many nationalist women.[82]

Similarly in Cyprus the unresolved conflict has put any public discussion on women's issues on the back burner.

Conflict, violence and war exacerbate internal tensions. When a community feels threatened, or during a national crisis, the link between gender and the production of cultural identity and nationalist consciousness causes the conflict to impact on women with gendered force. As Chazan argued, a society 'in a prolonged period of conflict inevitably develops values which underestimate the role of women and [their] essential contributions to the social order'.[83] A threatened society seeks sustenance and solace in its traditional roles of 'womanhood' as the reproducers of a culture and 'manhood' as its protectors. We note almost universally across societies that as a community in crisis buttresses down to defend itself from external forces, it concurrently clamps down internally by enforcing stricter gender roles. McWilliams[84] tells us that, as a rule, societies react to violence by

exalting the masculine and marginalizing the feminine and that 'armed patriarchy' invariably marginalizes women, with gender relations becoming hegemonic at the expense of alternative possibilities. In Cyprus, these gendered roles persist in part because of ethnic nationalism, interethnic violence, decades of foreign occupation and ethnic separation. As in other divided societies, making gender visible reveals the gendered dimension of history and notions of masculinity and femininity. Feminism, as a movement, political ideology or world-view has neither arisen indigenously in Cyprus nor been imported into the island's academic circles as a political or cultural movement. There are a number of reasons for the absence of public debate on women's condition and gender relations, but the main one is the patriarchal advice of 'not now but later when the problem has been solved'. Male Cypriots are being called upon to protect their homeland by doing military service and thus developing their manhood.

In a male-dominated society like Cyprus the two sexes are socialized into different roles and are associated with different values and spaces. Each sex is expected to follow its socially constructed roles, stereotypes and expectations. In addition, the space in which each gender is expected to move and to be self-fulfilled is socially determined. Although these gendered spaces are beginning to be challenged, they continue to be taken for granted in ordering the society and many social problems are blamed on the fusion of social boundaries. I argue that in a patriarchal, militaristic state both sexes are socialized with the same master narrative, which they internalize as if it were their own and which includes assigning selective origins to the national problem, fear of the enemy, demonization of the other, victimhood, one-sided justice, economic exploitation and moral norms. The family, schooling, media, church and mainstream political parties all play their part in achieving this end. Thus, not only men but women too reproduce the national narrative and norms; they participate in the militarization of the state and Greek Cypriot mothers are proud that their sons do military service for 26 months.

When a divided society like Cyprus reaches the point of armed violence, as in the 1960s and 1970s, it becomes hyper male-oriented; masculine attributes of strength and aggression are emphasized and the masculine psyche is adopted to explain the totality of the social

narrative. The female perspective is marginalized, silenced and dismissed as irrelevant. As war is deemed part of the 'male domain', female interpretations, reactions, desires and opinions are excluded as extraneous, secondary and ultimately immaterial. Enloe analysed this mono-gendered phenomenon of post-colonial identity, saying that nationalism 'typically … has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope'.[85]

Elshtain holds that war is seductive, the stuff of mythologies and romantic narratives of sacrifice and glory, and that it fixes men and women into prescriptive gender roles:

> war seduces us in part because we continue to locate ourselves inside its prototypical emblems and identities. Men fight as avatars of a nation's sanctioned violence. Women work and weep and sometimes protest within the frame of discursive practices that turn one out, militant mother and pacifist protestor alike, as the collective 'other' to the male warrior.[86]

These familiar heroic roles are sustained inter-generationally through story-telling, mainly by women, who transmit cultural identity through tales of ethnic origin and of the community's heroes, sacrifices and victories; women, meanwhile, are affiliated with icons of national domesticity, morals and private sociality.

While the heroic male role is exclusively that of the virulent, sexual, righteous warrior, the female figure in myths of conflict, as Muge Gocek pointed out, has three distinct roles – hero, mother or villain. In *The Myth of the Military Nation*,[87] the Turkish feminist scholar Ayse Gul Altinay shows how in Turkey from the time of the nationalist leader Kemal Atatürk and even today the identity of a Turkish male is a military one. The bonding of man/soldier/Turk is achieved through the compulsory conscription of young males, and through the compulsory element of military and nationalist education in schools. A similar perception, or misperception, exists in Cyprus on both sides of the divide with regard to compulsory military service being linked to masculinity, bravery and gaining enough manliness and maturity to protect the 'homeland'. Cypriot mothers are made to feel it their duty to 'offer' their sons to the military and during the conscription period

mothers are shown on television talking proudly of how they hope the army will mature their sons and turn them into 'real men' to be of service to their homeland.

As opposed to the virulent male hero, the heroic female is cast in a purely asexual role and portrayed as an allegorical figure bearing the cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, justice, fortitude, liberal arts, philosophy and truth. Another female role is of the sacrificial mother, or woman as representative of the 'motherland'. This role evokes a peasant woman in traditional dress or, in Cyprus, the ubiquitous grieving mother clutching a photograph of her lost son or husband. This figure is also asexual, for it is of a woman who is no longer a 'sexual object', but rather a warrior's wife, or woman who has borne children and become a patriotic mother by giving up her sons in battle for the 'higher' cause of the nation. The last female figure seen in war mythology is that of the villain. As war is masculinized, so the enemy is feminized, and treachery becomes equated with the female. This figure is often sexual, perfidious and fatally seductive. Therefore, the only sexual female role of the three is immoral and unnatural. Thus, in a society in conflict, a woman's sexual activity becomes complicit with her patriotism, and a woman who is neither a virgin nor a sacrificial grieving mother is immediately outcast as treacherous, unpatriotic and immoral. A 'slut' becomes a traitor. These three roles, learnt through the society's mythologies, become internalized subconsciously, and each individual woman's behaviour takes on national significance. As a woman's sexual activity becomes an act of treachery, or disloyalty to the nation, women also become an analogy for the nation at war.

During times of conflict, when the nation-state, cultural group, ethnicity or collectivity feels threatened, women are often more closely controlled, their behaviour more tightly circumscribed, and any deviance on their part seen as a threat to the survival of the collectivity. Thus controlled, corralled, veiled and forced to obey, their complicity is seen as a matter of national security. Anthias, Yuval-Davis, and Mosse (1948) have all shown how societies in conflict impose exceptionally strict rules of appropriate behaviour on women. They police their submission to their circumscribed roles vigilantly, and punish and correct any behaviour seen as deviating from their specific role as producer and reproducer of culture; female sexual complicity is

imperative to control. Lesbians, or women who marry or bear children with men from outside the collectivity, threaten the very existence of the community or nation-state and are thus worse than deviant; they are unpatriotic. This perception of female responsibility, with any deviance from prescribed gender roles presented as betraying the wider 'us', mutes any potential female resistance within societies in conflict. On the Israeli–Palestinian clash, Sharoni wrote that 'the intensity of the … conflict and its centrality in people's everyday lives have naturalized the tendency to overlook differences within one's imagined community, particularly the narrow roles allotted to women, and tamed, until recently, possible resistance on the part of women.' She goes on to say that this phenomenon is so pervasive that Marcia Freedman, an Israeli member of parliament, described Israel as a 'country where the liberation of women … [is] seen as a threat to national security'.[88]

Gender has not been included in the peace processes because, as Sharoni wrote, 'according to commonsense understandings, gender is usually perceived as a synonym for women. Consequently, as are women, gender is excluded from most discussions concerning international politics.'[89] Despite this tendency to ignore the intersections of gender and armed conflict, the literature shows that the interplays between societal gender roles and international aggressions are critical to sustaining each other. In the last two or so decades feminism has made refreshing and often challenging contributions to the study of international relations (IR). Thanks to scholars like Ackerly, Agathangelou, Cockburn, Enloe, Goldstein, Peterson, Runyan, Sharoni, Sjoberg, Tickner and others, feminism has become a well-established approach to IR, though we must admit that in a state-centric discipline developing feminist methodologies has been a challenge.[90]

Tickner[91] contested the Morgenthau thesis about politics and the neorealist understanding of state interests and power. Realists and neoliberals see war as a state's need to maximize its interests and to win. The pluralist feminist model, in which NGOs, international organizations, businesses, civil society and the individual citizen are seen as important in international politics as the nation-state, challenges the state-centrist model to promote feminist concepts of inclusion, interdependence and collaborative politics. A feminist-

envisioned transformation of international power would change the meaning and significance of 'sovereignty', for a feminist reformulation of power recognizes that power is a concept like justice, so cannot have one universally valid meaning. The exploration of power through a gender lens entails seeking the roots of domination and proposing problem-solving tools in global politics; it entails looking for empathy and suggesting alternatives to 'power over', 'power to' and 'power with'. Power, as Michel Foucault said,[92] is not only 'held' but it is also exercised relationally in many interpersonal and group relationships. Sjoberg[93] claims that power also refers to the capacity of an agent to act in spite of or in response to power wielded by others, whereas 'power with' is a discourse of alternative paths to power and uses many methods to expand the voices heard in politics so as to experience politics as a collaborative praxis rather than a competitive patriarchal project.

Holistic feminism

In the last section I shared some reflections on attempts to categorize feminisms and on the danger of compartmentalizing different schools of thought because one often contests the other. In a troubled region I find we need a variety of feminisms, for the issues women face in such situations are complex and multilayered and call for the use of integrated and holistic approaches. Fragmenting feminisms merely reinforces patriarchal stereotypes about disunity among women. One problem with using 'historical waves', ideological trends or historical moments to classify feminisms is that a number of feminist perspectives and movements might be excluded, especially in the developing world and in places like Africa, India and Nepal, where environmentalist feminists' attempts to stop foreign capital taking over their land and impoverishing their households do not fit mainstream classifications. Classifications can leave out the extraordinary work women belonging to the Gabriela movement in the Philippines engage in against patriarchy, imperialism, corruption and land reform. By using Western typologies one risks forgetting about all the other feminisms that develop in the non-Western world.

Feminists have challenged Western philosophical thought and forced it to consider women; liberal feminists, in particular, challenged

Enlightenment thought for disregarding women and gender.[94] They promoted the philosophy of rights for women, an issue that is pertinent today and that helps women's struggles not only in war-torn areas and in developing countries, but also in Western developed countries. The 'rights issue', which liberal feminism addressed in the past, now includes a specific set of proposals to rectify violations and cultural oppression, as for instance the right of girls in India or Afghanistan not to get married at a very young age – an issue the UN addressed in Beijing in 1995.

Patriarchal structures, anti-militarism and resistance to occupation complicate the acquisition of the right of women and of all citizens to move freely about Cyprus. Connected to this right is the need for a new constitution that takes account of the voices and presence of Cypriot women. The Cypriot women of Hands Across the Divide addressed this need when the Annan Plan proposing a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus conflict was first presented to the leaders of the two Cypriot communities in 2002.[95] In 2008, when Greek and Turkish Cypriot community leaders appointed working groups and technical committees to prepare various aspects of the solution to the Cyprus conflict, the presence of women was negligible. Women from both communities have challenged this omission and have mobilized women's interest in it. The patriarchal regime is neither interested in questioning such phenomena nor in associating itself with a gender-sensitive view of the solution to the Cyprus conflict, which also concerns Cypriot women. Thus, the conflict and its solution are viewed as either genderless or only a male preoccupation. The absence of a feminist independent movement makes it easier for patriarchy to prevail.

Serbian feminists also took a strong anti-nationalist and anti-militarist stand in their country because these were the urgent demands at the time of their ethno-national war in which appalling atrocities occurred, including attacks on women and the exploitation of their bodies. Later their struggle shifted to the 'rights' agenda. What I want to stress is that 'rights feminism' is a constantly developing contemporary issue that embraces political, social, economic and cultural aspects of our lives.

Radical feminists challenge the Marxist view that 'economics' is paramount; many say that other modes of domination need to be

considered, such as patriarchal structures and sexual and cultural oppression. Cockburn writes:

> The lens of war has made us acutely conscious of the way women are oppressed and exploited through their bodies, their sexuality and reproductive capacities. War deepens already deep sexual divisions, magnifies the contrast between femininity and masculinity, and legitimates male violence. It enhances men's authority in a quantum leap. So this tends to be 'radical' feminism in the sense that it sees women's oppression as being more than a mere by-product of an exploitative economic system or an unfair system of political representation.[96]

We can thus recognize that there is a need to interconnect to multiple feminist perspectives in order to address the more complex problems of oppression, violence, social injustice and inequalities. The former socialist republics were a good example of the failure to implement expectations, for there women's oppression and exploitation were allowed to continue in the form of 'double work'. The patriarchal structures within the family were not addressed as part of the social equality project. Each feminist perspective needs to acknowledge the contribution of the other so as to broaden our understanding of how gender, class, sexuality, race inequalities and oppression intersect.

For me, feminism is a dynamic, continually developing world-view, a political movement with the flexibility to respond to new circumstances and to attain new understandings of our shared goal, which is to do away with all forms of oppression and exploitation. Taking a more integrated view of feminisms can, I believe, lead to what I call 'holistic feminism', which is all embracing, welcomes diversity among women, avoids compartmentalization, and values complementarity and empathic collaboration. Holistic feminism introduces us to a transnational sense of women's condition beyond the exclusive male preserve of a sovereign nation-state. What I said at the beginning of the chapter about my students having difficulty with their feminist identity can be understood both within the theory of socialization and their perceived fear of being labelled men haters. We need to confront

the mental, ideological and social blockages that often deprive us of the openness to see multiple realities and how these function within various identities. A feminist, holistic lens will help us construct a feminist political mobilization that takes into account all the above. We need an alliance for change that calls for combined knowledge, and demands a shared vision of the nature and goal of dialogue, democracy and human rights, including a sense of a shared future for global alliances. This can come about as a product of imagination, for, as Yuval-Davis has reminded us, 'imagination, too, is situated'.

Chapter 2

Transformative Methodology and Social Change

> Making the invisible visible, bringing the margin to the centre, rendering the trivial important, putting the spotlight on women as competent actors, understanding women as subjects in their own right rather than objects for men – all continue to be elements of feminist research.
>
> (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992)[1]

Indeed, what Reinharz and Davidman state in the above quotation has steered our epistemology in conceiving and implementing the research project dealing with Cypriot and migrant women's experiences, lives and voices on both sides of the conflict divide. I share Ann Tickner's (2006) view that an important commitment of feminist methodology is that knowledge must be built and analysed in a way that women can use to change whatever oppressive conditions they face.[2] According to Oakley, many of us coming from the 'what we should get serious about is not what we say to each other, but the extent to which our work resonates with the experiences and needs of people outside the academic world.'[3] As feminists we ask what potential such and such a research would have to improve women's lives. Judith Cook and Mary Fonow focus on the need for research to mean something that can lead to change in women's lives and help women confront their oppression and formulate their plan of action. Thus, 'feminist research', say Cook and Fonow, 'is not research about women but research for women to be used in transforming their sexist society'.[4] Literature on feminist research calls upon researchers who aim for anti-sexist research approaches to give continuous and reflexive

attention to the significance of gender as an aspect of all social life and consider the significance of differences between women but also the relevance of men's lives to a feminist understanding of the world. Researchers should value the 'personal and private' as worthy of being studied, develop non-exploitative relationships within research and value reflexivity and emotion as sources of insight as well as essential parts of the research process.[5]

Feminists claim that knowledge based on women's lives, particularly marginalized women, is more robustly objective, both because it broadens the base from which we derive knowledge and because the perspectives of outsiders or marginalized people may reveal aspects of reality that more orthodox approaches to knowledge building obscure.[6] Feminist epistemology is based on the view that 'masculine' science is 'bad science' because it excludes women's experience; it sees a need to develop a 'successor science' to replace dominant social science paradigms. It holds that the 'personal is political' and it has been suggested that this view draws on Marxist ideas about the role of the proletariat. Women are an oppressed class and, as such, have the ability not only to understand their own experiences of oppression but are also able to see their oppressor's viewpoint. It is thus more reliable than the 'view from above'. The view here, says Millen,[7] is that research based on women's experience provides a more valid basis for knowledge because it gives access to a wider conception of truth via the insight of the oppressor.

One criticism of the feminist 'standpoint' is that material conditions of oppression vary dramatically and that this can lead to an unproductive discussion on hierarchies of oppression. Surely, since we all hold multiple intersecting positions on gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and disability, no one specific social location has complete access to 'truth'; it is difficult to speak about 'independent truth and objectivity as a means of establishing superior knowledge' because there will always be alternative knowledge claims of different standpoints.[8]

Feminist researchers (notably Maynard and Purvis)[9] believe that the research they conduct cannot and should not be separated from their identities as researchers and their multiple intersecting positions – gender, ethnicity, class, age, race and sexuality. Issues of emotional involvement or 'emotional work', as well as the politics of power, are

involved in the discussion of the relationship between the process and product of research.[10] Essential to feminism is the premise that women have been 'left out' of codified knowledge, where men have formulated explanations in relation to themselves; they have generally either rendered women invisible or classified them as deviant. The description and analysis of the omission of women as autonomous human beings has been one of the feminists' most significant contributions.[11]

Human experience is gendered and this understanding is central to the radical implications of feminist theory that emerge from and respond to the lives of women. Recognizing the impact of gender and insisting on the importance of the female experience have provided vital common ground for feminist research and thought. Listening to women's voices, studying their writings and learning from their experiences have been crucial to the feminist reconstruction of our understanding of the world. Women's personal narratives are, among other things, stories of how women negotiate their 'exceptional' gender status both in their daily lives and over the course of a lifetime.'[12]

In this chapter I discuss the specific methodology I employed with my partners, five NGOs, in carrying out the research project on women in all Cypriot communities. In the first section of the chapter I deal with the background to the research idea and what it meant doing research in a divided society. In the next section I give a brief profile of the five NGOs and the research team. In the third section I refer to the goals of the project before analysing the process we used and the challenges and transformations we experienced. In the final section, I attempt some generalizations about what I call 'transformative methodology' whereby the process and the products are equally significant.

Background: the research idea

In 1993 a Turkish Cypriot female journalist interviewed me. We met at the Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone in divided Nicosia – the in-between space where a Greek Cypriot could only meet a Turkish Cypriot after the military authorities in the north had issued a permit to cross. She asked me what I knew about the lives and struggles of Turkish Cypriot women. I remember saying that I knew more about the struggles of women in the United States, Northern Ireland,

Palestine and Israel than about the Turkish Cypriot women living only a stone's throw, yet seemingly so far, away. Geographical proximity was irrelevant to the political, socio-psychological distancing. She, too, was ignorant of the issues facing Greek Cypriot women. We both realized that the politics of nationalism, patriarchy and militarism permeated every aspect of our lives. My background in conflict resolution had reinforced my belief in the value of interpersonal contacts and engagement in collaborative projects as a way of transcending enforced divisions and ethnicities, and acknowledging shared interests and struggles.

Feeling uneasy and embarrassed at my ignorance I decided in the spring of 1993 to carry out a pilot study on women across the partitioning line. I wanted to examine identity, conflict and women's struggles for peace, their values and future hopes. I expected that it would become a larger research project and would produce information about women's voices in both communities. I was lucky to have met Neshe Yashin, a Turkish Cypriot woman, poet and peace activist, who soon after, with other Turkish Cypriot women, attempted to move beyond adversarial official narratives to build bridges of mutual acceptance and a different discourse and understanding across divisions. Neshe embraced the idea and shared the same concerns about the invisibility of Cypriot women's voices.

We met in the buffer zone whenever she could get permission from the military authorities. I prepared a questionnaire and gave it to her (no email at that time) to look over and we jointly decided on the final copy. We ran the pilot study with about 120 women in each community. I did my part among Greek Cypriot women but she was very late in returning hers. In the end only five Turkish Cypriot women responded. I asked why. She said some were afraid of being exposed to the 'enemy', or were suspicious of the purpose of such a project, especially since it had been initiated by someone they did not know. Others were forbidden to fill in the questionnaire by their husbands or fathers, who tore it up and threw it in the dustbin. I then realized that not only the conflict had sharpened their suspicions, but that the timing and level of readiness were not yet ripe. Interethnic research on women's issues in such a context was not only inappropriate and unappreciated but viewed as a threat. We lacked even minimum levels

of trust and a 'conspiracy theory' mentality prevailed. I also recognized that the Turkish Cypriots had more urgent needs than the Greek Cypriots. One thing was, however clear; patriarchy was doing well in Cyprus. Years later, some of our findings still confirm the dominance of patriarchy both in the private and in the public life of women.[13]

A decade later, in 2003, we were able to realize the 2003 goal with an even larger research study on Cypriot women's lives, not only in the two major communities but in all five Cypriot communities. Does this tell us that our society has become more tolerant and is more ready to listen to women's voices? Or is the change in political climate due to the prospect of the accession of Cyprus to the European Union? Has the harmonization of legislation on gender equality served to open up space for a public debate on gender issues and thus for academic research? Both conditions may have contributed. Up until then no research had been carried out on women in all the communities. Any other research on women had been conducted separately and the findings were only made public either in the Greek- or Turkish Cypriot communities. The production of knowledge was fragmented, as was the geographic space and its politics, and the one did not connect to the other's reality.

In a society in conflict, the 'national problem' historically overshadows and downplays women's issues, voices and different experiences.[14] The conflict is viewed as genderless, implying that men's and women's experiences of it are the same, or that it is irrelevant if they are not. The predominance of official masculine discourses in Greek- and Turkish Cypriot communities about one's duty to fight the 'enemy' for justice and recognition, led women from both sides to internalize what they saw as their ethnic and national duty.[15] In trying to meet their community's expectations, many women denied themselves the right to be full participants or social agents. As I mentioned before, in the absence of a feminist movement on the island and with women's associations closely associated with political parties and their agendas, they had little option other than to internalize the male political discourses. In this kind of environment, it is no wonder that Cypriot women still experience confusion, violence and numerous contradictions.

As a strong believer in participatory research, which emphasizes the

dialectic between researchers and researched, I chose to set up a team of researchers. Through the project we wanted to go beyond militarism, nationalisms and forced separations to engage in collaborative research that would include the communities' female population, bring to the surface the invisible and the voice of the voiceless and, it was hoped, initiate a different public debate. As coordinator of the project and president of the Cyprus Peace Centre, a non-profit NGO, I could not imagine doing research on women of all groups without engaging NGOs from all five communities. I wanted to challenge the bicommunal conceptualization of Cypriot politics that marginalized the discussion and seriousness of many social issues, including those of women and other minorities. Thus, I invited the participation of four partner NGOs – Hands Across the Divide, the Armenian Relief Society, the Maronite Graduates' Association and the Latin Association for Support of Foreign Workers.

Working as a research team I became aware of group dynamics, power asymmetries, inequalities and intra- and interethnic social sensitivities. We adopted what Rrinharz called a 'reflexive attitude' whereby personal experience is considered an asset for feminist research and a learning tool along the process. Thus, while working for the project we were also working on ourselves as a group and as individuals.

From the start of the research on 'women in the Cypriot communities' we avoided a binary conception and viewed reality as complex – as was the location of the research team. We needed different tools for understanding and analysing the questions we crafted together as a team. We looked at methodology as a process for social change at both an individual and societal level. We experienced it as 'research within research'. We used 'hard' and 'soft' methods to experience the positive insights obtainable from the qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Methodology is crucially important to feminism because it provides the key to understanding the overlap between knowledge and power. As the project proceeded we repeatedly confronted our ignorance of each other's community struggles, history, sensitivities, politics, oppression, differences and social prejudices. This became more acute when we started discussing the questionnaire, which turned out to be a lot more complicated than

a list of questions. Some questions were perceived as difficult and culturally embarrassing. Since different communities harboured different social taboos, it took some time to agree on a questionnaire with which all the subjects would feel comfortable enough to answer the questions. These referred mainly to the personal choices women made on issues of sex, contraception, divorce and, if married, their relationship with their husbands.

As a team we wanted to locate our project, which we believed was a pioneering one, in the broad global context of women's issues and struggles and we had to educate ourselves on what was happening in other divided societies. The project took 11-months to complete. There were times along the way when we felt we would never finish it, but with perseverance and mutual support we were able to move along and meet our funder's deadline.

The women coordinators from each NGO and I met first to share the idea of the proposed research project, and then to give each partner a copy of the draft proposal to discuss with her own association. The idea was for everyone to feel that they were part of the project from the conceptualization phase to the final implementation. Together we discussed the need for the project, its goals, objectives and what use we could make of its findings to promote social change. We first held three meetings, one every week in my house and later every fortnight at an NGO resource centre in south Nicosia – crossing to the north in those days was impossible. Each partner needed to feel that the project was meaningful to her so that she could consent and commit herself to it. Some of the partners expressed concern over the project being used to serve my 'academic' interests, but it soon became clear that it was 'our' project and they soon recognized its multicommunal value. Our theoretical goal was to demonstrate that knowledge can also develop from citizens' NGOs.

The process of finding, explaining and convincing the partners of the value of such an attempt and then committing them to the different phases of the project was a rich and, at times, intense experience; to meet our deadlines we needed to develop trust and mutual respect. One of the biggest challenges we faced was to maintain enthusiasm and courage when partners (the majority of whom were married) had to attend to other responsibilities like taking their children to various

afternoon activities, preparing evening meals, doing housework, or travelling abroad for work. We discussed these challenges as they related to the women's different 'positions' and noted the strength of patriarchal structures within the family, for seldom would husbands reach out to offer support or practical help. The unmarried women noted how much they had learnt from the group discussions; as we pondered over gender relations, we understood how knowledge is 'situated' according to what positions we hold in our multiple identities.[16]

Early on, we discussed the question of money in case the project got funded. Many women find it difficult to discuss this subject, but we needed to break that taboo and uneasiness. I believed that each woman's labour had to be paid for and acknowledged. We thought it important to have a clear understanding of the logistics and material aspects of the project to avoid misunderstandings and the unnecessary feeling of 'being used' that women often experience. We all agreed that some minimal voluntary work would be necessary in the early phases of the project when we did not know if we would get funding.

Below I give a short profile of each partner NGO and then discuss what I call 'transformative feminist methodology'. (A short historical background of each community appears in Appendix 1.) I received some information on the communities from the women in the research group – Monica Kalakoutis on the Maronites; Mayda Nishanian on the Armenians, Jeannine Bayada on the Latins, Mine Yucel on the Turkish Cypriots and the historian Katia Hadjidimitriou on the Greek Cypriots.

The partners

The Peace Centre

The Peace Centre is a non-profit-making organization that was officially registered in the Republic of Cyprus in 1991. It was originally meant to be a bicommunal NGO, but the division of the island, its militarist structure, obstacles to getting permits for Turkish Cypriots to cross to the south and lack of adequate resources made this impossible. Its main goals are to promote a culture of peace, which means a shift in thinking about 'us' and 'them' to including the 'other'; to sensitize the public at large on the need to resolve conflicts and

differences in a non-violent way through informal education and conflict-resolution workshops; and to foster collaboration by deconstructing mutually exclusive nationalisms and reconstructing a history of reconciliation and multiculturalism. Another of the Peace Centre's aims is to support and promote gender equality and to apply human rights in Cyprus and internationally. It is imperative to study in-depth the causes of conflicts and violence in all its manifestations. Over the years the centre has played a major role in organizing and facilitating training workshops in conflict resolution, communication, negotiation, mediation and project design for individuals across the divide. It has often cooperated with local, regional and international organizations with similar agendas in promoting peace.

The centre promotes and provides opportunities for interaction between individuals and groups from all communities to enhance understanding and appreciation of differences and to reinforce the notion of citizens' participation in the broader movement for confidence and peace-building, which we believe will strengthen the official peace process in addition to promoting the concept of a civil society. The centre supports the demilitarization of the island, which we associate with the demilitarization of our minds. Apart from its activist work, it undertook the first bicommunal research in both communities long before the opening of the Green Line and produced knowledge that third parties involved in the solution of the Cyprus conflict used.[17]

Hands Across the Divide (HAD)

HAD has its origins in a seminar held on both sides of Nicosia, in March 2001, under the auspices of the British Council and at the request of Greek and Turkish Cypriot women. Women from Ireland, Palestine, Israel, Bosnia Herzegovina and Cyprus participated in the two-day seminar called 'Women Living in Divided Communities. What Can We Do?' It was an opportunity to share experiences and knowledge as well as build networks. The feminist scholar and activist Cynthia Cockburn facilitated the seminar (for details see her book *The Line*).[18] We registered as a voluntary organization first in the United Kingdom (which was politically necessary because of the 'non-recognition' issue), but in 2008 we registered it in the Republic of Cyprus so as to benefit from local and European Union funding.

At the outset, because of militarism, the *de facto* partition of the island and embargo on permits imposed on Turkish Cypriots in 1997 to cross to the buffer zone where most of the bicommunal work was taking place, HAD members met under UN auspices in the mixed village of Pyla. Women had to travel more than 50 kilometres, which was difficult for those with family responsibilities. We used conflict-resolution tools and feminist perspectives in our discussions on gender, and on how to deal with each community's past fears and grievances. After long discussion, we agreed on a shared vision:

> We aspire to live in a united country and to create a democratic society, where there is equality, including equal access to resources and gender equality, and respect for all, irrespective of differences. Our mission is to contribute to a culture of peace and multiculturalism. We stress the urgency for an agreement on the Cyprus problem and accession to the European Union.

HAD continues to be active and since 2003, with the opening of some crossing points along the Green Line, physical contacts have become easier and meetings can be held without the previous torment of applying for permits. The organization welcomed the high-level meeting of the two Cypriot leaders, Mr Dimitris Christofias and Mr Mehmet Ali Talat, on 21 March 2008. A delegation from HAD presented a letter and two wreaths made of olive leaves to each leader drawing their attention to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to appoint women to the various working groups that would assist in the official peace negotiations. Another activity was a 'peace bus' initiative in which a group of women visited women in villages in both communities, with the aim of opening up spaces for women's narratives at the grass-roots level and of sensitizing them to women's role in the peace-building process. There are many Cypriot women who have not ever met the other. This project is located within the broader issue of reconciliation and trauma healing through contacts.

Association of Maronite Graduates

This is a non-political, non-partisan association of university graduates. Its main purpose is to work for the welfare of the Maronite com-

munity and of Cyprus in general. It aims to bring together and organize Maronite graduates to use their qualifications for personal advancement and to promote good causes in the Maronite community and wider Cyprus society; to make a systematic, scientific contribution to preserving the Maronite community, and its cultural and religious traditions, within a peaceful, prosperous, pluralistic, multicultural Cyprus; to promote awareness in Cyprus of the Maronite community and its long historical presence on the island; to raise the Maronite community's self confidence and image in Cyprus at large; to dispel any prejudice or discrimination by or against any community or individual members of it; to promote understanding, tolerance, interaction and contact among Cypriot communities and, finally, to contribute to the creation of a climate in cross-community relations conducive to solving the Cyprus problem.

Armenian Relief Society

The Armenian Relief Society is an Armenian women's charity founded in 1910; its headquarters are in Massachusetts, USA, and it has branches throughout the Armenian diaspora and in Armenia. Its Cyprus Chapter was established in 1987; it has been active in humanitarian relief and secures its funds through donations, membership fees, public collections and fund-raising activities such as bazaars; it helps support Armenians in need. It sponsors the education of deserving but needy students of Armenian origin by providing academic scholarships and it cooperates with other organizations with similar objectives. It also initiates social and cultural programmes.

The Latin Association for Support of Foreign Workers

Over the last two decades, when a large number of foreign workers started arriving in Cyprus, from such countries as the Philippines and Sri Lanka, many of them Catholics, there was a need to create a space for their requirements. Today there are such centres in cities like Limassol and Nicosia, and smaller shelters in Larnaca and Paphos. The Shelter of St Francis in Limassol, which is housed at the back of St Catherine's church, developed into a multicultural centre where conferences are held and people of different nationalities interact and exchange ideas.

The refuge of St Joseph's Convent and School in Nicosia is located inside the Venetian Walls, along the Green Line. The need to create a refuge for the ever increasing number of foreign workers impelled the clergy of the Franciscan order, in association with the Nuns of St Joseph, to turn a part of the boarding school into a shelter under the name of St Joseph the Migrant. In this refuge, foreign workers, many of whom are women, find a homely atmosphere and lessons in the Greek language and on how to acquire computer skills are given whenever the need arises; they are also provided with accommodation for a short period of time.

The research team and the different phase of the project

The core research team comprised 12 women, with two or occasionally three from each partner NGO. The women came from diverse educational, social, ethnic, professional and age backgrounds. All the members of the core group had a university education and some had postgraduate degrees as well. Some had done research before, others had not. I, with an academic position and from an activist background, was the main coordinator. I had an assistant coordinator in the south, a university graduate, Thalia Ioannidou. Mine Yucel and Derya Beyatli, university graduates from the Turkish Cypriot community, coordinated the project in their community. As I mentioned earlier, in the first few meetings, which were held in my house, we had a lot of explaining and thinking to do about the value of such an engagement and commitment demanded from each. The challenge grew as the project proceeded to realization. Since we did not know each other, we also needed a period for team building, which meant introducing ourselves, our strengths, weaknesses and time limitations. The draft of the proposal was given to each partner for comments and changes. Each partner had to endorse the project, filling in specific forms to be submitted to the funding organization.

In December 2002 the EU approved and funded the project. I asked each partner NGO to choose a coordinator. She would act as a leader in eliciting the participation of more women from her community as the project required it. The group leader was to coordinate the recruitment of interviewers as well as help with the sample of the interviewees. In total we employed 80 women interviewers.

From the start we had in mind a scheme of research that would include (a) an administered questionnaire, which was the quantitative part, and (b) focus group discussions, which was our qualitative part, including participant observation. The questionnaire was conducted in all but the Latin community due to major difficulties in obtaining a valid sample because of the community's small size and the fact that it is spread geographically. So we conducted only focus group discussions among the Latin women. The population sample totalled 1697 women as follows: 748 Greek Cypriots; 600 Turkish Cypriots; 182 Maronites; and 167 Armenians. A total of 50 women, made up of eight to ten women in each group, participated in the focus group discussions.

From the beginning the process was as significant as the product we wanted to produce. This meant that we, as a team, had to believe in, espouse and experience all the changes and values we wanted to introduce to our communities. The shared values we hammered out in our early meetings included cooperation, mutual empowerment, mutual trust and respect, solidarity, and learning. We all shared the desire to contribute to social change.

One of our practical aims was to develop a safe thinking space in which women from all Cypriot communities could articulate their opinions, concerns, fears, values and differences, thus getting away from 'essentialization'. Another aim was to raise awareness for the right of women to participate in a world that both men and women shaped. We believe that in a patriarchal, conflict-ridden society women need space in which to listen to each other and to affirm that knowledge is produced through reflecting on our experiences as activists, and that this becomes the most important data upon which to construct our realities.

The overall goals of this research were, through these communicative processes, to develop sustainable women's networks across the different cultures of the communities; to raise awareness of our shared values and common interest in building structures and institutions for peace, as well as in promoting cooperation and gender equality; to open a public space for dialogue in order to advance a common vision for the role of civil society and particularly of women; and to raise awareness of the gap that often exists between official policy and micro-level needs, particularly in relation to women.

In implementing this research project we made a conscious decision to employ only women. We wanted to observe the dynamics that unfold when women work together for a concrete goal and objective, shared by each one of us and to which each of us felt committed. The level of commitment increased as the project advanced. We wanted to foster cooperation, tolerance, support, respect for differences and women's solidarity in the working groups – values we aimed through the project to transfer to the wider society. We believed that this experiential dimension was essential for acquiring the knowledge of feminisms relevant to ourselves and the project. I believe we succeeded in raising consciousness and building relationships among the more than eighty women from all communities (many of them university students) who actively participated in the various phases of the project. The phases included getting to know the core group of representatives from all the NGOs; holding intensive discussions on themes for the questionnaire; formulating the questionnaire; running a pilot study; re-examining the final questionnaire; translating the questionnaire from Greek to English and Turkish; training interviewers; preparing the demographic sample for each community; filling-in questionnaires; preparing focus group interviews in all communities; undergoing data computation and statistical analysis; transcribing and analysing the qualitative data; and disseminating the quantitative and qualitative findings of seminars held in each community. Because we wanted the larger communities to own what we had experienced and produced, we ended up by holding a conference at the University of Cyprus in which scholars from Greece and Britain participated and that was open to the public.

The group transformation

As a team we spent a great deal of time discussing and formulating the questionnaire. We used a feminist approach in our effort to reach consensus on each question and it took us more than three months to formulate the questions. The discussions revealed the social and political history of women from each community. Like all reflexive researchers, we know that each person brings her own politics to the research and this was very apparent in our team. By politics here I mean that each of us approached the project from our individual

ideological, social, economic and cultural standpoints, which shaped many of the discussions we had, especially on whether or not to include certain topics in the questionnaire. These discussions produced creative tensions, which opened space for real learning with the use of a dialogic approach[19] that gradually produced mental shifts among us on most of the 'difficult' questions. We realized that our shared female gender ensured neither homogeneity nor a uniformity of experiences and voices, so we avoided the risk of 'essentializing' women. We understood that the 'ethnic' label is a construct and could be transcended in the coalitions we were building beyond ethnic or class divides.

We were constantly negotiating different thoughts and feelings and being respectful of the other's perspective. This was not always a comfortable process because, with its culture of conflict, the society at large still harboured a lot of pain and many misunderstandings, which were bound to enter the project. The fear, for instance, of being called a traitor in a nationalist and militaristic environment and how comfortable or uneasy it felt to meet the 'other' were other issues about which we talked openly. Some of us had already been branded 'traitors' because of our past attempts at *rapprochement* and work in conflict-resolution training workshops. More positively, however, by this time the political environment and nationalist agenda had become somewhat more relaxed on both sides because negotiations between the leaders of the two communities were being held under UN auspices.

I now give examples to illustrate the sorts of dialogue and negotiation in which we engaged. The section of the questionnaire on 'personal and group identity' contained questions to which some of the partners objected on the grounds that they were too sensitive, and an intrusion into the private lives of individuals. For instance, some members of the core group raised serious objections to women being asked about their marriages and the nature of their relationship with their partner, saying that they would never disclose the state of their married life. Consequently, we discussed at length our underlying intention in asking such a question. We were seeking to explain why the divorce rate in our society had risen so dramatically in the last decade. We also, with a view to raising awareness of the oppression and social pressures women in unsatisfactory marriages often endure, wanted to produce data on dysfunctional marriages. When this was

clarified the women's resistance softened and we framed the questions in a way that would both encourage a response and meet our research needs. Such data were necessary if we aimed to propose social programmes, especially in schools, on human relations and the value of interpersonal communication, self-respect, dignity and respect for girls and women in a patriarchal system. Later on, in our qualitative study, we agreed to take it further and many women, especially Greek Cypriot ones, spoke openly about the domestic violence in their marriages.

Also in this section of the questionnaire were questions about 'sex, contraception and abortion'. It is still considered socially unacceptable to discuss these subjects openly, especially male and female homosexuality, and contraception, despite the risk of Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases; also, because of the strength of the Greek Orthodox Church, abortion is illegal in the Greek Cypriot community. Most of the women in the research team objected to raising these issues, especially the Maronite and Armenian ones who felt that such issues were taboo and that women in their communities would refrain from answering them. We had another long discussion about our underlying assumptions about such issues, which is usually to connect them to morality and to a moralizing debate. Attitudes towards 'abortion' changed when Turkish soldiers raped Greek Cypriot women during the war of 1974. At that point the Greek Orthodox Church lifted the prohibition and abortions were then legally performed so that Greek women were not forced to give birth to the 'infidel' child of the enemy.

We discussed how rape and abortion are used to assert power over women's bodies in times of conflict, and how rape is a shameful tool employed by the enemy. Today in Cyprus abortions are performed secretly in private clinics, which points to institutional and social hypocrisy. We then broadened the discussion to look at a woman's entitlement to female sexuality and to exercise control over her own body, issues no women's organization affiliated to a political party in any community would ever have put on its agenda. We eventually included these questions in our questionnaire but only after we all felt comfortable about them. Some interviewers told us that a considerable number of women did not respond with ease to these questions (especially older women in the rural areas and a few in the cities) but

would ask the interviewer to move on to the next one. Indeed, such inhibitions and the persistence of a conservative, closed mentality points to a need for public discussion on these topics because, as radical feminists have pointed out, they are not simply 'personal' but also social and 'political' issues.

Other questions also evoked a lot of discussion. One referred to positioning oneself on an ideological spectrum from 'left to extreme right' and connecting this to one's voting behaviour. Some of the partners felt that women in all the communities would refuse to address that question because of the polarization between left and right-wing politics in Cyprus. Some argued that ideological positioning divided families; for example, if a right-wing government was in power, its supporters would receive favours either at work or when their sons did military service, and people on the left would feel discriminated against. In a closed patriarchal society in which clientalism is rife and people are liable to 'blame the other', it is not easy to reveal one's ideological and political identity to a stranger. We had to grapple with this fear and teach our interviewers how to encourage responses from their interviewees, for it was not always enough to promise anonymity and confidentiality. We also discussed the gendered aspect of ideologies that promote certain worldviews and that, along with our voting behaviour, change according to the social, economic and political conditions of a country. We found it difficult to expose our own ideological position openly, even among ourselves in the core research group. Ideological exposure is more difficult in warring societies where citizens are called upon to decide on an 'either/or' basis, and where polarities and divisions define many parts of our identity.

Another question was on the various causes of the Cyprus conflict, ranging from Britain's colonial 'divide-and-rule' policy to the present-day nationalisms of Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The discussion centred on male-dominated politics and understandings of history, on the exclusion of women in the construction of competing nationalist narratives, and on how the armed conflicts of 1963, 1967 and 1974 affected women. This was an opportunity to listen to the experiences of other communities and for the first time to realize that Armenians and Turkish Cypriots had suffered more in 1963 and 1974 than either Maronites or Greek Cypriots. We heard about how for a whole decade

Turkish Cypriots were excluded from the state and made to feel invisible, and how they looked upon Greek Cypriots as privileged and indifferent to their plight. Such discussions did not form part of the dominant narrative and we felt as if we were creating our own 'herstory'. The main issue was not so much to agree on a list of contributory factors as to build awareness of the invisibility of women and their structural exclusion by those whose decision it was to go to war or to make peace. As Sloberg suggests,[20] women's suffering in the war should be seen in the context of a political world of material gender subordination and political exclusion. Thus, in speaking about what factors contributed to the conflict in Cyprus, we could not avoid talking about patriarchal structures, militarism and the male ideologies of nationalism and neo-liberalism. The questionnaire we eventually agreed upon was divided into seven parts and contained 59 questions.

The above are a few examples to demonstrate the dialogic process as well as the 'reflexive attitude' we adopted in framing our research questions and reaching agreement through honest interactions and creative tensions. The process helped us raise consciousness and acquaint one another with feminist concepts. A few of the women did not at first want to use the words 'feminism' and 'feminist' –they still carry a negative connotation in Cypriot society – but ideas like the 'personal is political', the separation of the 'private from the public', the politics of the body and women's rights were recognized as valuable. It was our shared belief that during this process we learnt a great deal from each other about the collective and personal lives of women in our different communities. Learning became one of our values. While the research project was about Cypriot women, it was also about confronting our own oppression in an experiential way and using it to transform our sexist society. The research team therefore developed a gender consciousness, an awareness of what it means to be a woman and to live in a male-dominated society like Cyprus where the separation between private and public prevails, women's needs are not visible and their voices are subdued. Women often experience themselves as the 'other', marginalized by male hegemony.

Personally, through this process I grew intellectually and politically. I realized how little I knew about women from the other communities in my home country. I became aware of the many hidden political

factors affecting the everyday lives of women and the state's failure to address them. I was pleasantly surprised to hear Armenian women speaking Turkish to Turkish Cypriot women and felt my own inability to do so. I listened to women sharing their experiences of different forms of discrimination and prejudice about which I had previously been completely unaware (there is more on this in Chapter 5). At the same time we shared many positive experiences with and about the other, and were often critical of our own community's politics. The relationships we built continue to this day and whenever the need arises we know that each of us will have the support from the other. Focus groups were another method we used to collect data.

Focus group discussions

Through focus group discussions in each Cypriot community – Greek, Turkish, Maronite, Armenian and Latin – we wanted to draw attention to the legitimacy of each community and learn to appreciate each other's shared views and differences on specific issues. A focus group approach offers each member an opportunity to voice her views and interact with other members. Its dialogic style allows members to connect and gain deeper understandings of each other's positions. The perspectives that emerge during the interactions reveal the women's realities and may lead to new knowledge and insights because, as Haraway reminds us, 'all knowledge is situated'.[21] Core research members from each NGO approached women in their community with a view to informing them about the research project and inviting them to take part in it on a voluntary basis. The participants came from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and age groups. The sessions were all taped; I was the main facilitator, but another member from each NGO helped me and a research assistant observed the process and took notes. During the implementation phase of the project, certain political changes occurred in Cyprus, which we felt were important to address. In other words, we remained flexible and open to incorporating political changes into the project as these unfolded.

Some of the topics we discussed in the focus group interviews had not been covered in the questionnaire survey. These included the status of women in Cyprus; their relationships with women from other communities; the impact of the conflict on their own lives, especially

'crossings' to and from the other side; awareness of European Union gender policies; and women's visions of themselves. Ethical guidelines on confidentiality and privacy were agreed and the ground rules drawn. The willingness and need of women to talk about intimate personal matters in front of the other participants surprised me, but I was pleased that they felt safe enough to do so. The healing and therapeutic character of the sessions revealed a need to establish support centres in which women from all communities can meet, feel safe and share experiences with the help of a facilitator.

Transfer and dissemination of process products

As I mentioned at the start of this chapter, feminist methodology is committed to building and analysing knowledge in a way that allows women to use it to change whatever oppressive conditions they face. Ann Oakley suggested we ask ourselves to what extent our work resonates with the experiences and needs of people outside the academic world.[22] One topic we discussed as a core research group was how to transfer, disseminate and share the findings of our research project. We decided to go back to all the communities to present the results.

We organized gatherings in which the Peace Centre and its partner NGOs presented the results of the study in a comparative way. An open dialogue facilitated by the coordinator and two NGO partner members engaged the audience in a discussion of the findings, of how we had worked together and what that had meant to each of us individually and collectively. Men and women attended, and some participants were interviewees or interviewers who shared their experience of the project. They all spoke of how novel an experience it had been, and the men wanted to know why we had chosen to work only with women. We held a press conference in the buffer zone and it was interesting to observe that the media only sent women reporters, as if women's issues were exclusively women's concern. Needless to say, in many media discussions and public forums we often heard stereotypical male views – you women have to work hard; it is up to you to change society; or it is women who do not support women. Being eager to disseminate the results of the project, we gave press interviews on both sides of the divide. The people who attended these gatherings told us that it was the first time they had learnt about themselves and

about the experiences of women from other communities. Young women were particularly interested to see that on certain issues their generation was more open to change than that of their parents, whereas on others age made no difference (see Chapter 4).

The most moving presentation we made was before the Turkish Cypriot community in the Chamber of Commerce building. Two Turkish Cypriot collaborators, Mine Yucel and Derya Beyatli, and I spoke about the research process and its findings and, so great was the interest that a two-hour discussion followed. At the end the conversation continued over refreshments outside the hall. We knew then that we had sparked a new interest in women's issues that transcended ethnic politics. A Turkish Cypriot woman in her forties came up to me and touched my arm. She embraced me and then, with tears in her eyes, told me that it was the first time she had spoken to and touched a Greek Cypriot since Greek Cypriot fascists killed her father in 1974 and her family was displaced. She told me about her fear of Greeks for all those years, about how she had grown up without a father and still had nightmares. She was pleased she had attended the event because it had allowed her to renegotiate her fear of the 'enemy' and to recognize that there are people on the other side to whom she can talk and feel listened to.

We also organized a conference at the University of Cyprus in the south with a view to presenting the survey findings and recommendations to the wider public, including the academic community. We invited other feminist researchers who had done similar work on women to share their insights, thus broadening our base from a local to a more global experience. It was the first time the Cyprus university main hall had been filled with citizens from all the communities on the island, as well as with some non-citizens of Cyprus, and the first time a panel of women from all five NGO partners sat together on the platform, thus projecting a multicommunal and multicultural countenance. They described what doing research as a team had meant to them, how the experience had changed their views, and how much they valued the new friendships they had made and sense of community that had been created and sustained. Working closely for a year and a half not only shifted our original views and expectations but we also became wiser about seeing our own community through the lens

of the others. As Monica Kalakoutis, the Maronite member of the core research group put it:

> For the last 11 months I had the pleasure to work with a group of women from all five communities of Cyprus for the completion of this project. During these months I had the opportunity to discuss with the women from the other communities a number of issues and problems, we as women and as members of our communities faced. I also had the opportunity to discuss these with people of my own community. I observed and learnt many things. Cyprus is the homeland of a multi-communal, multicultural society, and the smaller communities, and certainly my own are, primarily, concerned about the issue of our survival and maintenance of our identity. This issue became more acute after the Turkish invasion of 1974 when more than 95 per cent of our community was displaced. The Maronite woman feels that a large portion of the responsibility for the survival of her community lies with her. She struggles to raise her children so that they live as good Cypriots without losing their identity as Maronites. But sometimes she feels that she is alone in that. She wants the state and the authorities to do more. The people of my community feel Cypriots yet they want to be able to keep their different identity, religion and customs.

The Turkish Cypriot researchers, Mine and Derya, spoke at length about the difficulties of doing research in a militarized society and how some of the interviewers were harassed and how the bicommunal dichotomy deprived the Cypriots of multiculturalism and diversity:

> In one area in the north some of our interviewers were questioned by police and some of their questionnaires were taken as 'evidence'. Apparently some people had complained to the police that a group of women were going round the towns asking questions, and this should be of concern to the police. It is important to list this as part of our realities in the north. Partly due to the Cyprus conflict and partly due to ignorance of our communities toward minorities we have not been able to

> realize the richness we have around us. The Armenian, Latin and Maronite communities are not known in either the north or the south. This research project gave us the opportunity to become aware of this factor.

The Armenian partner, Mayda Nishanian, stressed how she involved many members from her community in the research process and added:

> I personally have learnt a lot and have become wiser. I believe this project has helped women in our multicultural island to be able to communicate and understand each other, accept, tolerate and develop a common ground to work on women's issues. The majority of interviewees to the question 'would you consider voting for a woman as President of the State?' replied 'Yes'. I believe if the heads of all countries were feminist women then the world could be a peaceful and just place to live in.

Her appeal was to go beyond social divisions and unite under the superordinate identity of being 'women'.

The Latin member, Jeannine Bayada, stressed how:

> Through my involvement in the project, I experienced how women from various cultural backgrounds are really able to work together towards the same goal. The whole project took me back to my early school years in St Joseph school in Nicosia where Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot, Armenian, Maronite and Latin young ladies were eagerly listening to the same teacher, a nun of French and sometimes of British origin lecturing on the history of Cyprus. Thank you Maria and Thalia for taking us back to what it used to be and at the same time preparing us all to enter a new, much larger multicommunal society, that of the European Union.

The other presentations were by two notable feminist scholars Cynthia Cockburn from England and Chryssi Inglessi from Greece, each of whom spoke about their research on women's struggles, thus

complementing and reinforcing many of the views our research project had addressed. Both commented on the impact of patriarchy, tradition and politics on the lives of women.

Some concluding thoughts

In this chapter I analysed our research team's experiences and my own as coordinator, the process we used, the tensions we faced and the transformations that occurred as we worked together for a year and a half. The process we adopted brought to mind the image of an ever expanding loop unfolding various interconnected circles, starting with myself and the partners, then going on to the team of 12, the 80 interviewers, the 1750 interviewees, the focus group participants, the communities and finally the public at large. A web of relationships, networks and different loops were interacting while revealing hidden realities and the desire to 'be with the other' for a better future for Cyprus.

We used the kind of feminist methodology that would lead us to work on ourselves individually and as a team while working for the shared project. I believe that the process was as significant as the product. Transformative methodology gave us the space and means to listen to each other and to articulate our muffled or hidden voices as well as wanting to produce new knowledge about Cypriot women in different communities. The project became an interactive workshop and social laboratory. The non-hierarchical structure fitted our needs. It allowed each one of us to bring to the team unique skills and knowledge that were vital for our common endeavour. The individual social transformation we each underwent reinforced our demand for social and political change in the broader society, expressed in our recommendations to the state, the NGOs, various institutions, the media and civil society at large (see concluding chapter).

Our intention was to ensure that the project would result in fresh advocacy efforts being made to promote new legislation on the visibility and participation of women in all areas of public life. This, in turn, would bring sustainable changes to the society at large. We believe that a holistic feminist approach can benefit all citizens and promote social and political stability, in other words the conditions necessary to advance social justice and a culture of mutual appre-

ciation, mutual recognition and multicommunal coexistence in a demilitarized and reunified Cyprus. Through the use of transformative methodology, which as I mentioned earlier is a facilitative, reflexive process that produces a concrete product, we experienced the empathic power of working together, abandoned rigid hierarchies and learnt that we need new ways of imagining the creative, political, social and ethical dimensions of difference. We believe that the process and methodology we used in the context of Cyprus can be applied to other multiethnic and multicommunal societies in which divisions and polarities separate not only the citizens but also knowledge and differing realities. Transformative methodology brings together diverse ethnic groups to reflect and work together to build a model for political and cultural coexistence that can transcend rigid social identities without undermining difference.

Chapter 3

The Cyprus Conflict: Multiple Divisions and Lines of Separation

> The Cyprus conflict has become an industry. The number of people who have gotten involved to solve the Cyprus problem exceeds the number of people living on that island.
>
> (Mathew Nimitz, ex-envoy to Cyprus, 1997)

If we look at the gender of people who have become involved in solving the Cyprus problem we note they are all male and all from a middle or upper middle-class background – the United Nations secretary generals from U Thant to Ban Kim Moon, UN special representatives on the island, Greek- and Turkish Cypriot leaders and negotiators, US and British envoys, Canadian and Finish diplomats, Greek and Turkish government representatives and, more recently, European Union representatives. This implies a great deal about the gendered aspects of politics, and of conflict and peace processes, including the exclusion and marginalization of the female presence, voice and perspectives. Furthermore, it is an indication of how democracy, representation, rights and participation operate in conflict-ridden Cyprus. The irony of it all is that these men have been trying to imagine a different Cyprus in which a new state of affairs will be established if all the interested (all male) parties agree to it. It is a future based on excluding half the population (50.8 per cent of Greek Cypriots and 50.4 per cent of Turkish Cypriots are women).

To understand this eclipse we have also to look at history and at how national struggles and peace efforts have been initiated and run in

Cyprus. This does not mean that women were mere passive onlookers. Since the 1950s, but especially since the *de facto* partition in 1974, they have been organizing their own forms of resistance. These include Women Walk Home activities, Mothers of the Missing protests, Hands Across the Divide, women's groups attached to political parties, and bicommunal women's groups designed to promote coexistence, equality between the sexes and a gendered understanding of the Cypriot conflict.[1]

Another point Nimetz made in the speech he delivered at Princeton University in 1997, where I also presented a paper, referred to the intractability and protractedness of the Cyprus conflict, a problem that has been on the international agenda since the 1950s. In recent years, authors writing on conflict resolution and political psychology have paid special attention to the concept of intractability in ethno-national conflicts.[2] Intractability can result from the complexity of a conflict, the number of stakeholders, existential fears, loss of hope for a constructive resolution, ethnic victimization, unaddressed historical grievances, traumas, economic asymmetries, structural inequalities, unequal distribution of resources and leadership issues. Cyprus has all these features.[3] According to political and social psychologists, opponents in ethno-national conflicts tend to 'demonize' each other and attribute the causes of suffering or experiences of injustice exclusively to the other. This 'essentialist' view puts all the blame on the enemy and excludes any situational factors: 'our side' is reconciliatory and justified in doing what it is doing, whereas the 'other side' is aggressive and acts the way it does because it has always been like that. Another factor that is played up in intractable conflicts is the role of external forces, such as colonial politics, foreign interventions and regional interests.[4]

In this chapter, to facilitate understanding of the issues my partners and I raised in the research we carried out on women in all Cypriot communities from 2002 to 2008, I give a brief history of the causes and consequences of the crisis in Cyprus from the 1950s to the present. Through the lenses of a feminist and conflict-resolution approach, I view the nationalist movements, the independence of the island from British colonialism, the interethnic violence and ethnic separations that produced competing narratives and ideologies, selective collective memories and competing commemorations, as well

as citizens' efforts to challenge the nationalist and exclusionary narratives.

Which Side?

Flying Away to the Other Side
Our birthplace is split in two and we
Are caught on barbed wire-hybrids
Turk and Greek alike

'Is it December is it July
Choose your Side
Are you Turkish or Greek?
There's no Purgatory in between'.

We cannot be from both Sides
Because we are two, one and the other
You refused to believe in:
We are loneliness itself.[5]

Through dominant national narratives, which are patriarchal, militaristic and oversimplified, members of the opposing factions in ethnonational conflicts are called upon to choose their side and locate themselves on the conflict map, for they cannot be from both sides. When such calls were made in 1958, December 1963, summer 1967, July 1974, autumn 1983 and April 2004, to mention only the most recent and contested dates, issues like victimhood, truth, human-rights violations, justice, acquired monofocal, exclusionary meanings depending on what processes were used to construct the remembering and forgetting that enters into what Volkan aptly termed 'chosen glories and chosen traumas'.[6] What are the implications of this bipolarity for women and members of conflict-resolution groups who view political and ethnonational conflicts as having a multilayered texture? Does a culture in conflict, as defined by masculinist politics (through an androcentric understanding of conflict and the dichotomy of 'us' and 'them') allow space for the development of alternative options and analyses? The gendered aspect of the Cyprus conflict leads us to ask questions such as, what can explain the absence of women from the

mainstream narratives and their invisibility in the peace building processes?

History of the origins of the Cyprus conflict: competing ethnic nationalisms

The geostrategic location of Cyprus in the easternmost part of the Mediterranean, a link between east and west, south and north, has made it vulnerable to outside conquests and interference, each leaving their imprint on the local landscape. By far the most predominant character of the island was determined in the second millennium BC with the arrival and settlement of the Mycenaeans (or Achaeans) from mainland Greece. They formed Minoan-style city kingdoms and introduced the Greek language, religion and culture. Greek Cypriots, especially nationalist ones, still evoke this period to emphasize their Hellenic heritage. Later, the Greek Christian Orthodox Church and Byzantine culture provided other strong reference points for Greek Cypriots. Turkish Cypriot nationalists, however, see the three centuries of Ottoman rule (1571–1878) as determining the island's interethnic character and underplay any Greek influence on its identity. Such polarization ignores the rich multicultural history of the island of which evidence abounds in the composition of the population, as well as in its monuments, language and traditional social practices.

The division between Greeks and Turks and prevalence of a binational consciousness crystallized during the anti-colonial struggle against the British of 1955–59. The Greek population of Cyprus wanted union (enosis) with motherland Greece and, in the event of them achieving it, the leadership of the Turkish sector promoted partition (taksim) and union of their part of the island with motherland Turkey. In other words, both main ethnic communities looked to outside parties to realize their visions. The absence of a common political culture or sense of Cypriotness created the ethnic nationalisms that led to a culture of intolerance, mutual suspicion and fear.[7] There were two national projects: one trying to prove that the island was Greek, the other that it was Turkish. Although various other material economic and class-based interests existed alongside these ethnic divisions,[8] the presence of the other minorities was irrelevant to bipolar politics.

In 1950 Greek Orthodox Church leaders organized a plebiscite among Greek Cypriots who overwhelming supported enosis of the island with 'motherland' Greece, underestimating the Turkish Cypriot and Turkey's reaction later on.[9] According to Turkish Cypriot writers,[10] the Turkish Cypriot leadership at the time expected that sooner or later the Greek Cypriot fighters would terrorize and harm the Turkish Cypriot minority. By 1957 the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) had been formed to counter the Greek-based National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA) and to protect the Turkish Cypriot community, by which time it had the full support of Turkey. Separation existed not only between communities but between right and left factions within each community, thus destroying any prospects of dialogue, coexistence and cooperation. The British colonialists further politicized communal differences in an effort to serve their own colonial interests in the wider area of the Middle East.[11] This culture of intolerance reinforced the rise of two competing visions for Cyprus based on each group's 'primordial attachments'.

Archbishop Makarios headed the political wing of EOKA, which both Turkish Cypriots and the British found perplexing because they regarded EOKA as a terrorist organization. George Grivas (Digenis), a Greek Cypriot and retired colonel from the Greek army, led its military wing. He was a right-wing nationalist and anti-communist (his targets, apart from the British, were leftist Marxists, some of whom he had assassinated on charges of being traitors). Grivas only recruited young men, the 'passionate youth', to the organization and did so by making a strong psychological and religious appeal to their sense of honour, patriotism and love for Mother Greece. Most EOKA fighters were working class and very young.[12] All members had to take an oath to commit themselves to the organization and show blind obedience to its leader.[13]

Many exhibited tremendous acts of self-sacrifice and genuinely believed in the romantic ideals of enosis, which is still commemorated and often ideologically and politically exploited. The British hanged some of these young fighters and buried them in what are called 'imprisoned graves', which schoolchildren visit to honour their bravery and are being reminded of their patriotic duty to liberate the 'occupied lands'. This extracurricular activity is meant to promote a kind of

masculinity based on bravery, patriotism and sacrifice. However, removing such facts from their historic context can evoke fear of and undifferentiated enmity towards both British and Turks, which in turn forms part of the nationalist project of enemy construction. Some years later, in the 1960s, the creation of the Museum of Barbarism in the northern part of Nicosia similarly demonized Greek Cypriots and instilled fear and hatred in the minds of Turkish Cypriot school-children. In many of the conflict-resolution workshops held in 1994 young Turkish Cypriot women talked about the nightmares they kept having after being taken to that museum.[14]

Unlike other anti-colonial movements, EOKA's armed struggle was for neither independence nor socio-economic change; it was for 'enosis and only enosis', while the Turkish Cypriot slogan was for 'taksim' (partition). Both ethnic nationalisms identified with their motherlands and not with Cyprus. Women were excluded from leadership positions in EOKA and TMT, though they participated in other ways, as in street demonstrations, hiding fighters in their houses, cooking and carrying food and pamphlets, obeying EOKA orders to sabotage British products or TMT orders to boycott Greek ones and/or to knit pullovers for TMT members. These roles, of course, were designed by men to serve men. There is no book or account on the role of women during this period. One thing, however, is certain; they played no part in the decision to launch an armed struggle. On the EOKA agenda there was no mention of women's liberation, though it was important in other anti-colonial movements.[15] Many Cypriot women considered their ethnicity as the most significant part of their identity. This fixed, reductionist view is apparent in other national liberation struggles in Palestine, Algeria, Iran and Iraq, as is the tendency to return women to their patriarchal home environment once the struggle is over. As Vassiliadou wrote, the EOKA struggle in Cyprus in the mid-1950s 'was created by men, ordered by men and carried out by men. It was a patriarchal struggle on a patriarchal island which most women followed and became involved in it … in fact they were used by men to promote their interests.'[16]

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, women play a crucial role in nationalist movements because, symbolically and biologically, they produce and reproduce the culture, raise and educate the next generation and

pass on the society's cultural and ideological traditions.[17] However, nationalism exacerbated by violence exalts masculinity and marginalizes femininity. We saw this in the EOKA socializing process when men were trained to be brave, to sacrifice their lives for freedom and to protect women and children, whereas women were trained to play 'subordinate and subservient roles' and to keep the honour of the house intact until the 'fighter' returned.

During the colonial period, Greek- and Turkish Cypriot women worked mainly at home or in the rural areas in agriculture; only upper-class women were educated. Between the First and Second World Wars the poverty in Cyprus was such that Turkish Cypriot women would be sold to Arabs for as little as £10 or £15.[18] Traditional practices and values imposed many constraints on both women and men. As Loizos tells us,[19] in a traditional society women only associated with other women and men with other men. The coffee shop culture was exclusively male and even now women are not expected to frequent such places. The conversation in the coffee shops would be about politics and economics, from which women were excluded.

Women's education was secondary to that of men. In a family of boys and girls, only the male members would receive primary and, depending on class, sometimes secondary education. Compulsory education for both sexes was instituted only after independence. We noted an absence of any feminist activism or mobilization of women on issues other than the national question, for their social, educational, work, family or health concerns are not thought to matter. The national question overwhelmed everything else. The fact that Greek and Turkish nationalisms were so exclusively ethnic in character goes some way towards explaining why, unlike in civic nationalism, other oppressions like class, gender, ethnicity, women's rights or sexuality were never questioned. This patriarchal structure and lack of feminist consciousness continued in the post-1974 decades despite increases in the provision of education for women, in employment and in exposure to other cultures through travel abroad. The Greek Orthodox Church maintains its hold over social and gender issues among the Greek Cypriot community. For example, until 1979 the church allowed a husband to divorce his wife if she was not a virgin on her wedding night,[20] or until recently would openly condemn homosexuality as a

sin. Fortunately, this situation has changed under the weight of European Union laws.

In some conflict-resolution workshops in the 1990s we used storytelling and personal narrative as tools in our effort to understand the origins of conflict-socializing processes and, most importantly, the different histories and multiple realities that exist in warring societies and how these affect intercommunal relationships.[21] In one such workshop held at the Ledra Palace Hotel in the UN buffer zone, I recall many Turkish Cypriot women (and some men) in their fifties narrating very vividly their experience of the EOKA struggle (1955–59) and the fear and insecurity they felt when fighters knocked at their doors to harass them. Some even mentioned relatives being killed because they worked for the British administration. Others spoke about TMT's role in their community, especially after 1964. Such experiences do not appear in official national histories.

Greek Cypriot women at the workshop talked more about the British curfews, the terrible sound of sirens and British commandos searching their houses and parents' cars. They criticized EOKA B, an underground terrorist organization Grivas had set up in 1967 when a military government ruled Greece and that, with the National Guard and controlled from Athens, it staged the *coup d'état* in July 1974. They also spoke about being displaced by the 1974 Turkish invasion when their villages were bombed and mountains were set alight, and about the humiliation they experienced at the hands of non-refugee Greek Cypriots.[22] Obviously, each community has different reference points and different collective memories, even about the same events. These conflict-resolution workshops created space to share understandings, acknowledge mutual hurts and the chance to allow a new shared narrative to emerge.

Independence and post independence: new divisions

From a conflict-resolution viewpoint, Cyprus is a case of a settlement imposed from above leading to the establishment of a 'reluctant republic'.[23] When outside stakeholders – Greece, Turkey and Britain – put the compromise settlement into effect they ignored the 'enosis and taksim' options and promoted an independence that neither of the two communities had envisioned initially and for which neither was

prepared. The Cyprus Republic came into being in August 1960 as a bicommunal partnership based on a consociational model in which the president would be a Greek Cypriot and the vice president a Turkish Cypriot. The smaller communities of Armenians, Maronites and Latins were not included in the power sharing provisions and to have citizenship rights and to vote as individuals they had to side with one or other of the two main ethnic communities; all three chose to join the Greek Cypriot community. The constitution gave women the right to vote and stand for election but nothing more. It took 22 years of independence before the first Greek Cypriot woman, Rina Katsellis, was elected to parliament in 1982. The first woman to serve in the executive was Stella Souliotes, who came from a well-known legal family and was appointed minster of justice.

The top–down Cyprus settlement ignored local features such as the sharp ethnic divisions, the presence of mutual mistrust, fear and suspicion and unequal economic development, which augured badly for the newfound state and its symbols.[24] The society was not ready to see the new state of affairs as a shared opportunity to work towards state-building. Moreover, as the cold war was reaching its height and the Greek and Turkish alliance in NATO needed safeguarding, regional and global considerations were being given precedence over local concerns. Three treaties were attached to the constitution and these increased the republic's dependence: the Treaty of Establishment let the British keep two sovereign bases (comprising 99 square miles), which they still maintain and, in times of crisis in the Middle East, these are used as NATO military bases.

The Cyprus constitutional arrangements, which the Cypriot people had no hand in drafting, were based on communal separation and, of course, they lacked any gender considerations. No room was provided for integrative politics and cooperative alliances. In fact, each community interpreted independence through the lens of the antagonism already rooted in its national identity and through their separate nationalist aspirations. The Greek Cypriots who had fought for 'enosis' saw independence as a defeat and betrayal of their vision. The communist party AKEL (*Anorthotikó Kómma Ergazómenou Laoú*) expressed reservations about the agreement because of its imperialist provisions. In the first presidential election AKEL supported L.

Clerides and not Makarios, who became the first president and remained in office until he died in 1977. The Turkish Cypriots elected Dr Fazil Kutchuk as vice-president; Rauf Denktash later succeeded him as leader of the community and remained in office until 2003 when Mr Mehmet Ali Talat was elected. This same ethnic division was extended to the Houses of Parliament where the ratio of 70/30 per cent was applied, as it was in the civil service and security forces.

Women's organizations were affiliated to existing political parties and had not developed an independent voice or engaged in women's rights in parliament. The international women's liberation movements did not touch the ground in Cyprus. In fact, many of those who were appointed or employed in high governmental positions were men and came from the ranks of the respective nationalist fighter movements. Had liberal, progressive, gender-balanced and open-minded elites been given political power, interethnic integration might have had a better chance. Nevertheless, women's organizations would be mobilized during political crises, especially in the post-1974 events.

Moreover, with the establishment of communal chambers education was segregated. Each community developed close cultural and educational connections with its 'motherland'; students were socialized to feel more Greek or Turkish than Cypriot and they learnt more about the history of Greece and Turkey than about Cyprus and their shared Cypriot culture, let alone about the other smaller communities.[25] Apart from this split loyalty and allegiance, each communal leader advocated a different vision of what Cyprus should stand for internationally. Makarios identified with the third world and non-aligned movement, whereas Kutchuk supported NATO and the West. This difference in cold-war alignment became explicit after 1963 when intercommunal fighting broke out.[26]

In such a competitive and mistrustful environment the partnership government found it difficult to function and to implement its policies. When President Makarios proposed 13 amendments to the constitution aiming, in his view, to establish unitary, majority rule and to eliminate presidential and vice-presidential obstructive vetoes, the political and psychological climate was unreceptive. The Turkish Cypriots remained highly suspicious of any suggestion to change the status quo, fearing they would be downgraded to a minority status and

the island would be turned into a *de facto* Greek Cypriot republic. They thus rejected any such proposals, as did Turkey. Factions in both communities were still advocating enosis and taksim and the state seemed incapable of monitoring or addressing the problem, despite the constitutional provision to exclude them both. On 21 December 1963, following a minor incident in the centre of Nicosia, interethnic violence erupted and quickly spread to other towns and, from then on, Turkey became directly involved in the affairs of the Turkish Cypriot community.[27] Greek Cypriots called it a 'long-prepared' Turkish Cypriot armed insurrection, whereas the Turkish Cypriots saw it as an effort on the part of the majority to deprive them of their legitimate rights; according to a secret document called the 'Akritas Plan', they feared for their security.[28] In the official Turkish Cypriot narrative this period is referred to as 'Bloody Noel' and it is still commemorated. This crisis resulted in the 'Green Line' being drawn through the capital of Nicosia to keep the two warring factions apart and the arrival of the UN peacekeeping force.

The Cyprus problem turned into a cold war issue and the two superpowers became actively involved. Through its secretary of state Dean Acheson, the US administration wanted at all costs to prevent Cyprus becoming a 'Russian Mediterranean satellite' and Henry Kissinger later called Makarios 'the Castro of the Mediterranean'.[29] Turkey, as one of the three guarantor powers, threatened to intervene militarily in 1964, but international pressure, especially from the United States, prevented this, as it did later in 1967. Some 39 Turkish Cypriot enclaves were set up in the major cities of the island where one-third of the Turkish Cypriot population lived as displaced. Between August 1964 and 1967, 25,000 Turkish Cypriots were displaced. They lived isolated for a decade and established their own administration, which Turkey supported financially.[30]

The old interethnic fabric of coexistence had been damaged. Looking back we see that, in 1890, 515 of the 629 Cypriot villages were ethnically mixed; by 1960 these had been reduced to 114. By 1965 there were 23 mixed villages and by 2008 only two, Pyla and Potamia. In addition, in 1963 many Armenians who lived in the northern part of the walled city of Nicosia were displaced and forced to abandon their homes and businesses, and they are still deprived of their properties. In

1974 thousands of Turkish, Greek, Maronite and Latin Cypriots also lost their homes.

From now on, the so-called 'Cyprus problem' would remain on the international agenda occasioning the adoption of numerous UN resolutions. In March 1964 UN Security Council Resolution 186 provided for the stationing of a United Nations Peace Keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) to help restore peace and normal conditions. A special representative was stationed on the island to help negotiations between the two sides.

The period between 1963 and 1974 was a time of unequal social and economic development; this drew the two communities further apart and they remain so to this day. Greek Cypriots experienced economic prosperity and modernization, exposure to the outside world, membership of international organizations, whereas the Turkish Cypriot community, especially in the enclaves, entered a period of economic, psychological and cultural dependence on Turkey.[31]

Intra-communal divisions exacerbated the interethnic discord and two large factions – one supporting Makarios (*Makariakoi*), the other supporting Grivas (*Grivikoi*) – polarized Greek Cypriot society. With the rise of the military government in Greece in 1967, new divisions arose between '*ethnikofrones*' meaning 'Greek nation faithfuls' (who supported enosis) and '*antihountikoi*' who opposed the junta and supported the independence of the island. Within the Turkish Cypriot community some favoured cooperation with Greek Cypriots and were critical of their own leaders and TMT policies; others, headed by Rauf Denktash, were against such an ideology and supported partition and closer relations with Turkey. From now on two official, antagonistic and competing narratives emerged to infiltrate the collective consciousnesses of both communities, sharpening physical, political, psychological and economic divides.

The partition and deepening lines of divisions

In July 1974 the Greek fascist junta headed by George Ioannidis, in collaboration with local EOKA B fascists, launched a *coup d'état* to topple the Makarios government, which it accused of betraying the enosis ideal. President Makarios survived the coup and flew from the British base, first to London and then to New York where he spoke

before the United Nations Assembly condemning the coup and asking for international support. He returned to a partitioned state in December 1974. For eight days the island was run by the notorious Turk nationalist Nikos Sampson.[32] Many Greek Cypriots were imprisoned and hundreds were killed and buried in mass graves – many were later listed as missing. This event prompted Turkey's military intervention. Turkey first consulted the British government, with a view to intervening jointly to restore constitutional order. Britain declined and the intense shuttle diplomacy by the American administration also failed. Then, on 20 July, Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit ordered the invasion of the island by sea, land and air.

The two phases of the Turkish invasion, 20 July and 14 August, resulted in the present division of the island into two ethnically homogeneous regions. About 37 per cent of Cyprus territory came under Turkish military control while 3 per cent lay within the buffer zone. According to Greek Cypriot sources, the war uprooted 183,517 Greek Cypriots (similar to the one-third of the displaced Turkish Cypriots in 1963) and deprived 14,285 others of their livelihoods and businesses. At that time about 20,000 Greek Cypriots and Maronites stayed behind in the Turkish 'occupied areas'. These were the 'enclaved persons' in the Karpass area and village of Kormakitis, which by the 1990s had dwindled down to only a few hundred. Some 1000 Turkish Cypriots and 4000 Greek Cypriots were killed, and a further 12,000 were wounded. The Greek Cypriot refugees experienced on a much larger scale what the Turkish Cypriots had experienced in the interethnic violence in the mid-1960s. High unemployment forced Greek Cypriot men, as the breadwinners, to seek work in the Arabian Gulf countries or in eastern Europe.[33] Women took over the rest of the care of the household, the elderly and the children. The military defeat and being sent by the fascist regime to fight with rusty guns and tanks had crushed the Greek Cypriot men's self-respect and sense of honour.

> Seeing these momentous events with gendered eyes, what is striking is how, henceforth, the two rival masculinities in Cyprus – Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot – would have hegemony over separate terrains. Turkish Cypriot manhood would find a new pride in separatism, in defending its Line, in

> establishing its militaristic hierarchy, intermeshed in complex ways with that of Turkey. For Turkey, too, the military success prompted a celebration not only of redeemed nationhood [but also of] our *mechmetcikler* – 'our lads'.[34]

The Turkish intervention was celebrated as a 'peace operation' by the majority of the Turkish Cypriots and as an 'invasion' and an act of aggression and violation of human rights and international law by the Greek Cypriots. These opposing views created new exclusionary narratives and interpretations of the 1974 events. The recent history of Cyprus is built on competing narratives and on a contest between which of the two communities suffered the most in 1963, 1967 and 1974? The national dates of reference and commemoration for Turkish Cypriots are the events of 1963–67, highlighted by their liberation in 1974. For Greek Cypriots the reference point is the coup and invasion of 1974, which they are called upon 'not to forget' and to observe as an occasion for grief and mourning but also of determination to liberate the 'occupied lands'. Stories about these events are told and retold and they permeate the consciousness of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

So, two different collective memories and two different forms of denial were established, with any alternatives in between silenced. Each side produced new literature and wrote new textbooks that not only excluded but also demonized the 'other'. With their 'do not forget' campaign the Greek Cypriots kept the longing for return alive, whereas the Turkish Cypriots' 'not to forget' campaign included recalling what the Greek Cypriots had done to them in the past. The heroes of one side are considered the villains of the other and to forget the return. A conflict-riddled culture built mainly on the past and on an understanding of the conflict defined by each side separately was constructed.

Another contested issue since 1975 is demographic change. 'The influx of Turkish nationals changed the character of the demographic problem in Cyprus as it added a new element to the population ratios that have historically been important for power-sharing arrangements and power struggles on the island.'[35] An influx of Turks from Turkey, mainly from the Anatolia region and Hatay, who were intentionally imported to settle in Greek Cypriot villages, introduced a different

lifestyle that clashed even with that of the Turkish Cypriots. One difference is that the Turkish Cypriots are secular and the Anatolian Turks religious, evidenced by the construction of hundreds of new mosques. This became a 'settler issue', and is of political concern to both sides.[36] It weakened the 'Cyprus for the Cypriots' lobby and many members of the Turkish Cypriot community spoke of being in a minority against the settlers and Turkish army. In the mid-1980s and early 1990s, thousands of Turkish Cypriots were forced to immigrate for economic reasons. There are different categories of 'settlers'; some have established their own political party and are represented in the Turkish Cypriot parliament, so constitute an electoral force.[37]

Another historic event that each community experienced very differently was the 15 November 1983 unilateral declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Turkish Cypriots felt that 'finally we have an identity, a state' and Greek Cypriots viewed it as an additional threat to their 'right of return'. Only Turkey recognized the TRNC; the international community called it an 'illegal state' and UN Security Council Resolution 541 referred to the action as 'legally invalid'. It constituted a setback to negotiations for a solution. Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash granted citizenship to Turkish nationals, thus enabling them to vote and to help Denktash and his National Union Party (NUP) stay in power. Since then the issue of 'non-recognition' has become a serious Greek Cypriot domestic and foreign policy issue.[38] On the other hand, because of 'non recognition' the Turkish Cypriots felt isolated internationally and have become more dependent on Turkey – on Turkish passports, Turkish currency, and even Turkish telephone prefixes; their postcode locates them as a subdistrict of the Turkish city of Mersin and any international travel must go through Turkey. Little of importance is decided in north Cyprus without the consent of the Turkish National Security Council, a profoundly masculine cabinet of ruling politicians and military top brass who effectively govern Turkey.[39]

In the midst of this adversarial environment, Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the Nicosia buffer zone and abroad were able, with help from third parties, to arrange unofficial contacts with one another, and a series of conflict resolution workshops were organized. From these interactions an alternative analysis of the conflict and view of the

Other emerged that aimed to build confidence, mutual trust and understanding. In the 1980s and 1990s, Greek Cypriot nationalists and some right-wing officials viewed such citizens' efforts at interethnic dialogue with suspicion, for they feared they might lead to 'recognition of the illegal entity', thus undermining the international aspect of the conflict and turning it into a bicommunal discord instead.

Turkish Cypriot leaders and nationalists also opposed these activities, for they believed that they challenged the official two-state option. Many women and men who supported *rapprochement* on both sides and were ready to see the patriarchal monolithic official policies as the 'men's games' that they are, continued their meetings and joint projects in an attempt to promote a different understanding of politics and vision of the future.[40] Over the decades a new community of citizens developed that supported intercommunal contacts, acknowledged mutual atrocities, promoted cooperation, and supported European Union accession, coexistence and a bizonal, bicommunal federal republic with all citizens' human rights safeguarded.

By the end of the 1990s there were more than seventy such groups, many of them trained in conflict resolution and communication skills; they produced numerous reports on the need to address the requirements, fears, expectations and concerns of all sides concerned. Unfortunately, the official power brokers showed no interest in having a dialogue with these groups[41] and the open, democratic dialogue; link-up between micro-level citizens' politics and macro-level politics has not occurred; needless to say, the masculinist, militaristic understanding of politics still prevails.

The Annan Plan: polarization and betrayal

As Nimitz reminded us, numerous have been the efforts and people involved in trying to solve the Cyprus conflict. One of the most detailed documents contained the proposals of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, which became known as 'the Annan Plan'. Various versions of the plan were handed to leaders of both communities for discussion and changes, the final version being 'Annan Plan V'. All the experts and negotiators were male politicians; gender issues were never even raised and at no point were women given an opportunity to express their views on topics such as representation, security, econ-

omics, refugees, the settlers, reconciliation or human rights. Women's organizations affiliated to political parties neither mobilized nor raised their voice to demand consideration of the 2000 UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

This was in stark contrast to the Northern Ireland Peace Agreement (or the South African one) in which women had a great deal to say about social inclusion, equality and fairness. The women's group Working for Change in Northern Ireland insisted on guaranteeing inclusion and fair treatment for all marginalized groups, including those disadvantaged on grounds of gender, marital status, age, disability and sexual orientation.[42] The Annan Plan provided for a federal, bizonal, bicommunal framework based on the high-level agreements of 1977 and 1979 between the leaders of the two communities, and simultaneous membership of the whole island as a United Cyprus Republic within the European Union.[43] This latest initiative was, however, defeated in simultaneous referenda in which 76 per cent of Greek Cypriots voted 'no' to the plan and 67 per cent of Turkish Cypriots voted 'yes'. Turkish Prime Minister Tayip Erdogan and his government supported the plan and the 'yes' vote, as did Greece, the United States, the European Union and Britain. The only women's organization to voice a 'yes' to the plan was 'Hands Across the Divide', which networked with other bicommunal NGOs.

A week later, on 1 May 2004, the Republic of Cyprus joined the EU, but without any solution to its problems. Lack of trust and the absence of a shared vision, as well as lack of commitment from the leadership on both sides, had caused the contradictory results and deepening divisions. This proved that the shared EU agenda and mutual trust the bicommunal peace builders had promoted over the years was too weak to overcome collective fears, nationalism, mistrust, historical grievances and 'the arrogance of the majority syndrome'. A period of frustration followed in which Turks held that 'the Greeks do not wants us', Greeks complained that 'the Turks do not understand our fears' and the whole conflict was restoked and continues to fester.

Changes in leadership

It is significant that prior to the referenda many changes took place in the Turkish Cypriot community in 2003. There was a massive mobiliz-

ation of public opinion and demonstrations led by the left and centre-left, in which women's organizations, youth groups and NGOs participated, called for a change of leadership and of the status quo. It is estimated that more than 80,000 people were out on the streets. This 'revolution from below', which many peace builders supported, forced the Turkish military and Turkish Cypriot leadership to open the 'gates' or 'border' along the Green Line separating the two communities, with subsequent 'crossings' taking place since April 2003 of people to and from each side of the island. This was a historic moment for person to person contacts. There were no violent incidents and it raised new hope for reunification. Why then was the momentum not sustained?[44]

Through the crossings many Turkish Cypriots took the opportunity to claim back their right to their citizenship of the Republic of Cyprus, which also granted them EU citizenship. Thousands of Turkish Cypriots applied for a Cyprus Republic identity card and passport so that they could travel anywhere without the previous restrictions of a TRNC passport. A change in leadership followed with Mehmet Ali Talat, from the left-wing Turkish Republican Party, assuming office. The pro-solution forces came to power in the north, while in the Greek Cypriot area, Tassos Papadopoulos, from the centre-right, was elected president with backing from the communist party, AKEL, and the socialist party, Movement of Social Democrats (EDEK). He held that the Annan Plan was pro-Turkish and did not address the Greek Cypriot need for security and human rights. In his view, accepting the plan would have meant the dissolution of the Cyprus Republic without any guarantee that, given Turkey's untrustworthiness, the agreement could have been implemented. Talat, however, felt that the Annan Plan would reunite the island and was keen to enter the EU as one country.

Yet grass-roots efforts continue to promote bicommunal reconciliation and cooperation in joint projects on environment, education, women's issues, the restoration of old buildings, peace, youth camps, and business and medical cooperation. Lately, the exhumations of bones from mass graves and the identification of many missing people from both communities has led to the formation of a bicommunal organization composed of the missing people's relatives, which holds public events not only to share each other's pain

and sense of loss but also to voice the desire to leave the past behind and move forward to a different future. This has been the start of an initiative to promote forgiveness, healing and reconciliation.[45]

The divisions still abound

Despite the crossing points along the Green Line, the militaristic environment and 'enemy images' are still visible in the barbed wire, military posts, blue berets, and blue and green posters that read: 'BUFFER UN ZONE'; 'BEWARE MINE FIELDS'; 'NO ENTRY; OCCUPIED ZONE'; 'DEAD ZONE'; 'NO PHOTOGRAPHS – SECURITY ZONE'. Flags of all kinds are seen together or apart: the Greek flag, the flag of the Cyprus Republic, the red crescent of Turkey, the blue UN flag, the TRNC flag, and now the EU flag, all reminding us how strong national symbols, patriarchy and nationalism still are on the island. The island is believed to be one of the most militarized areas of the world in relation to its population – there are five armies in Cyprus: Greek, Turkish, British, Cypriot and the UN. As Cockburn tells us, militarism is an ideology and culture that scores the gender line particularly deeply. As men are trained for military service they must forcefully get rid of the feminine in their character because a sensitive and cowardly man is but a 'woman'. There is a certain linguistic jargon that is used to humiliate such men. In the south Greek Cypriot males who finish high school at the age of 18 are obliged to do their military service for 26 months. The values and beliefs that make up militarist ideology are clear prescriptions for gender whereby a military masculinity is important to sustain militarization and also imply a particular form of femininity.[46]

As in other areas of conflict, in Cyprus the state often uses women to promote its own political agenda. Although Greek Cypriot women, mothers, sisters and grandmothers if they are still alive, dressed in black, wearing black headscarves and holding photographs of their missing relatives, stand along the Green Line checkpoints to remind passers-by of their pain and suffering, they rarely question the role of the state and its responsibility.[47] In fact, the administration asked Turkish Cypriot relatives of missing people to accept that their loved ones had been killed and offered them financial compensation if they agreed to keep quiet about the matter. The manipulation and exploitation of these relatives' pain became a state project.

The Green Line in Cyprus, which is about 120 miles long, stretches across the island separating the north from the south (see map below). Depending on one's political position or ideological bent, this line is called the Green Line, ceasefire line, dead zone, demarcation line, partitioning line, Attila line, no-man's land or the border. These different designations of the 'line' constitute part of the collective historical and political experience in each Cypriot community. This line has acquired a symbolic and physical presence in daily life. The ideology of *rapprochement*, after 1974, challenged these lines and through dialogue women explored the diverse cartography of the historical and political experiences that the line silences. The line features in artistic and literary productions in each community and has become a theme for art exhibitions, poetry readings and dance performances.[48] Greek Cypriot folk stories still depict Cyprus as a young woman wrapped in barbed wire and calling for her liberation.

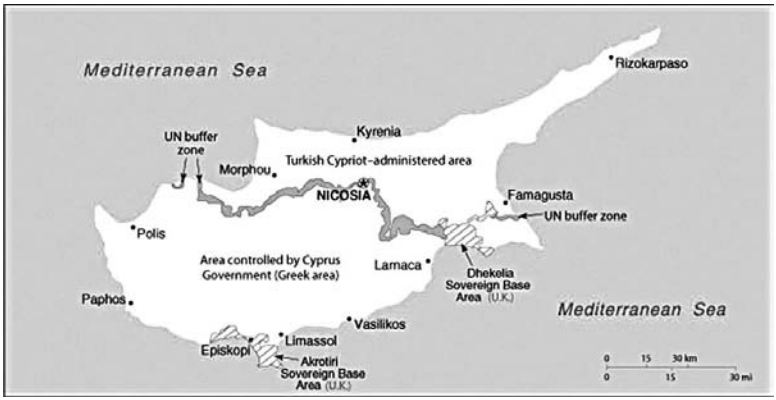
Women often feel as if the line colonizes their bodies. Cynthia Cockburn in *The Line* describes the performance of a Greek Cypriot dancer, Ariana Economou, walking the line in her effort to converse with the partition of Cyprus in multiple levels and she writes that:

> A geopolitical partition is not just armoured fencing, it is also a line inside our heads, and in our hearts. In fact the physical fence is a manifestation of these more cognitive and emotional lines that shape our thoughts and feelings. … When we are afraid or angry at some identifiable moment, a line springs out and plants itself in the earth as a barrier. It becomes *The Line*, and passage across it is controlled, by uniformed men, at a Checkpoint.[49]

Because of the emotional and psychological baggage they carry, internal demarcation lines are the most difficult to rearrange. New generations, under the influence of their schooling, the media, the family and official history, form imaginary images of the other and the inscription is often so sharp that realities are formed on assumptions that have never been tested.[50] Once these bipolar images become complex and blurred, as can happen in conflict-resolution workshops, then the participants start to confront their own ethnic mental maps.

For two decades bicommunalism was advocated in the form of joint dialogue, projects, cultural and social activities, peace festivals, youth peace camps and the promotion of a political identity called 'Cypriotism'. The Neo Cypriot Association established in 1976 invited attention to a shared Cypriot culture and interests. Thus, an infra-structure exists of citizens' action for coexistence and future allegiance to a Cypriot identity without in any way diminishing anybody's Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Maronite, or Latin identity. The feminist view of identity as fluid and continually expanding goes beyond ethnic constraints and allows renegotiation of different parts of our identities. A sense of self is complex and is built up of several interlocking and sometimes contradictory attachments – ethnicity is only one of them.[51]

Map of partitioned Cyprus



Are there new chances to challenge multiple divisions?

In February 2008 the Greek Cypriot community elected Mr Dimitris Christofias, secretary-general of the communist party AKEL, as the first leftist president of the Cyprus Republic. A new possibility and new hope had arisen. I found three of Christofias's initial statements highly significant. One was his reference to 'we want to find a solution that will come from the Cypriots for the Cypriots.' This was the first time a Greek Cypriot president had spelt out so clearly what many of us in the bicommunal and *rapprochement* movement had been promoting for decades, namely Cypriots must take responsibility for working towards a solution. This is a departure from either 'blame the

other' model or 'conspiracy theories'.[52] Second, in all his public speeches he refers to Turkish Cypriot leaders and to the Turkish Cypriot community, which brings Turkish Cypriots into the Greek Cypriot public debate. Third, Christofias said that 'we need to prepare our society for a solution', which again our conflict-resolution groups have supported for years. This means that it is not enough to 'want a solution' but that one needs to build the 'culture for a solution'. This entails public acknowledgment of past mistakes, forgiveness for past hurts and for the trauma we inflicted on each other, and changes in the education system and in our media so as to turn them both into institutions of reconciliation and advocates for coexistence. We need to empower civil society and to legitimate its contribution to peace building, for, as Harold Saunders said, 'some things states can do and other things citizens'. This may be the inauguration of a new political culture based on reciprocal and mutual recognition of each other as equal community partners.

On 21 March 2008 the two Cypriot leaders, Mr Christofias and Mr Mehmet Ali Talat, met in the presence of a United Nations representative and agreed, among other things, to open Ledra Street (Locmaci) in divided Nicosia and remove its military posts and soldiers. This happened as a result of citizen mobilization from both communities and it was indeed a historic moment because the barbed wire had been placed there in 1963. A wholly different dynamic then emerged that cut to the heart of the city, which had once provided a rich business life to Cypriot traders from Turkish, Armenian, Greek, Latin and other backgrounds. Many shop owners sought out former neighbours with a view to exploring the possibilities of reactivating the area and once again working together. One woman crossing on the first day told me that she was in a hurry to find a Turkish Cypriot hairdresser to whom she owed one Cyprus pound for cutting her hair in 1963. Because of shootings in the street at that time she had run way without having paid her debt but had kept thinking about it. She was wondering if she would find the hairdresser again after so many years so that she could pay her now in euros.

Surveys conducted two months after the Christofias election noted a shift in public opinion. In April 2008 a Noverna research survey for *Politis* newspaper showed that 75 per cent approved of Christofias's

policies. For the first time, 85 per cent of Greek Cypriots agreed to coexist with Turkish Cypriots and to be employed in the same sector, and 82 per cent agreed to frequent the same places of entertainment; 88 per cent approved of the presence of Turkish Cypriot children in mixed schools. In the event of a solution, 29 per cent of the refugees said they were prepared to live under Turkish Cypriot administration, and a high number would accept compensation for their property (thus questioning the myth that all refugees want to return). The challenge is how to cultivate this further and sustain the changes through political initiatives and negotiations. Another challenge for Christofias is to win the trust of the Turkish Cypriots who felt betrayed by his party after the referenda in 2004.

Women's role and challenge for reconciliation

As we have seen, the Cyprus conflict has taken precedence over all other important social issues, including women's rights and public participation. In the 1950s, 1960s and mid-1970s men were caught up in nationalist armed struggles and the housebound women acted as volunteers if and when the men needed them. For historical and traditional reasons this seemed 'natural' at the time. Drafting procedures and compulsory military service have recently been questioned by parents who feel that their sons should be allowed different options, as well as a reduction in the duration of military service. It is much more difficult, however, to engage in such a campaign in the south than in the north, where people are constantly reminded of Turkey's expansionist plans, of the presence of more than 35,000 Turkish troops in the area, where security is tight and defence budgets large.

Women today cannot afford to stand by as onlookers as the peace process unfolds. Now it is time for Cypriot women from all communities to transcend their ideological, ethnic and other divisions and organize in a big movement to demand, among other things, the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. This is both an issue of gender, equality, democracy and women's human rights. They can also propose the creation of a ministry of women's affairs in the new Cyprus federal republic.

Women from all communities, especially mothers, can intervene in the education of their children to ensure that the new generation is no

longer exposed to the nationalist, ethnically divisive narratives reproduced in public education. Competing collective memories that accentuate chosen aspects of the conflict and war, often disconnected from their social context, historical circumstances and material conditions, reinforce and deepen divisions in the already conflictual, patriarchal nationalist culture. Furthermore, individual testimonies, audiovisual documentation of atrocities showing cruelty by men in official posts merely sustain official war narratives.

Women's organizations can start to question the impact of nationalism and militarism on their lives and on the whole society and see how these conditions have excluded them. We know that women, and not the combatants, are the first victims of war and become the property of men in war situations. Cypriot women need to be sensitized to these levels of power over them and to build alliances across ethnic and class lines with other women in conflict situations. There is a need for a multicommunal feminist movement in Cyprus not only to prevent further armed conflict but also to struggle together for gender equality and equal access to resources. Cypriot women need to exert their agency and promote their public voice and presence to build a Cypriot women's gender and peace agenda that will rid the island of soldiery and weapons and this, of course, will entail redefining manhood and femininity.

Chapter 4

The Private and Public Domains: Contradictions and Desires

> Women, Pateman claims, were not party to the original contract; rather, they were incorporated into the private sphere through the marriage contract as wives subservient to their husbands, rather than as individuals. The private sphere is a site of subjection, is part of civil society but separate from the 'civil' sphere; each gains meaning from the other and each is mutually dependent on the other.
>
> (Ann Tickner, 2001)[1]

According to a report by the US Fund for the Feminist Majority, women worldwide will have to wait 450 years before they are represented in equal numbers with men in the higher echelons of economic and political power. Women, however, are not waiting that long and there is plenty of evidence that they are contesting such a possibility. Individually and collectively they have been participating on various levels as active agents to change that situation. The long-held patriarchal notion that the private and public are separate spheres, each appropriate to the separate sexes, has a long and contested history going back to the development of industrial capitalism and urbanization in advanced economies. As Tickner informs us, the separation of public and private spheres, which often resulted in the separation of the lives of men and women, had important ramifications for the construction and evolution of political and economic institutions at many levels. Feminists see them as closely related.

What goes on in the public sphere of politics cannot be understood as divorced from the private. Historically, therefore, terms such as 'citizen' and 'head of household' were not neutral but gendered. 'As feminists from the South have pointed out, what is "public" in one society may be "private" in another; it is true, however, that women's activities, such as reproduction and child rearing, tend to be devalued in all societies.'[2] We must however, admit that the notions of individual rights and human rights have had important benefits for women and for women's liberation and human rights movements in many parts of the world. One such effort on the part of rights advocates led to the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000.

For decades, Cypriot women have participated in making civil society – in the private and public arenas – but their presence and achievements have not been acknowledged and, more importantly, they have been denied the space in which to articulate them and the resources with which to record them. One reason for this is the gender-specific structural organization of the society. Patriarchal hegemony and structural impediments have historically discouraged women from actively participating and contributing to public discourses for change. What male leaders call the 'national problem' has, for example, limited women's growth as autonomous individuals and restricted the development of the society as a whole by either keeping women in subordinate roles or exalting their 'motherhood'. Women's experiences and insights over the decades both of and about the conflict and social change need to be voiced and included in the peace processes. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 'urges member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels, in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict'. It is thus notable that over the last 35 years no woman from any of the five communities in Cyprus has ever been part of any high-level negotiating team. This means that women's perspectives, knowledge and experiences are being excluded from the efforts to prepare Cyprus for membership of the European Union.

In this chapter I discuss Cypriot women's experiences in the private and public domains as these emerged from the quantitative data. I discuss women's education, identity (personal and collective), personal

choices about sex, contraceptives, divorce and political participation, their perspectives on the root causes of the Cyprus conflict; democracy in Cyprus, the European Union and women's issues. The data reveal similarities, differences and contradictions among different women's groups, as well as contesting homogenizations, essentializations and 'bureaucracies of oppression'. From these data tensions between traditionalism and modernity emerge and between the private and the public. I take the feminist view that the one informs the other and that one cannot separate the two spaces because, as radical feminism reminds us, 'the personal is political'.

Political background to the research

The research project started in December 2002, almost one month after submission of the UN secretary general's proposals, the 'Annan Plan', which women had no part in drafting. In the February 2003 presidential election Mr Tassos Papadopoulos, leader of the Democratic Party, was elected president and he formed a coalition government. There was much discussion about the impact of Mr Papadopoulos's appointment on negotiations with Mr Denktash. Turkish Cypriots saw Mr Papadopoulos as 'rejectionist' and anti-Turkish.

The United Cyprus Republic would ensure fundamental rights and specific provision for religious minorities: also, the rights of the Maronite, Latin and Armenian minorities were to be safeguarded in accordance with the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. These included the right to administer their own cultural, religious and educational affairs and to be represented in the federal parliament and constituent state legislatures. In addition, it provided for the establishment of a 'reconciliation commission' composed of an equal number of members from each constituent state and at least one non Cypriot member appointed by the UN secretary general. Its main objective was to promote understanding, tolerance and mutual respect between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

Gender equality was not considered important enough. This could be achieved through dialogue about the past and its differing interpretations, preparation of a comprehensive report on the history of the

Cyprus problem as experienced and interpreted by both sides, recommendations on the content of publications and school textbooks and the teaching of the official languages – Greek and Turkish – to school pupils. It is interesting to note that no reference was made to including members from the other smaller communities in this commission, no mention about gender equality or including the history of the Maronites, Armenians or Latins in the new textbooks. Thus, the whole project remained 'bicommunal' and genderless.

On 12 and 13 December 2002 the European Council hosted an important political event in Copenhagen to wind up the conclusions on the EU presidency and to mark the finalization of accession negotiations with Cyprus and nine other countries to be admitted in May 2004. A week later, on 23 April 2003, there was another significant moment when checkpoints were lifted and the people of Cyprus were allowed to cross the Green Line, thus moving a step further towards *rapprochement* and person-to-person contact. In the light of these political changes we felt it important to examine how these events could have affected women's perceptions, concerns and future desires.

Survey findings and analysis

The questionnaire survey was conducted in four Cypriot communities, namely Greek Cypriot (in the south), Turkish Cypriot (in the north), Maronite and Armenian (in the south).

Community	Sample
Greek Cypriot	748
Turkish Cypriot	600
Maronite Cypriot	182
Armenian Cypriot	167
Total	1697

Stratification permitted us to characterize the population sample according to the following variables: community; age: (1) 18–28; (2) 29–38; (3) 39–48; (4) 49–59; (5) 60–70; districts of residence: included both urban and rural areas of Cyprus; and place of origin: displaced, non-displaced.

The questionnaire comprised 59 questions and was organized as follows: demographic data; personal and group identity; participation in social organizations and activities; political/voting behaviour and political beliefs; the Cyprus problem; perceptions: 'us' and the 'other'; the European Union and women.

For the final statistical analyses, the following methods were used: frequencies to examine how participants responded in each item and cross tabulations to examine differences in the sample's subgroups such as age, refugee/non-refugee status, education and political ideology. It is important to stress the limitations of the quantitative research method and the dangers of drawing general conclusions from it, namely in terms of statistical validity, which is why we also made use of other methods in the book.

Education

Education is an important human right for all, but there is still vast statistical inequality between the schooling of girls and boys and in their educational opportunities. Worldwide, many girls still marry very young or take on adult responsibilities and duties, including caring for younger siblings. In many countries many more girls than boys are kept out of school or drop out early. For instance, according to the UN publication *Women Looking Beyond 2000*, 86 million girls, namely 43 million more than boys, have no access to primary school education; approximately 500 million start primary school but more than 100 million, two-thirds of them girls, drop out before completing four years; two-thirds of the world's one billion illiterate adults are women.

This problem does not only plague the developing world; in developed nations girls face discrimination from teachers, in textbooks and from male classmates. Research has shown that inferior education lowers a girl's self-esteem, employment opportunities and ability to participate in the world around her. Numerous studies reveal that mothers whose lives were characterized by poverty, illiteracy and gender-based discrimination had daughters who were likely to have the same destiny. Education is connected to employment opportunities, economic independence, power, status and self-confidence. Thus, we were interested to examine how much education Cypriot women receive and under what conditions. We cross tabulated the level of the

interviewees' education with the reasons: why you did not continue your studies further? Because:

(1) I chose not to;
(2) My parents did not want me to study further;
(3) I am female and my brother/s had to study;
(4) there were financial difficulties;
(5) I got married;
(6) other reason (what?)

Greek Cypriots

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. No school education	0	25	5	45	5	20
2. Primary school	10.2	19.7	7	49	5.1	8.9
3. Secondary/high school	31.7	8.9	2.7	34	15.4	7.3
4. College	64	2.7	1.8	17.1	6.3	8.1
5. University	58.5	3.8	0	13.2	5.7	18.9
TOTAL	33.3	10.7	3.5	33.3	9.8	9.3

Maronite Cypriots

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. No school education	0	40	0	60	0	0
2. Primary school	2.2	24.4	51.1	20	2.2	0
3.Secondary/high school	17.1	22.9	2.9	45.7	8.6	0
4. College	43.3	10	0	26.7	16.7	3.3
5. University	53.8	7.7	0	15.4	15.4	7.7
TOTAL	21.1	19.5	18.8	29.7	8.6	1.6

Armenian Cypriots

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. No school education	0	0	0	100	0	0
2. Primary school	33.3	16.7	0	33.3	16.7	0
3.Secondary/high school	29.2	20.8	1.4	12.5	18.1	18.1
4. College	40	5	0	15	30	10
5. University	38.5	3.8	0	7.7	23.1	26.9
TOTAL	33.8	13.1	0.7	13.8	22.1	16.6

Turkish Cypriots

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. No school education	3.6	35.7	14.3	28.6	0	17.9
2. Primary school	16.1	34.7	4	35.5	3.2	5.6
3.Secondary/high school	26.1	10.1	1.6	25.7	24.1	12.5
4. College	26.7	6.7	0	20	6.7	40
5. University	40.6	1.4	0	8.7	15.9	33.3
TOTAL	24.5	16.4	2.8	25.7	15.4	15

The majority of Greek Cypriot and Maronite women either chose not to further their studies or could not do so for financial reasons. As expected, the majority of women who chose not to continue received education at a college or university, whereas the majority of those unable to continue their studies because of financial difficulties had only primary or even no schooling. More than half the Maronite women did not continue after primary school because their 'brothers had to continue' and they had to work to complement the family income. More than one-third of the Armenian women did not continue after primary school because either they chose not to (33.8 per cent) or because of financial difficulties (33.3 per cent) and another third chose not to continue after secondary education. The majority of Turkish Cypriot women had no school education because of their parents (35.7 per cent) and close to one-third because of financial difficulties (28.6 per cent). One-third had no secondary education because of a parental decision, and another third because of financial problems. Another quarter of the women dropped out after secondary school because they got married.

It is worth noting that over 50 per cent of Maronite women did not attend university because they so chose. The social convention of giving more education to sons than daughters seems to be low in communities other than the Maronites and, on the whole, this social norm is breaking down. Socio-economic background played a significant part since the majority of women across communities who would have liked to continue their studies further did not do so because of financial difficulties. It is also apparent that most women decided for themselves how much education they wanted to have. Although it is true that we noted a move away from parents discriminating against

their daughters in favour of their sons, social pressure to comply with traditional expectations to marry and have a family still places a ceiling on how much education a young Cypriot woman can have. More education is often perceived as a threat. University students often say that their mothers and grandmothers discourage them from taking postgraduate degrees because they consider it more important to marry and start a family than pursue a career.

According to the Republic of Cyprus statistical service (south), in the last population census in 2001 the illiteracy rate of women was 5 per cent compared with 1 per cent in men. This shows a substantial reduction since 1976, when it was 15 per cent for women and 5 per cent for men. In 2006 we note that 50 per cent of men and 44 per cent of women received secondary education, whereas in the tertiary sector the percentage was equal, 26 per cent men and 27 per cent women. The number of university students either in Cyprus or abroad has increased in the last decade. In 2005/6, 1218 men and 3266 women attended university in Cyprus and 9258 men and 10,578 women went abroad to study. In the same year, 5305 men and 6305 women pursued a non-university-accredited college education in Cyprus, but those doing so abroad was substantially lower, namely 587 women and 550 men.[3] This shift in women's education indicates a new path towards personal and later economic independence. Since no specific information is included on the smaller communities, one assumes they are included in the Greek Cypriot statistics.

Research findings in the Turkish Cypriot community show that economics, cultural norms and pressure to perform traditional household duties affect women's educational opportunities. According to a survey in the north that the Turkish Cypriot University Women's Association conducted in 2001, 35 per cent of women discontinue their education either to marry or through lack of parental consent (whereas only 4 per cent of men do so) and this result confirms our findings: 78.9 per cent of Turkish Cypriot women who left school at the primary level said it was for financial reasons or because their parents did not want them to continue, whereas only 9.1 per cent of men gave this reason. Families therefore still exert control over their daughters' choices.

We must, however, acknowledge that some positive changes have

occurred in girls' education in Cyprus. Schools are no longer sexually segregated – all are co-educational – though school uniforms are still obligatory. Most school material is still gender biased and, though textbook analyses have attracted considerable attention, there is no mention of Cypriot women's contribution to the social and cultural life of the island, no mention of women writers, mathematicians, activists, politicians, scientists, artists, musicians or peace makers. The majority of textbook writers are men and that needs to change.

Marriage and personal choice

In traditional Western societies women's self-actualization was viewed through their success in getting married and having a family. This is a strong socializing factor and until recently unmarried women in Cyprus were considered failures, despite other personal and professional achievements. Feminist theories and research have dealt with the importance of family relationships in women's lives. Some feminists emphasized male violence and men's control over women's sexuality and reproductive role. Others looked at the economics of domestic labour and have discussed the contribution it makes to capitalism or the extent to which men benefit from it. Others still focused on the familial relationships that shape the construction of masculinity and femininity.[4] Some major debates among feminists on the inter-relationship between patriarchy and capitalism have been 'fought' on the terrain of the 'family'.

Recent discussions of differences among women in terms of class, race, ethnicity and sexuality have raised new questions for feminist analyses of family life. Marriage has also become a feminist project with regard to a woman's right to choose her partner and age at marriage. The mean age at first marriage of men and women has increased significantly in the last 30 years. In 1975 the mean age of women in the Greek Cypriot community at first marriage was 22.9, but by 2006 it had increased approximately five years to 28.2. A similar increase has been noted in men from 25.5 years in 1975 to 30.6 in 2006. Arranged marriage is still practised in Cyprus, though much less in urban areas.

With the introduction of civil marriage and an influx of migrants to the island in the last decade, we have seen many mixed marriages, especially of Greek Cypriot men to women from the former Soviet

Union. A significant proportion of the marriages contracted between 2004 and 2006 were mixed. In 2004 26.6 per cent were mixed but fell to 20.9 per cent in 2006 when the proportion of marriages between Cypriots increased. More Greek Cypriot men married foreign women than vice versa – in fact 8.9 per cent in 2006, which was a drop from 10.3 in 2004. The fertility rate has decreased dramatically in the last 30 years; in fact it dropped from 2.50 in 1982 to 1.44 in 2006.[5] Marriage between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is rare, but it is high between Maronite Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, especially given the Maronite community's fear of assimilation. In the north marriages between Turkish Cypriots and Turks are increasing.

There are various reasons why women choose to get married, some out of choice, and others out of social custom and pressure. We wanted to investigate this among Cypriot women and we asked the following: 'If you are or ever had been married, what was the primary reason for getting married?'

(1) Love;
(2) arranged marriage;
(3) economic;
(4) pressure from family;
(5) pregnancy;
(6) to escape pressure from my parents.

	G/C	Maronite	Armenian	T/C
Love	1.6	3.5	0.8	1.2
Arranged marriage	38.6	52.1	60.2	57.2
Economic interests	57.5	41.5	36.4	35.1
Pressure from family	0.8	0.7	0	0.9
Pregnancy	1.4	2.1	0	4.7
To escape pressure from parents	0	0	2.5	0.7

The majority of women from the Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Armenian communities cited love as the main reason for getting married; a significant percentage of women in these communities, however, chose arranged marriage. The latter was most common among Turkish Cypriot women for whom the percentage reached 57.5 per cent not only among women in rural areas but also, surprisingly,

among university graduates. Other reasons like economic interests and pregnancy changed little across communities, whereas there was some pressure from family in the Greek Cypriot and Maronite communities.

It seems that the majority of Cypriot women got married because they fell in love; social pressure from family thus seems to be in decline, which is a liberating development. Nevertheless, that arranged marriages seemed to be commonplace in the Turkish Cypriot community indicates either that women were asked to comply with the demands of family and the gender role or that arranged marriages would be perceived as more likely to succeed and to last longer. And since marriage is still considered an important actualizing social role for women we asked how unmarried women were perceived: Is an unmarried woman of a certain age considered a failure in your community?

	Greek Cypriot	Maronite	Armenian	Turkish Cypriot
Yes	27.4	43.2	18.9	10.8
No	72.6	56.8	81.1	89.2

The majority of Greek, Turkish and Armenian Cypriot women believed that an unmarried woman of a certain age did not carry a social stigma and therefore was not a failure because she had not complied with her gender role. In the Maronite community more than four out of ten women and almost three out of ten Greek Cypriot women believed that their community would view an unmarried woman as a social failure, suggesting the persistence of a traditional conception of 'woman'.

Over the years we note an increase in divorces in Cyprus. In the Republic of Cyprus, the proportion of divorced women increased from 0.6 per cent in 1982 to 2.8 per cent in 2001 and the number of single parents was 14,024, of which 12,315, or 88 per cent, were women. We noted similar trends in the Turkish Cypriot community. We asked the following question, which we tabulated according to age groups: 'Would you consider divorce if your relationship was not working out?'

In Cyprus, as in many societies in transition where extended families were the norm, divorce conferred a social stigma on women. Divorced

women had to suffer marginalization or were perceived as 'sexually available' and very few would consider remarrying, especially if they had children. This social prejudice started changing in Western societies after the second wave of feminism and women's movements for emancipation and gender equality. As mentioned above statistics show a rising trend in divorce.

	G/C		Maronite		Armenian		T/C	
AGE	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
18–28	91.5	8.5	56.7	43.3	94.3	5.7	86	14
29–38	89.7	10.3	87.2	12.8	73.3	26.7	83.2	16.8
39–48	78.7	21.3	76.2	23.8	79.3	20.7	74.4	25.6
49–59	55.6	44.4	71.4	28.6	72.5	27.5	63.1	36.9
60–70	30	70	7.7	92.3	57.7	42.3	42.9	57.1
TOTAL	75.4	24.6	66.3	33.7	76.3	23.8	73.6	26.4

In the years from 2000 to 2002 a total of 4000 divorces were issued in the Greek Cypriot community. The Association of Single Parents in the Greek Cypriot community openly supports their right to recognition as a special social group facing specific problems. This was unheard of some years back, which shows that divorce has become a public, social, political and legal issue. Similarly, women's rights, financial independence and a greater readiness to end dysfunctional relationships and cease to tolerate cold indifference or spouse infidelity, could explain this trend in Cyprus. This marks a change in that divorce is now considered less of a stigma and more of a choice. It does not mean, however, that, as our focus group discussions revealed, there are no dysfunctional marriages due to social or financial pressures.

Overall, a considerable majority of women would consider divorce if their relationship were not working out. The highest percentage was Armenian women (76.3 per cent) followed closely by Greek Cypriots (75.4 per cent), Turkish Cypriots (73.6 per cent) and Maronites (66.3 per cent). Generally, older women would less easily consider divorce and this tendency was most evident in the Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and Armenian communities (see table above). Older women more readily accepted their traditional role as wife and mother and did not think that they had a right to a life of their own if they felt

unhappy. We observed that the younger generation of Cypriot women from all communities felt liberated from that social taboo. They aspired to a meaningful relationship in the absence of which they were prepared to leave the marriage

Another issue that was considered taboo related to sex, so we asked the interviewees whether sex is a need in a woman's life?

	G/C	T/C	Armenian	Maronite
Yes	92,2	81,5	76,7	87,0
No	7,8	18,5	23,3	13,0

Feminists consider the 1960s to be the revolution of sexual emancipation and women's articulation of their right to own their own bodies and to reclaim their sexuality. A lot of anthropological research began to demonstrate that there is enormous variation in what is defined as 'sex', why people have sex, how often they have it, with whom they have it and where.[6] The view that sexuality is socially constructed was central to most feminist ideas about experience, and the study of sexuality shifted historically. In criticizing essentialist discourses of sexuality, feminists have sought to develop alternative perspectives to show how such discourses (portraying males as dominant and active and females as sexually submissive or passive) are implicated in women's subordination and can act to legitimate sexual violence.[7] In drawing attention to the connection between sexuality and power, in looking at male sexuality and its material effects on women, feminists like MacKinnon[8] and Butler[9] discussed topics such as the sexual objectification of women in pornography and its effects, the institution of heterosexuality, and sexual abuse and violence. 'By being (hetero)-sexual a man affirms his status and power over others and his identity as masculine'.[10] Some feminists have mounted a critique of heterosexuality and its role in controlling and exploiting women. They argue that heterosexuality is the most important institution of patriarchy and undermines other forms of sexuality like gayism and lesbianism.[11] According to Richardson:

> Within most feminist accounts, heterosexuality is seen not as an individual preference, something we are born like or gradually

> develop into, but as a socially constructed institution which structures and maintains male domination, in particular through the way it channels women into marriage and motherhood. Similarly lesbianism has been defined not as a particular sexual practice, but as a form of political struggle; a challenge to the institution of heterosexuality and a form of resistance to patriarchy.[12]

Feminists still debate long and hard over what should constitute feminist sexual politics. In Cyprus as elsewhere discussions about sex and sexuality are bound up with questions of modernization and woman's independence, as well as with the impact of the media, church, film industry, travelling, tourism and, more recently, the internet. Sexual orientation and homosexuality are rarely discussed either in public or among women in any of the communities. The closeness of the societies both in the north and south can easily turn such issues into gossip, which is unhelpful. In Cyprus, as elsewhere, women's bodies and femaleness are commercialized through television advertisements and on road billboards. In a patriarchal society women's sexual desires have to be oppressed, so remain an unexplored site.[13] It is therefore significant that the majority of women in all the communities said that they considered sex to be a need in their life. Whether this need derived from their desire to have children and the need for motherhood or because women's sexual pleasure is an important feminist goal needs to be investigated further. The table below is an illustration:

	G/C		Maronite		Armenian		T/C	
Age	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
18–28	95.3	4.7	84.6	15.4	88.2	11.8	82.4	17.6
29–38	94.8	5.2	97.4	2.6	76.7	23.3	88.3	11.7
39–48	97.7	2.3	97.4	2.6	72.4	27.6	83.7	16.3
49–59	91.2	8.8	76.2	23.8	82.1	17.9	78	22
60–70	56	44	41.7	58.3	62.1	37.9	63	37
Total	92.2	7.8	86.9	13.1	77	23	81.5	18.5

When these results were correlated with age, we observed that in all

communities this view is more evident in younger age groups. As is traditionally expected, women between the ages of 60 and 70 are less likely to regard sex as a need. Connected to this issue is the use of contraceptives. Feminists have emphasized how sexuality, which is commonly regarded as private and personal, is also a religious and political issue. The Greek Orthodox and Catholic Churches still prohibit premarital sex and the use of contraceptives. So we asked the women: 'Do you use any methods of contraception?'

	G/C	T/C	Armenian	Maronite
Yes	61.3	41.3	49.7	51.8
No	38.7	58.7	50.3	48.2

To increase their knowledge and control over their own bodies feminists campaigned for access to free contraception and their right to abortion, as well as for sex education for girls. These formerly undeclared public issues used to be associated with morality and being a 'good virgin woman'. With the increase in sexually transmitted diseases and Aids, this is no longer the case and debates on such issues take place on both national and international forums. Women and men in Cyprus can now buy contraceptives over the counter.

Many women were too shy or embarrassed to answer this question. We observed variations among women in the four communities. More than half the Turkish Cypriot women (58.7 per cent) did not use contraceptives, whereas more than half the Greek Cypriot women (61.3 per cent) did. The Maronite and Armenian women were evenly split. The majority of Greeks, Maronites and Armenians between the ages of 18 and 28, namely 74.4, 81.7 and 72.7 per cent respectively, do use contraceptives. This indicates that young women from these communities start an active sex life at an earlier age than the Turkish Cypriots and challenge traditional social and religious norms about virginity and 'purity'. The Family Planning Association in the south does a lot of work on these issues in schools and communities. In the Turkish Cypriot community there is no such association. Surprisingly, only the minority of Turkish Cypriot women (34.1 per cent) in the 18–28 age group uses contraceptives, whereas six out of ten Turkish Cypriot women between the ages of 29 and 48 do. This could be

attributed to financial difficulties and lack of information on reproductive health, or to husbands not wanting them to do so, as some Turkish Cypriot women told me.

Another related matter is abortion, which is both a personal and religious issue in the south. Would you ever consider abortion as an option?' we asked and correlated it with age.

	G/C	T/C	Armenian	Maronite
Yes	22.5	53.4	51.7	28.0
No	77.5	46.6	48.3	72.0

The feminist debate on the right of women to a safe and legal abortion continues. It is a religious, political and patriarchal power issue. More than half the Armenian and Turkish Cypriot women said they would consider abortion as an option, while only a minority of Greek Cypriot and Maronite women would.

The majority of women from all the communities who would consider abortion as an option are between the ages of 18 and 38, which shows a shift to the previous generation's views. In contrast, the vast majority of Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Armenian women between the ages of 60 and 70 and Greek Cypriot and Maronite women between the ages of 49 and 59 would never consider this as an option perhaps because they are beyond the child bearing years or because they perceive it as 'an act of murder'.

	G/C		Maronite		Armenian		T/C	
Age	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
18–28	26.3	73.7	55.9	44.1	61.3	38.7	56.4	43.6
29–38	27.5	72.5	17.1	82.9	62.1	37.9	57.8	42.2
39–48	23.3	76.7	12.8	87.2	60.7	39.3	55.4	44.6
49–59	17.5	82.5	9.5	90.5	54.3	45.7	48.1	51.9
60–70	4	96	0	100	12.5	87.5	40.8	59.2
Total	22.5	77.5	28	72	51.7	48.3	53.4	46.6

Surprisingly, four out of ten Turkish Cypriot women between the ages of 60 and 70, and five out of ten Turkish Cypriot and Armenian women between the ages of 49 and 59 would consider abortion as an

option, which in their case is more hypothetical since they are from the age groups who have already had their children, or perhaps they recognize this right for younger women.

The Church of Cyprus has taken a firm stand on these issues and occasionally priests have put great pressure on Greek Cypriot women, labelling them 'sinful' and asking their repentance. Today, with the increase in sexually transmitted diseases, young single mothers and adolescent pregnancies, contraceptives and abortion are being discussed in schools and in the media, but only from a medical standpoint. Abortion is prohibited by law in the Greek Cypriot community except where a woman's life is in danger or her pregnancy has resulted from a rape. Cypriot women can, however, go to private clinics for a paid abortion. Women's organizations have raised neither this social and health issue nor the right of women to control their own bodies and sexuality. In many Western countries these have become major political concerns, especially during election periods, with demonstrations being led by women and feminists. Pressure has been put on politicians to include such issues in their campaign agendas, especially in the United States and other Western countries. In Cyprus it appears that religious beliefs and pressure from religious institutions continue to influence women's views on abortion. The low birth rate has become a concern in Cyprus as it has in many other European countries with an ageing population.

Related to these private/public matters is the issue of premarital sex; we asked people whether it was acceptable in their community for women to be sexually active before marriage. Overall, 37.3 per cent of Greek Cypriot women and 42.9 per cent of Armenian ones considered premarital sex unacceptable. Maronite women were split, with 51.5 per cent finding it acceptable and 48.5 per cent finding it unacceptable. Six out of ten Turkish Cypriots considered premarital sex unacceptable. In all, we noted a conservative view on this issue, which contradicts their earlier response on whether sex is a need in a woman's life to which women from all communities overwhelmingly responded positively.

Gender roles

The separation of the domestic from the public sphere in patriarchal society has produced gendered roles and a sexual division of labour;

feminists view this separation as a social and cultural construct and challenge it as a male attempt to keep women under their control and domination. With Cyprus in a transition phase between tradition and modernity, we asked Cypriot women their opinion on whether they felt their social identity differed from that of men: are women expected to take on certain roles (in the family, charity, daycare of the elderly) that are different from those of men (in politics and at the workplace)?

	G/C	T/C	Armenian	Maronite
Yes	41.7	38.7	36.5	48.8
No	42.7	51.5	44.0	39.5
I don't know	15.5	9.8	19.5	11.7

The Greek Cypriot women were split with about 40 per cent believing that women have different social roles from men and 42.7 per cent believing there is no difference. More than half the Turkish Cypriot women believed that there was no differentiation between male and female roles. The Armenian responses were overall closer to those of the Greek Cypriots, whereas half the Maronite women felt that they were expected to have different social roles from men. Overall, however, there were no major differences in the answers of women from all four communities. The percentage of women who responded 'I don't know' was anywhere from between 10 and 20 per cent, which meant either that they were unaware of gender differences or had never thought about them as anything other than 'natural' or that is 'the way things are'.

Self definition

Women's self definition is closely linked to their position in society, self-autonomy and to how masculinities and femininities are constructed. Women's literature taken from life experiences describes how they were the objects and 'possessions' of their fathers and husbands and how men defined their self-identity. Simone de Beauvoir told us that women are the 'other' who lives in 'false consciousness'. The uncovering of women's oppression requires attention to systems of relationships in which individuals are embedded and whose boundaries go beyond the individual and her vision. 'Individual agency

is critical for feminist theory because it provides both the source of insight and the means of action which lead to social change'.[14] Many women need greater opportunities to shape and direct the changes in their lives and disengage from dependency relationships. We thus asked our interviewees to define their sense of self. What represents you the most?

(1) I am someone's wife/daughter/sister/mother;
(2) I am me.

	G/C	Maronites	Armenians	T/C
I am someone's wife/daughter/sister/mother	30.4	38.9	23.2	21.3
I am me	69.6	61.1	76.8	78.7

We notice that the majority of women in all communities felt that 'I am me' represented them best, which indicated that they recognized their separate individuality and identity, a departure from the self-definition through the 'other' – father, husband, brother, son. This change came about through women's economic independence and higher education. In addition, though social connections are still strong at many levels of Cypriot society, many women in Cyprus hold demanding jobs in which they are evaluated according to their individual qualities. However, the self-definition of a considerable percentage of women across the communities is still determined by the other, which was apparent when we asked them to name their greatest pleasure in life. The vast majority of married women from all communities cited their wedding day or having children or grandchildren, which complies with social expectations, whereas single women named finishing their studies, getting a job or pleasing their parents.

We asked women to identify the patriarchal system – feminists have given different definitions of patriarchy (see Chapter 1): given that the main characteristics of a patriarchal social system are the following:

(1) Hierarchical;
(2) Competitive;

(3) Social roles are determined by gender and;
(4) Control and power derive from decisions taken by men.

Do you believe we have such a system in Cyprus?

This question is closely linked to gender awareness. In the Greek Cypriot, Armenian and Maronite communities more than half the women said they believed a patriarchal system existed in Cypriot society, and almost half the Turkish Cypriots said they did not.

	G/C	T/C	Armenian	Maronite
Yes	50.2	38.5	55.1	50.0
No	33.8	46.7	15.2	33.3
I don't know	16.0	14.7	29.7	16.7

This is indicative of the lack of public discussion on such issues and also of the education system, which is gendered. However, when we correlated their responses with their level of education we found that it made little difference; only slightly more women with degrees believed that there is such a system in Cyprus than women who only had primary education. The percentage of women who did not know was higher among the illiterate or those with only a primary school education.

Collective identity

Ethnic identity has been politicized and politically manipulated throughout the recent history of Cyprus and is contingent on who the other happens to be – Franks, Venetians, Ottomans, British, Turks, settlers, Asians or new migrants. As Cockburn and others like Anthias and Yuval-Davis have said, due to the political conflict in Cyprus the most significant ethicizing process there has been the dichotomizing of 'Greek' and 'Turk' and the marginalization of cultural variations that diverge from these two stereotypes. Cockburn writes that this ethicizing process is:

> paralleled by a gendering process that (as elsewhere) differentiates masculine from feminine in such a way as to box varied people into two reductive and inescapable categories of human

> 'being'. Both processes have been socially damaging and impoverishing, resulting in power structures that have generated inequalities, resentment, incomplete development and violence. … Gender is always constituted in a culturally specific form, and an ethnicity always pronounces its norms for manhood and womanhood. Our oppression as women is enacted in ethnically specific ways.[15]

The dichotomy of Greek and Turk has not only left out smaller communities but all other possibilities for multiple identities and variations. We asked the Cypriot women which of the following best described how they define themselves collectively.

	G/C	T/C	Ar	Mar
Cypriot	66.1	62.7	17.5	43.4
More Cypriot than Greek/Turkish/Maronite/Armenian	6.4	3.5	3.6	5.1
Equally Cypriot as Greek/Turkish/Maronite/Armenian	22.7	20.2	45.2	37.5
More Greek/Turkish/Maronite/Armenian than Cypriot	1.3	2.3	21.7	4.4
GreekTurkish/Maronite/Armenian	1.3	7.5	9.6	3.7
I don't know/haven't thought about it	2.1	3.7	2.4	5.9

This question examined women's collective identity, which is broader than 'national identity' in that it includes cultural, linguistic, religious, political and social identifications. We observed that a high percentage of Greek Cypriot women (66.1 per cent) said that they felt Cypriot while about (22.7 per cent) said that felt equally Cypriot and Greek and only 1.3 per cent said they would describe themselves as only 'Greek'. These figures reinforced a previous study carried out in 2000–02.[16] A high percentage of the Turkish Cypriot women (62.7 per cent) as well as of Maronites, (43.4 per cent) felt 'Cypriot', indicating identification with Cyprus as a geographical space, as well as an attachment to the place as a homeland and to a unitary 'Cypriot' identity. This finding challenges the ways in which Helleno-centrism and Turko-centrism penetrated the formal and informal education system, the use of Greek or Turkish symbols, textbooks and the national

anthems of Greece and Turkey (the Republic of Cyprus does not have its own anthem) and the mainstream media.

More than 20 per cent of Turkish Cypriot women said they felt 'equally Cypriot and Turkish', and 7.5 per cent described themselves as 'Turkish'. Almost half the Armenians (45.2 per cent) said they felt equally 'Cypriot and Armenian' though close to 10 per cent felt exclusively 'Armenian', no doubt an attempt to project their distinctive culture, language and religious practices. The Maronite women felt 'Cypriot' (43.4 per cent) whereas, like the Armenians, 37.5 per cent said they felt as 'Cypriot as Maronite'. This shows that as minorities and citizens they felt loyalty to the state but also to their own particular culture, which they wish to revive and preserve, especially now in the context of European Union laws on minority rights.

We cross tabulated this question with ideology so as to check the prevalent political view that those who felt 'Cypriot' belonged primarily to the left ideological spectrum.

We found no clear-cut relationship between 'Cypriotness' and being on the 'left'. Some 26.6 per cent of Greek Cypriot women chose the answer 'I don't belong anywhere'; a similar percentage of those who felt 'Cypriot' placed themselves on the 'left' ideological spectrum; the 37.5 per cent of women who felt 'equally Cypriot and Greek' placed themselves on the 'right', while more than three out of ten women who felt 'more Greek than Cypriot' located themselves on the right The majority of those who felt 'Greek' also placed themselves on the right.

The majority of women who felt 'Cypriot' either placed themselves centre-right (26.3 per cent) or did not belong anywhere (28.1 per cent). The majority of those feeling 'more Cypriot than Maronite' (33.3 per cent) and more 'Maronite than Cypriot' placed themselves on the right. The vast majority of women feeling 'Maronite' were on the centre-right. Similarly, quite a few Armenian women (25.8 per cent) did not feel they belonged anywhere ideologically; of these one-third felt 'more Cypriot than Armenian' and another third felt 'Armenian'. The majority who felt 'Cypriot' placed themselves on the right, the majority of those feeling 'equally Cypriot as Armenian' did not belong anywhere, those feeling more 'Armenian than Cypriot' placed themselves at the centre, while those feeling 'Armenian' either did not belong anywhere or placed themselves at the centre.

The vast majority of Turkish Cypriot women chose the answer 'I don't belong anywhere' (48 per cent). Of those placing themselves on the left 52.4 per cent felt 'more Cypriot than Turkish', while the majority of those placing themselves on the right felt either 'Turkish' or 'equally Cypriot as Turkish'.

What we note in general is that ideology is much more complex than a right versus left bipolarity, and that one-third of Greek, Maronite and Armenian women and almost half the Turkish Cypriots stated that they did not belong to any ideology as male political party leaders defined them. This gives Cypriot politicians on both sides of the divide and women's party organizations a strong warning against taking male assumptions about political life and culture for granted. The existing political ideologies, which are male constructs, fail to accommodate women's different needs and feelings about belonging.

Another important issue for a society in conflict is how well democracy works and how much it is contingent on the 'national problem' and male nationalist project that marginalize other social issues. Dissenting or independent voices are viewed as a threat to social cohesion. The dominant group usually sets the agenda and priorities for the rest to follow. Thus we asked: 'As a member of your community, do you feel excluded and isolated from the larger community?'

(1) Always;
(2) Most of the time;
(3) Sometimes;
(4) Never.

As expected, the majority (71.5 per cent) of Greek Cypriot women said that they 'never' felt excluded, though about 23.5 per cent of them said that they did 'sometimes'.

	G/C	T/C	Armenian	Maronite
Always	1.1	43.9	1.8	22.8
Most of the time	3.9	55.9	7.3	3.3
Sometimes	23.5	0.2	33.9	27.8
Never	71.5	0.0	57.0	46.1

Another result was that all Turkish Cypriot women felt 'always' or 'most of the time' excluded from the wider community, which did not surprise us considering that for them the 'other' is the Greek Cypriot. They felt invisible among Greek Cypriots, which is to do with the Greek majority's dominance and with the international recognition the Republic of Cyprus enjoys over the illegal TRNC. When Greek Cypriots use the term 'Cypriot', Turkish Cypriots feel excluded because they know that the former are referring only to the Greeks. Greek Cypriots often speak of 'Turks' without differentiating between Cypriot Turks and Turks from Turkey. A Turkish Cypriot woman in a conflict-resolution workshop once remarked that 'we feel like a sandwich, we are in the middle – above is Turkey and below are the Greek Cypriots.'[17]

The Maronites felt the next most excluded after the Turkish Cypriots, with one in four feeling excluded or isolated 'always' or 'most of the time'. Their feelings were reconfirmed in focus group discussions in which they spoke openly about different forms of discrimination. Overall, it seems that a great deal of sensitization work needs to take place at institutional and community levels on questions of majority domination and minority rights, for such issues can undermine the smooth functioning of democracy. Related to this issue was the question on how satisfied Cypriot women felt about how things were run at the state level. We asked how proud Cypriot women felt about certain sectors and policies in Cyprus. In particular, we sought to observe the level of their satisfaction on the following issues, which we tabulated with age:

(1) The way democracy works for women;
(2) The fair way that all citizens are treated (irrespective of nationality, sex, class, sexuality);
(3) The promotion of the arts and culture of each community;
(4) The presence of women in politics;
(5) The quality of health services;
(6) Educational quality.

On the first issue, a little more than half the Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Armenian women (53.9, 55.6 and 53.2 per cent

respectively) were 'somewhat proud' of the way 'democracy works for women'. Among Greek Cypriots and Maronites this belief was more common in the 29–38 and 39–48 age groups, while the percentage of Armenian women who felt 'somewhat proud' was higher for women over 49. A significant percentage of Turkish Cypriot women (22 per cent) did not feel 'at all proud' of the way democracy worked in their community – this was more common among women aged between 29 and 48. The Armenian women had the highest percentage of 'I don't know' and specifically, three out of ten women aged 18 to 28 chose this option. As for the 'very proud' option, only two out of ten Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and Maronite women felt so, while even fewer Armenian women (14.9 per cent) chose that option.

In general, these answers referred to how institutions and infrastructures, which are all still male dominated, worked for women. Democracy for women means, among other things, equal opportunities, and equal allocation of resources to what are generally considered their issues (health, nurseries, kindergartens, culture and the arts, secure roads and secure employment).

In multiethnic societies in which the composition of different ethnic groups is unequal, we note a tendency on the part of the hegemonic group to impose its national ideology, values and sense of 'political correctness' on other subordinate groups and to expect them to follow suit.[18] In our research we observed that not only do smaller communities express 'little pride' in the degree of 'fairness' with which all citizens are treated, but also that the same view prevailed among Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women (43.3 per cent and 42.1 per cent, respectively) in every age range, which is hardly surprising given that they all share the same male hierarchical and hegemonic environment.

Women worldwide protest that not enough financial resources are allocated to education, health, the arts and culture compared with arms and national security. (Cyprus is one of the highest spending countries on defence.) Only two out of ten Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Turkish Cypriot women felt 'very proud' about the money allocated to education, whereas 43.6 per cent of the Armenian women were 'very proud' of the Cyprus Republic's cultural policy – especially those over 60 years of age. This was a surprising result given that it contradicted the women's feelings about how democracy worked in Cyprus. The

majority of Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and Maronite women aged between 18 and 59 are 'somewhat proud', while the number of women who did not feel proud at all (17.2, 26.1 and 25.4 per cent respectively) was low especially between the ages of 18 and 48. A high percentage of women chose the 'I don't know, I can't choose' option, especially among women aged over 60.

The presence of women in public life, especially at decision-making levels, is very low compared with that of men (15 per cent in the Greek Cypriot and 10 per cent in the Turkish Cypriot community). Since the establishment of the republic in 1960, no woman from the Maronite, Armenian or Latin communities has ever been elected or appointed as a community representative. Surprisingly, the majority of women in all communities are 'somewhat proud' of women's presence in politics, with the lowest percentage among women aged 18 to 28 in all communities, except the Turkish Cypriot one in which this view is less common in the 60–70 age group. Low percentages of women from all communities felt 'very proud' of the presence of women in politics – one in ten Armenian women, nearly two in ten Greek Cypriot and Maronite women, and one quarter of Turkish Cypriot women. Almost three out of ten Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Armenian women were 'not satisfied at all'.

Over the last few years there have been public debates about the quality of the health services, delays in finishing new hospitals and state doctors being overworked. We examined the level of women's satisfaction with the quality of the health services and observed that the majority of Greek Cypriots, Maronites and Armenians of all ages felt 'somewhat proud' (45 and 54 per cent respectively), whereas more than half the Turkish Cypriot women (53.3 per cent) felt 'no pride' at all; this view was more common in the 18–48 age group. Only two out of ten Greek Cypriots, Maronites and Armenians felt 'very proud', while a substantial percentage (31.2 per cent of Greek Cypriots, 26 per cent of Maronites and 16.8 per cent of Armenians) did not feel proud at all. It should be noted that among all communities, women between the ages of 60 and 70, the ones who need health services the most, comprised the lowest percentage of 'not proud at all'.

Education usually concerns women because in a patriarchal society mothers are expected to undertake the upbringing, care and schooling

of their children. The political instability has made Cypriot mothers even more concerned about their children's schooling because they consider education a future investment for a good life and something that no war can destroy. Therefore, we wanted to examine how satisfied women were with public education. More than half the Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Armenian women and almost half the Turkish Cypriot ones felt 'somewhat proud'. In addition, a considerable percentage of Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Turkish Cypriot women (17, 22.1 and 19.2 per cent respectively) did not feel proud at all. A high percentage of Armenian women (38.5 per cent), especially those in the 18–28 and 60–70 age ranges, felt 'very proud', followed by Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot women (29.8 and 26.2 per cent respectively).

In general, all age groups in all communities felt 'somewhat proud' but expressed a need for improvement especially in the curriculum content. In focus-group discussion many Maronite and Armenian women expressed regret that there was no mention of their community's history, culture or religion in the school textbooks the Greek Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture disseminates to all schools. When in 1974 the Maronites were displaced and lost their schools, their children attended Greek schools in which nothing was taught about their history and culture. It is only recently that a Maronite school has been established in Nicosia with aid from the European Union and the Republic of Cyprus (there is more about this in Chapter 5).

Participation in social/political organizations

The level of citizen participation often defines the quality of a democracy and a society's willingness to accept social change. Traditionally, women joined school parents' associations or organizations that dealt with philanthropy, charity, community services or caring for the elderly. Men would join trade unions, or political and athletic organizations. This was part of the gender-specific patriarchal order. We asked the Cypriot women to define their level of participation in organizations and, as expected, they were most active in religious, cultural, artistic, educational and charitable organizations. This fits in with the social expectation of women as care givers and the reproducers of cultural values and national ideology.[19] Armenian women

were much more active than the women from the other three communities in almost all social and political activities, but were less visible in the wider public life.

For social, traditional and historical reasons the participation of women in trade unions is not usually high. Historically, men from the left set up the movements to promote workers' rights, and working-class women were expected to be passive bystanders. The majority of women in all communities did not participate 'very actively' in trade unions. More specifically, only 12.6 per cent of Greek Cypriot women, the majority of whom were in the 39–48 age group, were active participants in the unions. By contrast, and as expected, the majority of Greek Cypriot women in the 18–28 and 60–70 age groups (92.4 and 97.5 per cent respectively) were not active participants. Only one in four Maronite women was active in a union. This was an expected result since most large trade unions in Cyprus, such as the Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO) and the Confederation of Cypriot Workers (SEK), also engage in national and political struggles that exclude women.[20] With the recent exception of the newly-elected president of the high school teachers' association, presidents and chairmen of unions are invariably men.

Similarly, the majority of Armenian women (85.4 per cent) were not very active participants in the unions. However, more than one-fifth of the Armenian women aged 18 to 28 were active participants, which is a hopeful sign for the new generation. In the Turkish Cypriot group, the highest percentage of women who participated actively in trade unions was 21.4 per cent for the age group 29–38, whereas the 'not very active' came from all age groups, a total of 89 per cent.

Concerning participation in women's organizations that are not affiliated to a political party, the majority of Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Turkish Cypriot women (82.2, 80.6 and 76.7 per cent respectively) were not active. An exception was in the 39–59 age group of Armenian women in which a majority (52.1 per cent) participated, although only 20 per cent of the 18–28 age group were active participants. The majority of 'active' women among the Greek Cypriots and Maronites were aged between 49 and 59, whereas the majority of active Turkish Cypriot participants were aged between 39 and 48. This shows that women in their thirties and forties had a more

developed consciousness of social and gender issues than other age groups.

This was disappointing because it showed that women did not mobilize to assert their rights in an organized fashion or act as a pressure group to influence policies and build networks for social change. With the political party culture dominating political life in Cyprus, it is difficult to establish independent women's associations. The only one such organizations is Hands Across the Divide, which faces its own difficulties.[21] This reinforces another finding that women's active participation in local government is low both among older and younger generations of women in all communities. A vicious circle has been created whereby the non-visibility of women in public life is due to their poor involvement and participation in political or women's organized groups, yet they can only become visible if they participate in political movements to challenge the patriarchal political order. When we asked our interviewees about women's role in their community's struggles for social change, which no women's organizations have researched or documented systematically, their responses suggested two trends, one of which was that Cypriot women's contribution was big but 'invisible' and unrecognized.

What do you think is the women's participation of your community in the struggle for social change?

(1) Big;
(2) Small;
(3) Irrelevant;
(4) I don't know.

	G/C	T/C	Armenians	Maronites
Big	46.4	41.0	18.8	36.0
Small	33.8	46.0	48.5	44.9
Irrelevant	3.8	1.9	26.1	7.4
I don't know	16.0	11.1	6.7	11.8

High percentages of women in the two larger communities responded positively and believed that women played a major part in social change, whereas for the Maronite women (at 36 per cent) and

for the Armenians (at only 18.8 per cent) the response was very much lower. Equally high, however, were the percentages of women who identified a 'small' role for women in the field of social change, which is understandable in a patriarchal society. The fact is that women's contribution to social changes remains unacknowledged and undocumented, which the 'I do not know' responses exhibit.

Voting behaviour and political beliefs

Once women had gained the right to vote, political scientists and election strategists became interested, especially after the 1960s and 1970s, in women's voting behaviour, for feminism has changed the way we think about the public space and politics. All political parties now include women's issues in their political campaigns. They also undertake research into what attracts female voters. We asked our interviewees: 'How do you decide which party to vote for? Do you choose the party that (up to 3 choices):'

(1) You believe has the best election campaign?
(2) Expresses your interests (personal, family, professional)?
(3) Seems to have the best leader?
(4) Has the best political view on the Cyprus issue?
(5) Your family always votes for?
(6) Your husband/partner votes for?
(7) Is sensitive to women's issues and has a programme for women?
(8) You agree with its ideology?
(9) Other (what)?

The majority of Greek Cypriot and Maronite women would vote for a party because of its 'ideology' and political position on the Cyprus issue, and this cut across all communities and age differentiations. These two reasons were the choices of Greek Cypriot and Maronite women in the 18–28 (27.6 and 25.1 per cent), 29–38 (23.5 and 22. per cent) and 39–48 (24.6 and 25.1 per cent) age groups, while only a small percentage in the 60–70 age group considered these to be important factors. The majority of Armenian women aged 49 to 59 would vote for the political party that had 'the

best leader', 'a similar ideology' to theirs and the best political position on the 'Cyprus issue'.

It is noteworthy that, in choosing a political party, Greek Cypriot women considered choice (7), on 'sensitivity to women's issues' the 'least important factor'. Only 50 out of 748 women chose it, followed by 'its election campaign', which only 88 out of 748 chose. In fact, no women aged 60 to 70 considered the party's programme on women's issues significant, whereas women aged 39 to 48 more frequently made that choice. Likewise, Armenian and Maronite women would not be influenced by a party's programme on women's issues, whereas almost three out of ten would vote for the 'political party their husband/partner' supported. The majority of Turkish Cypriot women would base their vote on a party's 'platform and leader', especially among the 18–28 and 29–38 age groups. Surprisingly, less than 1 per cent would vote for a party sensitive to women's issues.

Though disappointing, these responses are not surprising given the political socialization of girls and women in Cyprus where a combative masculine style of politics prevails and puts off many women, who in turn internalize the assumption that politics is a 'man's world' and would refrain from challenging male authority. On the other hand, the absence of women's, environmental or health issues from political party agendas, puts off many women who might otherwise think of becoming involved. This is indeed a message to both politicians and women's organizations to rethink male hierarchies and their political agenda so as to make politics a more inviting and friendly place for women. Political parties should also consider the feminist definitions of power and rethink issues like security, development and coalition-building.

Women's political socialization is related to how frequently women follow political discussions through the media.

	G/C	Maronites	Armenians	T/C
Almost daily	29.8	13.8	24.7	33.7
Two-three times a week	18.7	33.7	17.5	20.8
Sometimes	35.1	42.5	41.6	33.5
Almost never	16.4	9.9	16.3	12.1

It is evident that the majority of women follow such discussions 'only sometimes' and a considerable percentage 'almost never', with the Greek Cypriot and Armenian women in the lead. This is consistent with the overall disengagement from political parties and community organizations. Thus, women are not only absent from those political institutions that would influence policy making and social change but are also not well-informed. Feminist writers conceptualized power as mutual enablement rather than domination.[22] As I pointed out earlier, there is huge gender inequality in representation in Cypriot public life. The political parties do not follow the quota system closely, despite the EU and UN directives to member states on gender mainstreaming at all policy and decision-making levels of organizations.

Given the above limitations would Cypriot women consider voting for a woman in the highest position of the president of the state?

(1) Yes;
(2) No;
(3) I don't know.

	G/C	Maronites	Armenians	T/C
Yes	80.2	66.1	78.0	78.2
No	5.4	13.3	11.0	7.3
I don't know	14.4	20.6	11.0	14.3

The public perception was that women do not vote for other women, especially in parliamentary elections, so we wanted to test this among the Cypriot women voters. The responses disproved this belief since the majority of women would consider voting a woman to the presidency. Certainly, this question was hypothetical since, until now, no woman in Cyprus has run for president. One may also assume that women are disillusioned with men being the key decision-makers. This belief can be utilized by women's organizations and NGOs so as to open a debate about feminist politics, elections and women's values.

Feminine values

Peace' and 'love' are widely viewed as 'feminine values' and it is socially expected that women, by virtue of their biology, reproductive

role and socialization, would support these values as opposed to men who, again because of biology and socialization, are expected to be more aggressive, declare wars and hide their feelings. Feminists and social constructionist scholars challenge this 'essentializing' view. There are many peace-loving men as there are women leaders who have declared wars. Issues of war and peace are social phenomena and, as such, are gendered.

The concept of peace has usually been associated with the negative definition of 'no war'. However, in recent peace studies the concepts of 'positive and structural peace' have been introduced to mean the absence of any form of violence in the family, at the workplace and in the public space. In addition, peace has been closely connected to economic development, equal distribution of resources and gender equality. Thus, in this question we have introduced 'peace' to include both positive and negative definitions. What does 'peace' mean to you (one choice)?

The majority of women from all communities agreed with all the choices and responded with the answer 'all of the above'. In the Turkish Cypriot community, a considerable percentage (24.8 per cent) has interpreted peace to be 'justice and equality'.

This shows that women felt more oppressed, discriminated against and their social role sharper than in the other communities. Furthermore, it must be noted that almost all the communities were compatible in their choice that received the second highest percentage, namely 'the absence of war', which is the traditional way of defining peace. Reunification of the island received only a minor percentage and this at a time when some hope had emerged with official negotiations on the way. We then examined the value of 'love' from a women's understanding. 'What does love mean to you?'

	G/C	T/C	A	M
Absence of war	22.2	24.4	31.1	17.3
Justice and equality	10.5	24.8	11.4	26.3
Financial stability	0.5	4.1	0.6	2.2
Absence of violence or of threat of violence against children and women	0.5	1.2	1.8	5.0
Reunification of the island	5.4	5.1	6.6	10.6
Creativity and development	2.3	2.4	1.2	4.5
All the above	58.5	38.0	47.3	34.1

	G/C	M	A	T/C
Acceptance and recognition of the other	9.3	8.8	6.6	5.7
Forgiveness of those who hurt you	2.8	11.0	6.0	5.2
Not hurting the other person	5.3	9.4	3.6	11.8
Trusting the other person	5.5	5.0	10.2	5.1
Feeling equal to the other person	1.1	8.3	1.2	6.8
Unconditional giving	5.1	5.0	14.4	16.9
All the above	69.0	50.8	55.7	40.5
Other	1.9	1.7	2.4	7.9

This question closely relates to the previous one in that 'love' carries social, emotional, relational and spiritual connotations. The fact that the majority of women chose the option 'all of the above' showed that they had a broader understanding of 'love' as a value that is important in a conflict-ridden society, like Cyprus.

The Cyprus conflict

Living in a conflict habituated system it was important to examine the beliefs of the Cypriot women regarding the causes of the conflict, which, as I mentioned in Chapter 3, are complex and multilayered. So we asked to what extent (very much, somewhat, not at all, and I don't know) the following have affected the creation and/or perpetuation of the Cyprus conflict The goal was to reveal women's knowledge of both the actual historical events and the complexity of the issues, and thus the different points of entry for peaceful interventions.

(1) The 'divide and rule' British policy;
(2) Turkish Cypriot and/or Greek Cypriot nationalism;
(3) The role of the Greek Orthodox Church;
(4) The Zurich constitution;
(5) The involvement of the motherlands;
(6) The interests and the intrusions of other nations;
(7) The use of national symbols (national anthem, flag) of the motherland by each community;
(8) The national, religious and cultural differences between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots;
(9) The social and economic inequalities between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots;

(10) The leadership' s mistakes;
(11) The intransigence of the 'other side';
(12) The lack of communication between the communities;
(13) The lack of trust between the communities;
(14) The perceptions that the educational systems cultivate;
(15) Other (what?)

We cross tabulated the findings to the factors above with the demographic data of refugees and non-refugees. Historical, domestic, socio-psychological and external factors, as well as regional dynamics in post-colonial countries, are studied to design appropriate interventions for future accommodations. In our study we used the most frequently voiced causes of the Cyprus conflict, those that have been used as individual or combined explanations for the Cyprus situation. Do women who experienced the consequences of the conflict directly believe differently from those who did not? If the degree of differentiation was small then, does this tell us that women as a category were more united and supportive of each other? Do policy-makers, negotiators and third parties involved in the peace process need to consider all these factors from the women's perspectives too?

With regard to the first factor, the 'divide and rule' British policy, we observed that a total of 54.5 per cent Greek Cypriot women and 56 per cent Turkish Cypriot women considered this to be 'very significant'; 45 and 50 per cent respectively of Maronite and Armenian women also do. A surprising 22.3 per cent of Greek Cypriot women and 22.4 per cent of Armenian ones did not know whether British colonial policy in Cyprus had contributed to the conflict. In fact, we observed a smaller percentage of 'I don't know' in the Maronite and Turkish Cypriot communities (7.5 and 15.3 per cent respectively). With regard to the demographic 'refugees' we noticed that more Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women refugees supported this statement compared with 'non-refugees'. These responses surprised us, as did the high percentage of Greek Cypriot women who answered they 'do not know'.

For the second factor, which refers to 'Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalism', we noticed that Greek Cypriot women (43.1 per cent) showed the lowest percentage against all the other communities,

which were much higher. Turkish Cypriot women (at 10.5 per cent) showed the lowest percentage in the 'I don't know' category, with the highest percentage being the Greek Cypriots (18.3 per cent). Greek Cypriot and Armenian 'refugees' tended to see this factor as more significant than the 'non-refugees'. However, Maronite and Turkish Cypriot women believed otherwise. It was surprising that the latter – by a margin of almost 20 per cent over the Greek Cypriots – considered nationalism to be a crucial causal factor of the problem. Does this mean they are more critical, better informed or more willing openly to acknowledge their community's responsibility? Does this also show a readiness to move forward despite past mistakes? Nationalism in Cyprus evoked women as the embodiment of the 'nation' yet excluded them from any decisions that were made about 'national struggles'.

On the role of the Greek Orthodox Church as a causal factor, six out of ten Turkish Cypriot and four out of ten Maronite women believed that it contributed significantly, compared with 21.2 per cent of Greek Cypriot women and 10 per cent of Armenians. Furthermore, 28 per cent of the Greek Cypriots, compared with 5.1 per cent of the Turkish Cypriots and 5 per cent of the Armenians, did not consider the role of the Greek Orthodox Church of any significance, which shows a positive view of the Orthodox Church in Cyprus. Similarly, there were high percentages in the 'I don't know' category, with Armenians and Greek Cypriots (at 37.9 and 21.1 per cent respectively) the highest, followed by Turkish Cypriot women at 19.1 per cent. It was understandable that 40 per cent of the Turkish Cypriot women would consider this factor significant because, from their standpoint, Makarios, the archbishop and later president of the republic, had been associated with injustice, exclusion and tolerating violence against them when they were made to feel like second-class citizens. And, as expected, Greek Cypriot and Armenian women held the Church in high esteem and were not critical of its role in advocating ethnic nationalism.

The majority of Greek Cypriots saw the Zurich constitution as 'imposed from above' rather than growing organically from the needs of the citizens and with their approval. Moreover, it was referred to in public debates as one of the causes of the malfunctioning of the

republic and its collapse in December 1963. Despite this widely-held belief, only 35.7 per cent of Greek Cypriot women considered the issue very important and, surprisingly, only 15.9 per cent of Turkish Cypriots believed that the constitution had played a significant role in the creation of the conflict. Equally surprising were the high percentages of Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot and Armenian women (45.4, 32.8 and 37.9 per cent respectively) who said 'I don't know'; only 10 per cent of the Armenian women saw it as a significant factor as opposed to 46.5 per cent of the Maronite women. The refugee and non-refugee category was of no significance. This result showed ignorance about crucial historical moments in the conflict, especially between the women from the two larger communities, which indicates that contemporary Cyprus history was not being taught in schools or taught only very selectively.

The different communities experienced the political discourse on the role of the two 'motherlands' at various historical moments differently. The Turkish Cypriots often viewed Turkey as their 'rescuer' from Greek Cypriot fanatics, whereas Greek Cypriots, especially those on the left, cited the destructive role of the military junta in Greece as being responsible for creating the 1974 tragedy. It was not therefore surprising that more than half the Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Armenian women considered the involvement of motherlands 'a significant factor' in creating the conflict. Greek Cypriot and Armenian refugee women were more likely to hold that position than non-refugees, whereas there was no difference between refugees and non-refugees among the Turkish Cypriot women.

In political analyses of the conflict, 'outside interests and external foreign interventions' were often presented as colonial and post-colonial phenomena – a view also repeatedly mentioned in the popular media. More than half the Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Turkish Cypriot women, both refugees and non-refugees, considered it 'very significant'. Almost two in ten Armenian women did not know whether outside interests and external foreign interventions played a role in the conflict, while another 35.9 per cent considered this intervention 'somewhat significant'.

The pre-1974 period, which saw the rise of nationalism and fascism culminating in the EOKA B-instigated *coup d'état*, Greek symbols,

evoking the goal of enosis, were highly visible in the Greek Cypriot community. In the post-1974 period, however, when the Cyprus Republic gained international recognition, its symbols, evoking the desire for 'taksim' (partition), then became more prominent, as if to reinforce the republic's legitimacy. Half the Maronite women (50.3 per cent) considered this factor significant, whereas smaller percentages of Greek Cypriot (26 per cent), Turkish Cypriot (26.6 per cent) and Armenian (33.1 per cent) women believed that symbols mattered. Equally important, 27.6 per cent of Greek Cypriot women and 28.5 per cent of Turkish Cypriot women did not believe that the use of national symbols from one or other of the motherlands contributed at all to the creation and perpetuation of the problem.

It is often stated that the Cyprus conflict is neither religious nor cultural. In fact, Greek Cypriots stressed coexistence among the communities. Only one-third of all women across communities believed that the ethnic, religious and cultural differences between Greek and Turkish Cypriots were 'very significant'. Does Samuel P. Huntington's causal explanation have any importance here? We think not because in Cyprus ethnic and cultural differences became an issue only after being politicized at times of crisis and after the fabric of coexistence had been affected. After the 'crossings' in 2003, many similarities between the communities re-emerged and difference was no longer perceived as a threat.

Ethnic conflicts are often attributed to social and economic inequalities and unequal development. These inequalities existed in the two communities before and after 1974 and are even more noticeable today after the accession of the Cyprus Republic to the European Union. As expected, a high 51.9 per cent of Turkish Cypriot women, both refugees and non-refugees, considered this factor 'very significant' in the creation of the Cyprus conflict, whereas these percentages were lower among Greek Cypriot (35 per cent), Armenian (33 per cent) and Maronite (45.2 per cent) women. Apart from the security issue the economic factor was crucial for the Turkish Cypriot community as a whole, and needs to be considered in any future solution.

A high percentage of women in all communities – with the highest being the Turkish Cypriot – believed that 'mistakes of the leadership' had contributed towards creating and perpetuating the Cyprus conflict.

This belief was more common among Greek Cypriot and Armenian refugee women, and among Turkish Cypriot and Maronite non-refugee women. Once again we notice that the Greek Cypriot women together with the Armenians scored highest in the 'I don't know' option. Is this an expression of cynicism, of disillusionment with the leadership's role in the solution of the problem? Greek Cypriots often spoke about opportunities their leaders had missed, especially after the mid-1980s and in 2004. The Turkish Cypriot community became increasingly critical of its leadership's policy, which they viewed as promoting the interests of Turkey. On the whole, women exhibited a critical attitude towards the leadership's responsibility in the history of the conflict.

Every time there was a deadlock in the official intercommunal talks, one side would blame the other for the stalemate. Each side characterized the other as 'intransigent', leaving no room for constructive analysis and mutual acknowledgement of responsibility. As expected, seven out of ten Greek Cypriot women, as well as 68.5 and 58.4 per cent of Maronites and Turkish Cypriots respectively, considered the 'intransigence of the other side' a 'very important' cause of the conflict. This belief was more common among Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot refugee women, whereas the majority of Maronite women who believed this was significant were non-refugees. Surprisingly, only four out of ten Armenians believed so. There were also considerable percentages of 'I don't know' replies among the Greek Cypriot and Armenian women (13.1 and 17.4 per cent respectively).

Lack of contact and communication between warring factions is an important socio-psychological factor in divided societies and ethno-national conflicts, for it presupposes the parties to exaggerate their differences and construct stereotypes, which in turn strengthen mutual fears and mistrust. In our survey more than half the Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Turkish Cypriot women believed that 'lack of communication' was a significant cause of the conflict, whereas only three out of ten Armenians believed so. There was not much difference in the responses of Greek Cypriot refugee and non-refugee women. However, there was a notable variation in the Maronite and Armenian communities. Integrative institutions and cooperative practices need to be established to strengthen the culture of peace and eliminate fears of domination.

On the role of the 'educational system' in creating and perpetuating the Cyprus conflict, 52.5 per cent of Maronite women, followed by 37 per cent of Turkish Cypriot women and 34.5 per cent of Greek Cypriot women considered it 'a significant factor', whereas only one in four Armenians did. We observed a 10 per cent variation in all communities between refugee and non-refugee groups. Equally significant was the fact that almost two out of ten Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and Armenian women did not know whether education played a role.

What kind of Cyprus?

Different proposals have been put forward about what form of governance would be optimal in the event of a solution. During high-level meetings under United Nations auspices in 1977 and 1979 both sides agreed to establish 'a bicommunal, bizonal federal republic' and this idea was developed further in the Annan Plan. We asked the women what they thought was the best solution for the Cyprus problem?

	G/C	Maronites	Armenians	T/C
Unified state	47.0	70.8	28.2	6.7
Federation	6.5	8.5	11.7	11.1
Confederation	2.4	2.3	7.4	8.1
Two separate states	11.8	6.9	20.9	59.1
I don't know/I can't choose	32.3	11.5	31.9	15.0

During the time of our research there were numerous discussions on the 'Annan Plan' among politicians and in civil society. Despite this we noted that the overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriot women supported 'a unified state' whereas the vast majority of Turkish Cypriot women supported a 'two states solution'. This was in compliance with the 'patriotic exclusionary political rhetoric in each community in which both men and women were socialized. Seven out of ten Maronite women wanted a unified state, which shows a strong alliance with Greek Cypriots, whereas less than 30 per cent of Armenian women did.

It is noteworthy that a high percentage of women from all communities did 'not know or could not choose' the best solution. In

fact, this was stronger among Greek Cypriot and Armenian women (32.3 and 31.9 per cent respectively) followed by the Turkish Cypriot and Maronite women (15 and 11.5 per cent respectively). This may be attributed to women's lack of information on the different types of solution, to the non-participation of women in political debates or to the fact that they considered it to be an issue that primarily concerned male politicians and leaders at the macro level.

The Cyprus conflict has so dominated the lives of Cypriots that wherever one goes one is bound to hear discussions about it. We asked the women to what degree they felt that the Cyprus problem had obstructed and delayed discussions on women's issues.

	G/C	Maronites	Armenians	T/C
Very much	26.7	43.4	31.6	24.7
A little	37.1	38.6	48.7	34.2
Not at all	36.2	17.9	19.6	41.1

In ethno-national conflicts, the national question supersedes all other issues, be they social, health, legal, cultural, environmental or gender specific. In the political life of the island, the Cyprus conflict has prevailed with the result that other equally important issues have been marginalized or ignored. The answers given by women from all communities vary, but overall most believe that the Cyprus problem obstructed and delayed the promotion and discussion of women's issues to a greater or lesser extent, whereas there is a strong belief, especially among Greek and Turkish Cypriots, that it did not play a role at all, which indicates how unaware women are about the connection between militarism, nationalism and the hegemonic narrative that subordinates other issues.

The role of women in peace building

Can the Cypriot women contribute to building and strengthening relationships between and among communities?

	G/C	Maronites	Armenians	T/C
Yes	83.1	85.2	84.2	90.2
No	16.9	14.8	15.8	9.7

In that women usually think and act relationally when strengthening ties and contacts with others, it was no surprise that the vast majority of them in all communities, almost nine in ten, believed that they could make a huge contribution towards strengthening ties among the communities. They seemed aware that they had the social skills required to work towards peace on the island and that this related to their belief in the value of 'peace' and 'love'. They need to use these skills to build a culture of coexistence and mutual understanding among groups; relationship building and mutual acceptance, which the ideology of *rapprochement* advocate, are necessary prerequisites to implementing any future solution.[23]

Rapprochement

Soon after the tragic events of 1974 and the separation of the two communities into north and south, civil society groups tried to build bridges of contact between groups from each side. The first attempts at *rapprochement* came mainly from the left, but gradually people from a wider ideological spectrum began to participate. The movement reached its peak in the 1990s with thousands of citizens from across the divide trained in conflict-resolution and communication skills. They worked together on a range of issues and projects designed to build shared understanding and to challenge the official Turkish Cypriot discourse that the two communities could not live together.[24]

The underlying principle of *rapprochement* is based on the fact that official diplomacy and third parties alone cannot solve ethno-national problems. Citizens and civil society are equally important to peace because the success of any solution would depend on the cooperation of all citizens.[25] Another principle is that any solution would need to accommodate citizens' basic human needs for identity, security, recognition, participation and a sense of justice, as well as each side's concerns, fears and hopes. This can only happen if there is official recognition of the significance of civil society participation. The last decade has seen an increase in such activities and joint projects. Inter-communal contacts, especially since 23 April 2003, have contributed to the gradual reduction of mistrust and fear of the 'other'.[26] Since a feminist understanding of the other would promote inclusion and difference, we asked the women whether the ideology of *rapprochement*

among all communities was an important factor in reuniting Cyprus. And if yes, it is because it would help (up to two choices):

(1) communication and understanding;
(2) eliminate stereotypes and negative perceptions;
(3) reconciliation between communities;
(4) develop acceptance, tolerance and recognition;
(5) economic development;
(6) the participation of all in decision-making process;
(7) all the above.

	G/C	Maronites	Armenians	T/C
Yes	87.1	94.7	90.5	85.9
No	12.9	5.3	9.5	14.1

As the table shows, the majority of women in all communities supported *rapprochement* as a way of reuniting people on the island; it links up with women's skill in strengthening relationships among the communities. This was a positive and hopeful sign for future relations on the island. The majority of Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Armenian women believed that *rapprochement* would help build 'communication and understanding' between people. In addition, the Armenian women believed that it would help 'eliminate stereotypes and negative perceptions', while the Maronite ones thought that it would 'contribute to the development of acceptance, tolerance and recognition'.

For Turkish Cypriot women, the two most popular choices were 'economic development' and 'participation in decision-making processes'. It was encouraging that the Greek Cypriot women also chose 'all the above', which might show a greater willingness to work with others and build a more tolerant and just society in a cooperative and relational spirit.

We asked them to prioritize the three main problems women faced in their community. The majority in all communities considered the three main problems to be 'inequality between men and women', 'difficulties in professional development' and 'social discrimination and stereotypes'. All relate to patriarchal structures and gender separation. We asked the Cypriot women to name what changes they thought

would make the society more egalitarian and gender conscious: the majority of Turkish Cypriot and Armenian ones wanted 'men to learn to respect them as individuals' and to 'share responsibilities in domestic life', namely in the household and in the children's upbringing. Greek Cypriot women also expressed the wish to see 'men learning to respect women as individuals'. In addition, the majority of Greek Cypriot and Maronite women expressed a wish to see 'broader social and individual changes'. The majority of Maronite women chose a self-reflective way in that 'women should do their own work in changing the perceptions of self and trusting their own abilities', an individual and a collective issue. Thus, the changes they require are both structural and value oriented.

The European Union and women

We contracted this survey at a time when the accession treaty was signed and the harmonization process complete. We asked the women if they knew what accession would mean for them. Only a small minority from all communities knew 'very much' about EU policies on women, while the majority knew either a few things or nothing at all. Information about EU legislation on women was restricted to elite circles and not disseminated to the wider public. Also, the official language used in drafting EU legislation and documents is not easily understood by or accessible to the wider public.

	G/C	T/C	Armenian	Maronite
Very much	12.3	3.8	9.9	14.5
A bit	49.2	52.4	59.3	58.0
Not at all	38.6	43.8	30.9	27.5

Would the accession to the EU mean much to women's status and rights? We asked whether, with the accession of Cyprus to the EU, will gender equality be implemented?

	G/C	T/C	Armenian	Maronite
Yes	52.4	43.9	35.9	54.9
No	8.0	6.6	5.1	13.1
I don't know	39.6	49.6	59.0	32.0

Greek Cypriot and Maronite women in the majority believed that measures should be taken to ensure equality between men and women after accession to the EU. Only a small percentage of women were pessimistic that no policies on gender equality would be implemented, while a significant number did not know. Expectations may be based solely on the public perception that the EU is a just and fair institution.

We finally asked the women to tell us what vision or 'dream' they envisaged for themselves. Most of the interviewees found the question 'strange' because it had never occurred to them that they could create a vision for themselves alone. Their responses focused on the well-being of their family and children and on finding a solution to the Cyprus problem. Only a few women spoke about individual satisfaction and personal development without linking it to family and children. The majority of women defined their pleasure in relation to others.

General observations

Our quantitative research showed that Cypriot women's experiences and views on the range of issues we examined were heterogeneous, thus pointing to the de-essentialization of the category 'women' and situating heterogeneity in different historical, economic and socio-psychological contexts. The women's confusion and contradictory ideas arose from their lack of exposure to different feminist understandings of how a conflict-ridden society in which nationalist, militarist and patriarchal views prevail can shape their choices and exclude them from public spaces. Different needs and beliefs were revealed in discussions about sex, contraceptives and abortion, which until recently had been regarded as taboo. Greek Cypriot and Maronite women take a more conservative stand on the question of abortion than their Armenian and Turkish Cypriot counterparts. On the whole, however, younger people in all the communities are more open about abortion and consider it a woman's personal choice.

While a tension between traditionalism and modernity remains, as for example the tendency for women to adopt caring and humanitarian roles rather than engage in politics and economics, in other areas they challenge traditional norms and social pressures. These include the right to personal choice on issues like divorce and the importance of peace and love in promoting their agency in

rapprochement and relationship-building with others, thus challenging bicommunalism.

In general, Cypriot women's knowledge about the root causes of the conflict and views about a solution derive from male-dominated narratives. They have not yet articulated their own vision of a different Cyprus or been exposed to alternative perspectives. Nevertheless, Cypriot women, especially younger ones with high educational and professional aspirations, struggle to shake off and challenge their traditional roles. The majority felt that the 'national problem' had not only impeded the acquisition of women's rights, but also that their own silence had contributed to the suspension of the women's project. They all acknowledged their role in building good and trusting relationships among all communities. They thus strongly supported *rapprochement* and felt that women had an important part to play in finding a solution to the Cyprus conflict.

Chapter 5

The Self and Other: Discrimination, Domination and Hegemony

> Children could be dependent from the outset on people of both genders and establish an individuated self in relation to both. In this way, masculinity would not become tied to denial of dependency and devaluation of women. Feminine personality would be less preoccupied with the individuation, and children would not develop fears of maternal omnipotence and expectations of women's unique self-sacrificing qualities. This would reduce men's needs to guard their masculinity and their control of social and cultural sphere which treat and define women as secondary and powerless, and would help women to develop the autonomy which too much embeddedness in [a] relationship has often taken from them.
>
> (Chodorow, 1978, p. 218)[1]

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, in our research we used focus-group discussion as a tool with which to explore, understand and interpret women's thoughts, perceptions, positions and opinions on issues that concern individuals. In using this approach we wanted to highlight each community's legitimacy and promote the politics of appreciation of each other's commonalities and differences on specific issues. The focus groups were composed of a heterogeneous group of individuals from different socio-economic, class, age and ethnic backgrounds and a facilitator who, using loosely structured guidelines, leads the dialogue. Its advantage rests on the interactive dynamic of the group and on a

projective technique that allows participants to express themselves freely.

Cypriot women in all the focus groups felt that social pressure limited their self autonomy and that they had to struggle for individual choice. The married ones felt that the role of 'motherhood' weighed heavily on them. Many of them only became aware of this because of the inner void they felt when their children grew up and left home. They had sole responsibility for their children, 'maternal omnipotence', while the father did not feature in the life of the household. This absence leads to what Chodorow above calls a 'devaluation of women' and to constructions of masculinity and femininity that are detrimental to children and parents alike. Single mothers were not only overwhelmed with responsibility but also faced economic hardship.

The topics of discussion used in the focus group interviews were not covered in-depth in the questionnaire survey. In particular we raised questions regarding:

- Women's location and sense of self;
- Gender discrimination and prejudices;
- Issues of violence against women;
- The role of religion and the Church;
- The role of education in reproducing the dominant culture;
- Awareness of the European Union's gender policies;
- Conflict and its solution; and
- Relations with women from the other communities.

Focus group interviews were held in September 2003. Four of the groups – the Greek Cypriot, Maronite, Armenian and Latin – were held in the south, while the Turkish Cypriot one was held in the north. Each group contained eight to ten women of different ages and from different socio-economic backgrounds. We transcribed the data and elicited broad categories of themes as these emerged. Because the narratives focused on the women's actual life stories, they reflected their sense of self and of the other, their sense of belonging, their attachments, political engagement and inner dilemmas. A divided society is 'dysfunctional' and as such it has an impact on a community's relationships.

Self, others and 'mothering'

It is often difficult in a Mediterranean culture to get women to talk about themselves, to tell their story and to reflect on who they are, what they want and what they have achieved. This is because we tend to stress the community and communal identity more than the individual; the individual belongs to the group. This is also attributable to gender socialization: women are not expected to speak much about themselves; if they do they are judged egotistical or even showing off, whereas when men do they are socially admired. Also, women are socialized to listen rather than speak, and to focus on caring and serving the needs of the other or others (father, brothers, husbands, children, parents, community and nation), putting aside their own needs and self development as autonomous beings. One of the women from the Latin Cypriot community expressed this as follows:

> To talk about yourself is very difficult because it sounds as if you are very arrogant to do so. In general, in Poland we say that whoever is taking pride in one's self is worth[y] of disregard. We were brought up to say only a few words because all about yourself sounds insignificant.

First we observed that this woman used the 'you' second person and not the 'I' as a subject to express her own view. I frequently hear this from female students who are reluctant to wish things for themselves and would instead say 'I wish good things for the whole world and my family!' Most of the women in the Latin group were reluctant to talk about themselves, but with encouragement and when I pointed out the significance of the personal story to learning and producing knowledge, they became more at ease. We met the same resistance in the Maronite group, but it was easier to handle. The Armenian and Greek groups were more willing to talk about themselves. The Turkish Cypriot women spoke about the self in relation to the other and the social system, thus stressing the self as embodied in the community. The participants needed to build up trust to reveal emotions and painful experiences. One young working mother had to deal with her inner dilemmas before she could engage in something that was pleasing and self-actualizing. Her husband was

not supportive, which is a feature of gender relations in Cyprus, but she did not expect him to help so had to negotiate other ways. New opportunities for women arose after the 1974 war when thousands were displaced and the economic calamity impacted on everybody. In the post-1974 period many women moved into the public sphere, like Ayse who experienced different oppressions but nonetheless decided to take control of her desires and goals:

> When I talk specifically about myself it was firstly me who felt uncomfortable as if I were doing something inappropriate. Afterwards I questioned myself, why did I do that, why did I go there, did I have to do it? Our parents had a quiet life going from home to work and back. … But with the changes in our community life after 1974 I thought to get involved in the trade union movement and raise women's issues. I had to leave my two-month-old baby at home with someone else in order to attend the meetings. I felt guilty at first, but as time went by I decided it was the right thing to do for me. Since then every step I have taken has brought me personal fulfilment. If I don't do it nobody will do it for me.[2]

Some of the women adopted a reflective style of questioning their identity location. Ayse acknowledged her inner dilemma of wanting to be an active citizen and a caring mother. In a patriarchal society men do not experience this double bind. Since the system did not provide childcare facilities she created her own possibility. Her desire to become an active trade union member promoted her view of the self in relation to the social basis of selfhood, something that does not come easily.[3] She is also aware of inter-generational changes and is determined to make her own way, though she had to overcome guilt and uneasiness. Social pressures and hegemonic narratives are often difficult to ignore.

> As a woman what do I want to achieve, what is my aim? I often ask myself. I believe that our situation and position is determined by the way we were brought up, by the outside influence, the formal education and training. Despite it all those

> of us who are more privileged than others make their own intervention in shaping who we are. This all depends on your will and determination but also opportunities to do so.
>
> (Ayla, aged 23)

Ayla's insight and awareness of her privileged position were expressed by other educated women who, being born after 1974, had not experienced the baggage of the conflict. She is aware that social class and opportunities determine the development of selfhood. Thus, working in this difficult space of questioning one's own ideas and practices develops possibilities for new social identities, thus challenging the hegemonic Cypriot culture and gender socializing practices.

Most older Greek Cypriot married women focused their pleasure on their children and the gratification they derived from being 'good, sacrificial mothers'. Some of these women regretted having adopted 'maternal omnipotence' and the self-sacrificing qualities that demanded too long working hours and neglect of their own needs. As Despo reflected after many years of 'giving and caring', she regretted abandoning her self for the sole sake of her children:

> When my children were small I stayed at home until noon and then left for the factory. But I never neglected taking my children to private lessons and both of them are now university graduates. Every day I had to drive them home, go to work, be with them to do their homework and watched that they did not waste time playing. I am proud of them. But my biggest regret is that I was working 18 hours a day and had no time left for me. I had no time for my personal life; I always had to steal time.
>
> (Despo, aged 58)

Social pressure is especially keenly felt when a woman chooses to assert herself and act beyond the socially prescribed norms. A young Turkish Cypriot woman described a 'bitter experience' when she decided that she would go abroad for her university studies. Relatives and neighbours came to her family's home to try to persuade her mother not to let her go abroad because she would regret it in her old age. This young woman mounts a critique of both the system and the

way parents view their children as 'investments' for their old age, as if they owned them. Despite it all, Mine left because she wanted to be educated and break the gender norms which she knows are deeply ingrained in the system. As she recalled:

> A neighbour came up to my mum and said, 'you are making a mistake here. You should have kept her with you, you know she is the youngest kid and she has to stay with you to look after you, don't send her away.' I now think that it was normal for her to say this. This is the way they look at their kids, we become their long-term investment. They use love as an excuse. They need to possess the person they love. There is a sequence in what we should do as women: we go to school, then get married, have kids, get them married and so on. If you don't behave how the community wants you [to], then the pressures start.

Another Turkish Cypriot, a university graduate expressed her experience of social pressure and her sense of being watched and controlled by this patriarchal system as follows: 'You cannot live on your own, there is a greater power over you, out there and you have to stay within the prescribed circle, otherwise people will laugh at you.'

Even when women return from abroad after finishing their university studies and decide to have a life of their own, both the family and community start to put pressure on them to comply with the traditional expectation to get married and have a family. They rarely value their other achievements and abilities as women. Thus, biology and reproduction function as indicators of a woman's success. Women who challenge this culture are often marginalized or viewed as social failures because their desire to build their autonomy as individuals and live the way they choose challenges the hegemonic system. Interestingly, it is mostly mothers who disapprove of their daughters' choices, which fits in with the feminist observation that women are the ones expected to reproduce and safeguard the traditions, national values and overall system as defined by the male national project. Since being a woman first and foremost implies being a wife and mother, women's bodies represent the continuation of a tradition and nation. A

Turkish Cypriot participant described her experience when she showed 'disrespect' for social taboos and expectations and the cost such a choice entailed:

> When I came back to Cyprus, after I finished my studies abroad, I decided not to marry against my mum's wishes. I started work, got my economic independence and decided to stay single. This was something my mum could never understand. Whenever she gets together with her friends, that is all she can talk about. I do have many other positive features, can't they talk about them? Instead of looking at my life and seeing that I am happy the way I am, she becomes critical of the way I act and have chosen to live. She is disappointed because I stand outside the socially expected roles for a Cypriot woman.

Another view expressed, which relates to the previous one, is that women themselves often undermine their own strengths and abilities, which can lead to self-oppression. Some become so overwhelmed with caring for others that in the end they give up trying to change anything to do with their own priorities, even although they might know that they have the power to do so. Most of the married women were silent about their husbands' failure to assume family and household responsibilities, thus unconsciously they reproduce the very system that oppresses them. A Greek Cypriot high school teacher in her fifties stated it as follows: 'We, as women have a lot of power and talents but we do not really utilize them. This is because we get so tired with all the responsibilities that we end up by saying "let the other do it".'

In a male-dominated world, some women consciously adopt male styles of behaviour and traits they believe will help them survive and succeed as women and professionals. For instance, a Greek Cypriot business woman described the 'system out there' as so competitive and aggressive that her values as a woman did not fit and ended up reinforcing the very system she criticized:

> I have learnt to be in control; otherwise I will not be able to survive, that is to dominate others irrespective of gender. I was once gentle, romantic and soft. I was also sensitive to the needs

> of others. I have been taken advantage of so many times, so I learnt to be aggressive and to demand my rights in such a male way [that] my friends do not recognize me. The competition out there is so cruel.

There are male characteristics and female characteristics, but in a male-dominated world women's qualities are unappreciated and male traits define success. As a young 25-year-old Greek Cypriot said: 'the women of Cyprus today create problems for themselves. We create a certain frame for ourselves and we live in stress. Successful women today do not enjoy the comfort of successful men and yet it is these women who experienced the revolution' – in other words, get more education and build a career. However, more education has not been associated with individual development and self-autonomy. Feminisms do not advocate that women become like men and adopt male models, but that they promote respect for difference and the autonomy of women as citizens.

What we have observed, in general, is that women in Cyprus are still struggling to establish space for individual autonomy and, as citizens, to feel free to choose and keep their femininity the way they understand it. Women and men are still expected to comply with their assigned traditional roles, which makes it difficult for them to seek personal gratification outside those roles. The younger generation seemed to be more liberated and critical than their mothers. Those who make different choices and assert their rights often experience loneliness, social criticism and marginalization, yet they still dare.

Discrimination and prejudices

A concerted effort has been made to raise public awareness in an attempt to combat the increase in racism, xenophobia and prejudice. No society is homogeneous, globalization and migration have rendered them all multiethnic and multicultural, and to combat discrimination it is necessary to address the issues of human rights, democracy and representation. There are numerous instances of racism in the new enlarged Europe and Cyprus is no exception. According to a study published in the 1990s,[4] the then 184 independent nation-states were home to more than 600 living language

groups and cultures. Various steps are taken at international and national levels to address this issue.

Discrimination against minorities is manifested in different ways and usually on grounds of gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, class, race or age. How do prejudices and stereotypes arise? According to Fiske,[5] power imbalances and rigid hierarchies create a tendency to revert to stereotypes. In a work situation, for example, the boss exercises considerably more power and control than the employees. Women and minorities are often in positions of low power relative to men or the dominant group. Prejudice is one of the most destructive aspects of human behaviour and can often lead to acts of violence. The classification of social groups into 'us' and 'them' – into in-group and out-group dichotomies in which negative characteristics, attitudes and behaviours are attributed to members of the out-group – create a culture of polarization and a tendency to homogenize communities or even whole nations.

Inter-group antagonisms contain three interrelated but distinguishable elements: first, stereotypes are defined as cognitive beliefs about the typical characteristics of group members; second, prejudice is affective, which means it exhibits negative feelings toward a target group; and third, discrimination is behavioural, in other words it disadvantages individuals simply because of their group membership. Gender stereotypes refer to beliefs about the personal attributes of females and males, thus essentializing masculinity and femininity.[6]

According to contact theory,[7] lack of knowledge and information about other people causes prejudice, fear and hatred of the other. Creating conditions under which groups can meet and get to know each other as human beings, engage in dialogue and generate new information, helps break down negative stereotyping and prejudices. But these changes, if they are to be lasting, need institutional support, acquaintance potential, a cooperative atmosphere and equal status.

Gender discrimination

Gender stereotypes exaggerate differences between groups and minimize differences within groups. For instance, they assume that women are all alike when in fact there are huge individual and group differences among them (age, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality) and

the same applies to men as a social category. In our focus group discussions, gender discrimination was more evident and intense in the experiences of Greek- and Turkish Cypriot women, whereas other forms of discrimination, as at the workplace and in the community, were more intensely felt in the Maronite and Armenian groups. Greek Cypriot women emphasized degradation, sex-role stereotyping, and cheap and sexualized images of women being promoted through the media, school textbooks and in the broader environment. And, as the women said, such phenomena are forms of violence.

In addition, women who experienced sexual harassment at the workplace said the support system was usually very weak. Power asymmetry was often felt as a factor. Women were afraid to report such incidents for fear of either losing their jobs or not being taken seriously. One Greek Cypriot participant had been sexually harassed by her supervisor and, because she did not give in, he made life unbearable for her at the workplace. She was eventually forced to resign because he showed no respect. A colleague of hers who in fact gave in to his demands out of fear, in the end lost her job. A Turkish Cypriot participant who worked for a company gave a similar example of such discrimination:

> When I go to a customer I get the feeling they don't respect me because I am a woman. They dismiss me and ask for a male colleague. Will this change when we enter the European Union and, if so, how long would this take, I wonder? When I go somewhere, I don't want to be judged according to how I look or the way I dress, I want equal respect.

Biological differences are often turned into social marginalization of women, to lack of professional trust and therefore exclusion. This mentality takes us back to the division of men's and women's professions.

On this issue, a Greek Cypriot woman experienced a sense of exploitation at the workplace both as a woman and a mother. 'The employer does not respect the time schedule and expects me to devote more hours at work disregarding the fact that I am also a mother and others are dependant on me, especially since I am a single mother.'

Some participants experienced discrimination from other women, which not only shows a lack of female solidarity but is also an abuse of power. For instance, when female school inspectors are asked to evaluate the work of other women, in their efforts to exercise and maintain their own power and status, they can be overtly strict, domineering and unfair. Younger, better-educated female teachers in lower positions said that their less well-educated supervisor used the authority of her position to create an unhealthy atmosphere that was not conducive to learning and professional development. In fact, these women felt that their female supervisor was worse than the male one. In fact, many women in our focus groups complained that they did not experience solidarity and support from other women. This is not surprising given the sorts of values a male-dominated system promotes and the amount of female competition there is for the few high positions. When women get there they adopt male values, so the system remains intact and the feminist project is not promoted. This can only change when women in power develop a gender consciousness and introduce a feminist understanding of power. The absence of alternative models of socialization and organization of our lives is of concern to feminists.

Turkish Cypriot participants experienced control, domination and gender discrimination from their mothers. More specifically, a mother firmly stated that:

> I wouldn't be very happy with my daughter going out with men because the neighbours will start talking about her as a loose woman. I might trust my daughter but I don't like people talking about her, you know, if she goes out with different men, then no one will marry her … you have to play by society's rules.

This mother would not have felt the same if her son had dated many women because that is not only socially acceptable but also commendable. Women, as Anthias reminded us, reproduce both the nationalist and patriarchal systems in conflict societies.

Discrimination, however, is not limited to the experiences of women; as some Greek Cypriot women have observed, women can oppress men in the workplace, especially when men are the minority

among women in professions that are classified as 'female', such as primary school teachers, nurses and secretaries. So, not everybody is equally oppressed, but taking on somebody else's oppression is not about which to feel proud.[8] Individual experiences vary, even among those from the same ethnic background, which could explain why many Greek Cypriot women were denied the support and solidarity of other women when they were harassed. For this to happen they have to build a consciousness of 'sisterhood and solidarity' as women while acknowledging diversity of experiences.

Community discrimination

Discrimination and prejudice, which are equally prevalent at the community level, are often expressed in a context of power asymmetry and feelings of superiority and inferiority. Often the dominant group feels superior and does not show interest in learning about minority cultures. It assumes it knows what is fair and best for less powerful groups, which in turn often internalize their lower status as if it were the 'natural state' of affairs.[9] To question these status discrepancies, both groups would need to raise their social awareness and confront each other openly. This would lead to an acknowledgement of interdependence and admission that each can learn from the other.[10]

Maronite women, whose community is small and who struggle for their cultural and social survival, encountered more discrimination than others in their social interactions with the dominant group. In general, they thought that Greek Cypriots enjoyed a higher standard of living and were better educated than they were. In addition, they felt that Armenians had a historical advantage over them in that they and the Greek Cypriots shared a common enemy in the Turks. They also thought that others perceived them as 'peasants' because their community engaged in agriculture and farming, had little education and spoke a strange language, which characterized them as 'not so civilized'.

On the issue of historical advantage, the Armenians responded by pointing out that because of the genocide against their nation they had suffered more than others during the 1963–64 intercommunal crisis, and later in the 1974 Turkish intervention. They felt they were victimized and caught in the middle of the Greek-Turkish dispute over Cyprus and suffered more than the others. Some tried to forget it and

move on. Forgetting was a strategy. One participant in the group told us:

> Many of us lost our homes and properties in the northern part of Nicosia in 1964. We had beautiful houses, churches and schools there. We lived in the Armenian neighbourhoods in northern Nicosia and were quite wealthy before the troubles began between Greeks and Turks and we had to abandon all this. The Turks in 1974 expelled us again and from Famagusta and put us in a church and in a factory. We feared about our lives. We stayed there for four days. After that we came to the Greek sector. This experience hurts us a lot and we try to avoid talking about it.

Maronite women also spoke about the disastrous effects of the 1974 war on the cohesion of their community; apart from the few hundred who managed to stay on at Kormakitis village, they were displaced from their other three Maronite villages and repeatedly expressed their concern about the shrinking of their community and loss of their separate sense of identity. They criticized their own leaders for making too little effort to preserve and promote their culture and language. Some young Maronites feared that 'the condition of our community today is such that we are heading towards its disappearance. But why? This is due to the fact that nobody taught us who we are. And as a community we lack good organization. The efforts made by our leadership have been inadequate.'

War destroys families and livelihoods and sharpens gender divisions. Another consequence of the 1974 war was what became known as 'the enclaved persons'. About 20,000 Greek Cypriots, mainly in the Karpass region, and a few hundred Maronites in Kormakitis refused to abandon their homes and property. For them the south was a 'foreign place' (*xenos topos*) and, even though their basic human rights were being violated, they preferred to stay where they were. Over the years, however, thousands were forced to relocate to the south to find work, a proper education for their children, health care and freedom of movement. Today only a few hundred Greek Cypriots remain in Rizokarpasso village and, with the crossings now open, their relatives

can visit them often. Many 'settlers' have learnt to coexist with Turkish Cypriots. Prior to the opening of the crossing points, the Turkish military authorities only allowed relatives of the Maronite 'enclaved' to visit and even then, it was with much difficulty. According to one Maronite woman, many Greek Cypriots interpreted that so-called 'privilege' as: 'you (Maronites) don't encounter a problem to go and come in both sides. As if telling us or implying that we are not patriotic enough, as if, in their view, we had a certain give and take with the enemy. This hurt us.' Both sides felt victimized and the suspicions that arose often weakened solidarity and mutual understanding.

Some Maronite women complained that whenever the Cyprus government spoke of the 'enclaved' people it meant only Greek Cypriots and made no reference to 'enclaved' Maronites. These women were asking for empathy and recognition of their grievance. Turkish Cypriot women were aware of the presence of Maronites in the north and empathized with them because the forced partition had separated them from their families.

Some of the older Maronite women recalled the traumatic experience of being perceived as 'non-Christian'. One Maronite participant, now in her late fifties, remembered such an experience vividly:

> When I was 18 I had an operation at the Nicosia General hospital and in the same ward there was a woman from another village who was operated, too. One day my mother came to see me and told me that she would not come the next day because of Easter preparations. When the Greek Cypriot patient heard this she remarked that Easter was in two weeks' time. My mother told her that we are Maronites and that we celebrate Easter earlier than the Greek Orthodox this year. The Greek lady then turned to me in great surprise and said, 'so you are a Maronite? It is a shame such a good girl like you [has] to be a Maronite!' How would you feel if this was told to you? She befriended me for three days and as soon as she heard that I am a Maronite she changed her attitude and rejected me.

Other Maronite women said that they may work alongside their colleagues for years without them knowing that they were Maronites.

But when the issue of one's religion and identity come up in conversation, their Greek Orthodox colleagues show disappointment when they tell them they are Maronites:

> The stereotypical saying is 'you don't look it'. The word Maronite sounds as if we came from the outer space, something strange. You talk with them [Greek Cypriots] they see no difference, and sometimes they may even admire us, but when we reveal that we are Maronites their comment is 'really, I can't believe it'.

Covert racism and prejudice derive from ignorance and because the dominant community fails to legitimate difference.

At the workplace Maronite women notice a difference between working in the private and public sectors. In the private sector what matters are efficiency and profit and not one's ethnic origin. In the public sector, a person's ethnic and religious background seemed to matter when promotions were to be decided. Because of such discriminatory practices, Maronites tend to hide their Maronite identity even in mixed marriages. They are fearful of how they will be perceived and adopt this as a protective mechanism. Difference is seen, not as richness but as a threat in conflict situations. Some try hard to assimilate and hide any differences in public. Lenia, married to a Greek Cypriot recalled: 'Being different is perceived as being inferior or vulnerable to discrimination. For instance, children from mixed marriages do not reveal that their grandparents are Maronite. We adopt this as a self-protection mechanism.'

In other cases, however, young mothers try to instil in their children a sense of pride in being Maronite and talk to them about their villages in the north, their history and about what life was like before displacement. A new generation has been born in the south to parents and grandparents who lived in the north. Since 2003, when the crossings to and from the north began, this effort has been regaining ground. It is their attempt to reclaim their identity and value their difference.

Some Latin women have also experienced communal discrimination and one described her experience at the workplace. She was looked upon as a non-Greek speaker, even though she had graduated from a

Greek secondary school and had excelled in her lessons in both Greek and Latin. Despite repeated applications for promotion, she was eventually forced to resign rather than receive another rejection letter. She believed that her gender and religious background had influenced the promotion committee's decision.

The Armenian participants described discriminatory practices against their community as a whole and particularly emphasized the degree of ignorance people from other communities exhibited towards them. For instance, one deeply offended participant explained how the majority of Greek Cypriots could not tell the difference between the Armenian and Turkish languages:

> Something I do mind is when we talk with each other in Armenian and they [Greek Cypriots] listen to us and ask whether the language we speak is Turkish. They do not bother to understand the difference. We have been here for centuries and I believe they ought to know by now who we are and what language we speak.

Ignorance and indifference as well as lack of contact cause such misunderstandings and both sides share responsibility for it. The Armenian leadership can make more effort to inform other Cypriot communities about their history and culture and the government must provide the Armenians with the means and resources to do so.

Like the Maronites, Armenian women expressed concern about the cultural survival of their community. The younger participants in particular mentioned that their parents not only encourage them to marry an Armenian but expect them to do so: 'Yes, my parents want me to get married to an Armenian. I have been hearing this since I was a little girl and I know inside me that I will marry an Armenian. I do not blame them because we are a small community and need to survive.' Some felt concerned that sending their children to Greek or English schools in an attempt to integrate them into the society, as well as the changes their language is currently undergoing, may lead to their community's extinction. Therefore, 'one way to save our community is through marriage within the community.' The younger generation feels responsible for retaining the future cohesion of the

community. This could, however, be seen as another form of social oppression from within channelled as a 'communal duty'.

However, despite discriminatory practices, Armenian women do experience positive feelings and even positive discrimination. One participant said: 'I have not experienced any discrimination at the workplace. I have worked in a lot of enterprises and I have observed that managers prefer Armenian employees and I must admit I was surprised. They say that Armenians are more hard-working and are more to be trusted than others.'

The participants seemed satisfied with the amount of financial support the government gave their community. More specifically, they spoke of the state's support for infrastructure: 'We are proud that the Cyprus government has donated money to build our school. Our children go to school for free, and our priests receive their pensions.'

It became apparent in the focus groups that the smaller communities on the island have experienced personal and community discrimination. Specifically, the Maronites' main concern was the survival and unity of their community. Armenians were concerned about other communities' ignorance of their history, values and culture. In the words of one young Armenian participant: 'I am considered somehow different, somehow strange because of my culture. … But our experiences and our concerns are shared since we all live in a conflict society. I believe there is no reason for discrimination. We all share Cypriotness.' Would this overarching political identity unite all the women around common issues?

Violence within relationships

In the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, characterized by the radical position that the 'personal is political', issues of domestic violence, women's reproductive rights and women's ownership of their bodies were publicly discussed. These feminists argued that power inequalities, which are rooted not in individual characteristics but in social structures and the values that sustain them, shape the personal and private lives of women. In other words, individual problems often have systemic causes and many so-called personal decisions over issues of sexuality, appearance, consumption and family life also have political implications.[11]

In recent decades violence against women has been related to human rights and put on the international agenda: 'every woman has the right to be free from violence in both the public and the private sphere.'[12] The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) contains a whole section on 'violence against women', which consists of any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. A manifestation of this is physical, sexual or psychological violence in the family, including battering and rape.

In 2006 the Greek Cypriot parliament passed a law making any act of violence against women illegal, including sexual harassment at the workplace. Women need to be informed about these laws and become aware of their right to stop abuse and mistreatment, which can inflict serious harm on them. Domestic violence is on the increase in Cyprus as in many other conflict-ridden societies.

During our focus groups discussion it was primarily the Greek Cypriot participants who raised the issue of violence in the family and in interpersonal relationships. They spoke openly and sincerely about abusive relationships with their husbands, feelings of humiliation, psychological abuse and lack of communication. Such dysfunctional relationships lead either to estrangement in the relationship and total alienation, or to the woman leaving home and suing for divorce. Others, due to social pressure, are forced to stay in a meaningless relationship.

Women, as I mentioned earlier, tend to invest a lot in the upbringing and needs of their children and family as a whole. After the children grow up and leave home, the mother would naturally turn for support to her partner to renew their relationship, and to avoid loneliness or even depression. The husband's response was usually indifference. One high school Greek Cypriot teacher who was suffering from depression, confessed:

> When my children left, I thought I would go into depression. Who should I turn to, but my partner? I told him my problem and asked him to come home earlier, to change his schedule of going out with his male friends after work and to renew our social life, to nurture our relationship. I was also going through

> my menopause and this made it more difficult to deal with my emotions. He did not respond to any of my needs and I felt so lonely.

A Greek Cypriot woman revealed that she may have been married to the same man for many years but did not feel that she knew him, his feelings and thoughts, or how he would behave at a given moment. She described the quality of her relationship as non-existent. One explanation she gave, which sounded like self-blame, was that she had wanted to have a family so badly that they started having children right away and all her energy and personal investment was channelled into that and, since her husband did not help, she was forced to neglect her relationship with him.

Another Greek Cypriot participant admitted that she had problems with her relationship because her children's needs overwhelmed her and she was unable to set any boundaries. This resulted in a break-down of communication and she ended up leaving the house for a while. Some years later she reflected: 'We need to look at our problems and solve them, otherwise they become a habit in our lives and we are taken for granted. I had a lot of support from my family, my friends but none from my husband.' This sharp divide between domestic and public leads to psychological abuse, exclusion, self-blame and guilt. Wives continue to work and take care of the house but when decisions are made it is the husband's opinion that counts.

Another serious issue many women faced was their husband's infidelity, a frequent social problem across the dividing line in the last decade or so. The Greek Cypriot participants said that even when they confronted their husbands with evidence of their infidelity, they not only denied it but also responded with: 'you are a fool; you are crazy, ready to be admitted to the psychiatric hospital.' Such abuse led women to doubt their self worth and state of mind; they could even be induced with a sense of guilt and made to feel as if it were their fault. In an environment like this, women developed physical and psychological problems like sleeplessness, migraines, stomach aches, dizziness and depression.

In the Turkish Cypriot group, one issue that was raised with regard to domestic violence was the father–daughter relationship. This can be

attributed in part to economic dependency and to patriarchal structures. One woman explained:

> Young women are still fearful of their fathers; it is a phenomenon that still goes on in our families. That's the bitter truth. I believe it is because of economic dependency … because of the bad economic situation in the north; fathers' control continues unfortunately. It is connected to the traditional role the family bestows [on] a girl, which is far from valuing her autonomy and selfhood.

The Latin participants believed that women's economic independence had changed their position in the family and community. They also believed that it was much easier for women to get a divorce now than it was years ago. The department of statistics in the Republic of Cyprus confirms that over a period of almost 20 years the number of divorced women increased from 0.6 per cent in 1982 to 2.8 per cent in 2001.

Role of religion: the Church as a cohesive force?

Religion is supposed to promote love, inter-faith dialogue, tolerance and reconciliation. It is supposed to play a positive role in eliminating social divisions, interethnic enmity, racial discrimination and social injustice. The Greek Orthodox Church has not played this role in the Greek Cypriot community. In fact it has instigated hatred against the Turks, whom it calls 'infidels'. In the life of minorities the church can act as a cohesive social and cultural force. For instance, members of the Latin community go to church frequently and the church is a place for them to meet each other and socialize. Some even continue to attend the Catholic Church despite being married to a Greek Orthodox and having baptized their children into that Church. One Armenian woman, however, said that Armenians were discriminated against because of their different religious beliefs and she described a conversation with a Greek Orthodox priest who, to her surprise, referred to Armenians as 'heretics'.

Another Armenian woman spoke of her experience when her best friend, a Greek Orthodox, asked her to baptize her child. The Greek

Orthodox Church refused because she was Christian but not Orthodox; by contrast, the Armenian Church posed no obstacles. To these women this was an act of discrimination but their deep friendship continued and she was honoured as the godmother despite the formal disapproval of the Church.

Young Maronites had similar experiences in Greek Cypriot schools where 'morning prayer' is still mandatory despite the multicultural school population. The teacher would ask the pupils to stand and pray right before starting the lesson. 'And I would begin to cross myself and the teacher would order me to get out of class because he thought I was mocking him. And the man was supposed to be teaching religious tolerance and love. He was a religious instructor.'

In recent years, in an attempt to preserve their cultural characteristics and pass them on to their children, young Maronite women have shown more interest and have become more active in their community's affairs and life. The church is viewed as one of the most cohesive factors in their community's life. 'I believe if my parents were not so closely connected to the community and the church I would have lost touch with the community. I am now trying as much as I can to pass this on to my children.' Here again we see mothers assuming the role of cultural transmitters. Despite religion being acknowledged as a defining characteristic of Maronite identity, many felt that they did not wish to be designated as a religious community but as a minority, and they planned to pursue this right.

The role of education in reproducing the dominant culture

Education is the institution that promotes and reproduces the official ideology, national identity, values and dominant culture. A considerable amount of research today focuses on the role it can play in conflict reduction, non-violence and problem solving. Peace education programmes are promoted in conflict-ridden societies, which, among other things, means teaching students how societies create hierarchies that privilege the experience, culture and humanity of some and devalue those of others.[13] The Council of Europe, the international community and several NGOs have looked into the question of the need for history textbooks to introduce the other and its relationship to the national self as a complex phenomenon.[14]

Greek Cypriot history textbooks, for instance, deal with the Hellenic presence on the island in great detail from ancient times to the present, whereas, in a show of ideological hegemony and ethnocentrism, they hardly mention or completely ignore the histories of the other communities.[15] Needless to say, male authors wrote most of these books from a male understanding of history and were quite blind to women's contribution and experiences. Now that Cyprus is a member of the European Union, the challenge is how to educate the Cypriot citizens of tomorrow to form a democratic, pluralistic, multicultural society in which people will no longer be forced to choose between parts of their identity. The new Greek Cypriot minister of education has initiated a series of measures both to teach the island's most recent history from each different perspective and to cultivate a reconciliatory ethic among the different communities for the academic year 2008/9. Turkish Cypriot education has already moved from a Turco-centric position to a 'cypro-centric' perspective and has removed all references of hate against the Greek Cypriots.[16]

Both Maronites and Armenians strongly criticized the lack of any reference in the mainstream textbooks to their communities' presence on the island, history or culture. Greek Cypriots also mentioned that they had learnt nothing about the other communities and their contribution to social and economic life in Cyprus. No questions have been raised on the gender dimension.

The Armenian women were very clear in their opinion that since all communities coexist on the island they are all considered equal citizens and there must be extended reference in the form of whole chapters dedicated to the history of all the communities: 'Since we coexist, it is better for all Cypriots to know more about the Armenian community.' They all stressed that the lack of information in the school textbooks perpetuated Greek Cypriot hegemony. Discriminatory practices and behaviour begin at an early age and are in part attributable to the education system:

> Discrimination results from lack of information at school and it becomes much more difficult to try and promote certain awareness after a certain age. Hence, intercultural education must take place at an early age. We do not demand a great deal,

> we simply ask for more awareness and more time devoted to information about our community.

Many Armenian parents choose to send their children to Armenian schools to ensure that, in addition to learning the Greek language and about Greek culture, they are educated in their own culture. Other Armenian families send their children to private English schools in an effort to help them interact with students from the other communities. They believe that this would ensure that their children did not feel isolated from the dominant community and would find employment more easily later on.

Maronite women similarly complained about the lack of information about their community and, in particular, emphasized experiencing discrimination in the school environment. One participant vividly recounted an occasion when a female high school student excelled in her exams, which according to the school regulations entitled her to carry the Greek flag in the national day parade on 28 October, which is designated a Greek national day, not a Cypriot one. The headmistress denied her the right saying, 'How could a young Maronite girl carry the Greek flag? So she did not.' Another participant recollected from her high school years an incident she never forgot:

> I was very amazed when I was a student to see some female students from our community being prevented from going to the annual educational trip to Greece. My sister happened to be a good student in the fifth class of the gymnasium but our headmistress said that a Maronite student cannot go because she would take the position of a Greek Cypriot student and so deprive this student from going to her 'motherland'. This was an act of racism and discrimination. I wonder if this could happen today being in the EU.

Although these incidents occurred some years ago, discrimination still exists in the Greek Cypriot classroom, especially against the new group of pupils from mixed marriages or children of migrant workers. A Maronite mother felt frustrated and angry when her son's teacher challenged him for having crossed himself during morning prayers at

his elementary school. He told the teacher that it was because he was a Maronite, but when another child asked what a Maronite was, the teacher replied 'A Maronite is an atheist!' In response to that, her son unbuttoned his shirt and showed the cross he was wearing, and exclaimed 'Who is the atheist?' The teacher then had the opportunity to inform the pupils that Maronites too were Christians.

The Ministry of Education and Culture bears a lot of responsibility for such incidents. These women believe that, where there are minorities, whether Maronites, Armenians or others, the state and its educational institutions have a duty to ensure that teachers are informed about these issues by offering them special training seminars on how to deal with 'otherness'. A typical example of such exclusionary and racist practice was described by another Maronite mother:

> In an elementary school class with children from the Black Sea, the Greek Pontiacs, it was noticed that the other children were not playing with them. The Greek headmistress gathered all the children in the school yard and told them 'Children, *oi Pontioi* (these Pontiacs) are our brothers and sisters; they are not Turks, they are not Maronites, they are like us.'

They also stressed that from kindergarten onwards Maronite children are taught about the Greek flag, motherland Greece and the occupied Pentadactylos range. 'My child is now at the kindergarten and knows that we have to struggle to liberate the occupied land,' implying that her child's identity is being constructed only in relation to the dominant group's nationalist educational objectives.

An issue about which all Maronite women in the group wanted to speak was the new Maronite school established in Nicosia in 2002. They all stressed its significance in contributing to the cultural survival of their community. Previously, their children were exposed to the Maronite faith at the Sunday school they attended once a week until the age of eight when they received their first communion. The call for a Maronite school came soon after the 1974 displacement and, while Maronite representatives repeatedly raised the issue, it did not happen until recently because it was European Union policy to promote the rights of all minorities. The availability of funds was another factor.

This school now complements the church as the nucleus of the community. The school has 113 students and its curriculum is the same as in Greek Cypriot schools with the important difference that 'the children here are taught more about their community's history, religion and culture.' Although many mothers felt proud to enrol their children in the Maronite school, believing that it would strengthen that part of their identity, others were concerned about sending their children to that school in case they felt isolated from the rest of the society. Also, with a lot of village children attending the school, a number of parents worried that its educational standards might be too low. One mother expressed it as follows:

> I was basically raised in Nicosia and went to a Greek gymnasium. I was debating within myself whether now that I have been established in the Greek community would I be doing the right thing to enrol my kids to this new school? I had my doubts. But in the end I did it. Now I see my kids feel comfortable and mix socially with other kids from our community.

The question of schooling, which stimulated a considerable amount of public debate in the community, had become both a class and educational issue. The general consensus was that both parents and the community should help raise the standard of education, as well as remove any misconceptions or prejudices. The Maronite school is also open to Greek Cypriot children, but they have not been encouraged to enrol there.

While Latin, Armenian and Maronite women reported discrimination at the community level, and the role of formal education in promoting it, the Greek and Turkish Cypriot women focused on the other form of discrimination embedded in the educational system – gender discrimination, sex bias and sexist language.

The Greek Cypriot women described the content of the school curriculum as 'tragic' and 'outdated', and complained that their children were being assigned specific gender roles, were being taught about female and male professions, and that the teachers were not gender sensitive. They argued that school textbooks presented women in subordinate roles, thus perpetuating their social inferiority. It was

clear to these women that education had played a significant role in the construction of discriminatory and gendered practices and they wondered if this would change with EU membership.

Turkish Cypriot women stressed the importance of education in the formation of societal norms and attitudes to girls. Some felt that we needed to change our 'orientalist' mentality and demand gender sensitive books and programmes. They were also critical of the utilitarian aspect of education, which encouraged competitiveness and superficiality. Others stressed that investing in education would help them deal with political insecurity: 'we want to educate the children to view the other as equal and, due to the protracted conflict, we want to offer them as much education as possible because we do not know what will happen in the future. They need a good job.'

The European Union and women's expectations

Most political debates and statements by EU and Greek Cypriot politicians emphasized the benefits Cyprus would derive from joining the EU – primarily security and a political solution to the conflict. The process of harmonization with the *acquis communautaire* would incorporate all sectors – economic, political, social, environmental, and health – and ensure gender equality. While the Greek Cypriot community seemed the most enthusiastic about signing the Accession Treaty on 16 April 2003, the majority of the Turkish Cypriot community was also pleased and welcomed it as an opportunity to work towards the reunification of the island by May 2004. But how well-informed were the Cypriot women in our focus groups about the European Union and in what ways could they expect to benefit from EU membership?

The Latin women welcomed Cyprus's accession to the EU and believed that the island would generally benefit from it. When asked, however, what it would mean to Cypriot women, there were opposing views. For instance, some thought that it would take time to feel the impact and that this impact would be felt more by the younger generation. Others, by contrast, did not expect anything: 'I believe we make our own destiny and I don't expect anything. I don't think women are treated in a different way in other European countries from us here in Cyprus.'

The Maronite women spoke about EU legislation as it relates to women's rights and gender equality – especially at the workplace. They were disappointed, however, that the information they were given referred mainly to the Cyprus problem and not to women's issues. In fact, all the women participants believed that the Cyprus problem so dominated the agenda that all other serious issues were ignored. They all hoped that, by joining the EU, equality would be realized at social, professional and religious levels. However, they emphasized the impact Cyprus's accession would have on minority rights rather than on women's rights, indicating that their main concern was the discrimination they experienced at the community level. They also stressed how difficult they found it to understand EU legislation and complained that no detailed information was forthcoming from the state in language the general public could understand.

Some Armenian women also expressed disappointment at the lack of information and wanted to know more about what Cyprus's accession to the EU would mean to Cypriot women. 'We should know more about this and I am thinking of inviting some knowledgeable officials to our association's monthly meetings, in order to inform us how the EU works. … We need to know.'

Because of their lack of knowledge, Armenian women were sceptical of the possible benefits of Cyprus joining the EU, but nevertheless pointed out that some changes, especially at the workplace, would be beneficial. Their main hope was that by joining the EU there would no longer be discrimination against minorities or religious groups and that they would be treated equally. They also wanted the Armenian genocide to be officially acknowledged and some hoped that politicians could be called upon to raise the issue in Brussels.

Similarly, Turkish Cypriot women spoke of the inadequacy of the information on EU issues and, more specifically, on EU policies that promote gender equality and women's interests.

> Now we are going through an important phase [referring to the EU]. When I asked my mother about the European Union and the role of women there, she was surprised. But that is normal because she has not been given any clear information, and we did not hear much in the media.

The European Commission has, however, now opened an office in the north to handle public information and requests for EU-funded projects. This will help those women who want to know what benefits they might enjoy as Europeans and wonder how it will change their daily lives. For them equality and respect as women is important and they could not stress enough their need for knowledge, both for empowerment and activism:

> We have to know what the status of women in Europe is at the moment, so as to be able to get organized. Would things change when we get into the EU, how long would it take? I want equal respect; would I get that when we enter the EU? This is my concern.'

Despite the lack of information on EU policies and the uncertainty over changes in the social structure, they had certain expectations, however exaggerated these sounded:

> There will be more job opportunities, and this will, of course, affect people in all ways. But more importantly I will know that if I want something as a European citizen I can get it. There will be nothing out of reach for my personal choices. They won't be imposed on me by the patriarchal system. Women will have a right to choose and we can build our economic independence.

Greek Cypriot women were sceptical and voiced mixed concerns. They too admitted that they were ill informed: 'Would we be safer joining the EU? How would that change our lives? As women and members of a bigger multicultural community, how would this change our lives? What will be our contribution to the European Union as Cypriots and as women?'

Concerns were expressed about the economic situation and fears raised that prices would increase in a global economy. The Greek Cypriot women, who appeared quite well informed, said that implementing the laws, including those on sexual harassment and domestic violence, would be difficult because they required changes in societal

mentality. Despite their fears and concerns, the Greek Cypriot women seemed optimistic: 'I believe we could benefit from joining the EU as long as we know what we want. I believe that women and young people could benefit the most. At least it would be difficult to discriminate at the workplace.'

In general, however, they all wanted more information through seminars, public speeches and informal gatherings. They believed that Cypriots had the right to know the benefits, opportunities, responsibilities and drawbacks of entering the EU. Women wanted to feel part of the process, which was possible only if they were adequately informed. This was a message to all the relevant authorities and institutions, the media, women's organizations as well as NGOs. After all, the level of civil society development depends to a great deal on a well-informed polity.

Concluding remarks

War destroys relationships and sharpens gender divisions and it also creates new divisions within the categories 'man' and 'woman'. Difference in conflict societies is viewed as a threat and the Other is then put in a position of exclusion and is vulnerable to discrimination and stereotyping. As we have seen in this chapter, many invisible women's experiences became visible though discussions in a safe environment. Women felt sufficiently at ease to share their dilemmas, feelings of exclusion and domination. There were moments of tension but also a willingness to listen and understand. It was also clear that the women, mainly from the younger generation, who broke with tradition to embrace modernity experienced marginalization and loneliness, but they remained determined to realize their feminist venture projecting their agency. And in times of conflict the pull to comply with the nationalist agenda is strong and underplays other issues such as women's rights and liberation.

Women from all the Cypriot communities discussed in the book experienced issues over self-autonomy, oppression in the family and the patriarchal system at large, as well as discrimination because of gender, at communal and intra-communal levels. Women, especially in the smaller communities, experienced some of the beliefs and practices of the education system, Church and media as divisive and

exclusionary; they demanded a more democratic, pluralist structure and a view of unity within diversity in which women's voices could be heard. The quantitative study in the previous chapter confirmed this experience. Violence within and outside relationships in the domestic sphere was another issue women from all communities mentioned, but especially the Greek Cypriots who often as a result suffered from psychological and physical illnesses. Others regretted that they overworked and had so many responsibilities (for their children, home, family and job) to the detriment of their own self needs. Maronite and Armenian women were more concerned about the cultural survival of their communities and the danger of assimilation and believed that their state representatives were not doing enough to prevent this happening.

The women acknowledged that they knew very little about the conditions of women in communities other than their own and expressed a wish to find out more about them. The quantitative part of the research mentioned in the previous chapter showed that women could do more to communicate with other communities. The Greek Cypriot women were surprised to hear some of the Armenian women speaking in Turkish with the Turkish Cypriot women and some of the Latin women speaking more than two languages. The Maronite women corrected the commonly-held misperception that their community was mainly engaged in agriculture and cultivation of the land. Today, many Maronites are well-educated and hold high professional and government positions.

In addition, Cypriot women's knowledge of the European Union and what it would mean when the Cyprus Republic joined it as a full member was very limited and confusing, which reaffirmed what the quantitative part of the research showed. Some women were sceptical but they all expected more information on how to reach the grass roots in their communities and not only the few elites. They wanted this information to be transmitted in a language free of legalistic jargon that they could all understand. Most of the women, however, hoped that the EU laws and directives would create a new space for women's consciousness-raising and activate their agency to demand their rights and put an end to inequalities. Thus, feminisms tell stories and reveal issues that remain untold in traditional, mainstream 'his-tories' and so did the women in this feminist project.

Chapter 6

The Crossings: Unofficial Her-Stories

> One of us was guest, the other hostess – but which one?
> All those thirty year old tears, finally, belatedly
> two sisters, who were mothers, wives, daughters,
> so long ago. Then the past came and sat between us
> and woke me with a whisper:
> It's me (the past). Don't forget.
>
> (Nora Nadjarian, 2003)[1]

The 'crossings' and the other

As I mentioned in previous chapters, during our study several historic events occurred and we adapted our research questions accordingly. One such event was the opening of the checkpoint at the Green Line in the buffer zone of divided Nicosia beside the Ledra Palace Hotel. This occurred unexpectedly on 23 April 2003, a week before the Greek Orthodox Easter and 29 years after its erection. On presentation of a passport and after filling in a form, citizens could now cross to the other side. In the early days and weeks, long lines would form as thousands of Greeks, Armenians, Maronities, Latins, Turkish Cypriots and others waited to cross to see their homes and properties on the other side of the border. In the first six months (April to October 2003) about a million and a half Greek Cypriots and 700,000 Turkish Cypriots crossed. In 2005, according to United Nations figures, about nine million people crossed. In 2008 the numbers were close to 60,000, which is a big decline from the early months of 2003. On 3 April 2008 the two Cypriot leaders Dimitris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat agreed to open Ledra Street (Locmaci) in the heart of old

Nicosia. By 2008 there were six crossing points between the north and south and two more still under negotiation. Ledra Street had been closed with barbed wire and military posts on each side since 1963, so its opening was a symbolic occasion, loaded with deep emotions and recollections.

We wanted to look at women's experiences of crossing and meeting the other, of confronting their past – 30 years on for Greek Cypriots, Maronites and Latins, and 44 years on for many Turkish Cypriots and Armenians. In this chapter I discuss Cypriot women's varied reactions to this experience, whether open, eager, sceptical or reserved. I gathered the data through interviews and participant observation from 2003 to 2008. In total, I spoke to more than 100 women aged 18–70. The crossing points became sites for interaction and informal politics, as well as for contests, and these constitute part of their informal, oral histories (or her-stories). While these 'visits' obviously aroused a number of painful emotions and half-forgotten memories, which made many women resistant to crossing, they also served to deconstruct ethnic stereotypes and activate reconciliation. What I argue here is that women's stories and contacts with the 'other' form part of the wider peace process in societies in conflict and should be included in official histories. On their own, however, the impact of these encounters is limited unless they have institutional support and an environment of political continuity linked to macro level politics.

The euphoria at the grass roots was a promising dynamic in 2003 and would have been even more promising had it been translated into political initiatives at the policy-making level. Many returned to their former properties to meet the new occupants with reconstructed memories, experiences, stories and messages with which to recall the past and relive the present with the new users. They shared their experiences of having lived in, perhaps even been born in, the same house or room, but at different times, so each could rightfully claim her birthplace. Both felt embodied in the past and both yearned for a future that would be different from the present, which sits on the past. But as yet neither dared articulate this future and how it is imagined. Some, after a few trips, felt that it was time to say goodbye to what used to be theirs but no longer was. Many formed 'new attachments' across the border. Some policy analysts, international journalists and

academics spoke at that moment about a new history being made in those days and a 'revolution from below'. The young generation, which had been simply taught through mediated information about the fearful other side, has been given a chance to experience the other and to wonder what next.

The crossings, which featured in the local and international media and on television screens all over the world, also became a topic for many creative minds, artists, poets and dancers. In a poem entitled 'Don't Forget', the Cypriot Armenian female poet, Nora Nadjarian, vividly depicts her experience of meeting her 'other', the Turkish woman living in her house who kept the photograph album she had left behind as if she had known that one day the real owner would want it. Different versions of the 'past' occupy many Cypriots' sleeping and waking life. The 'victim' and 'perpetrator' are placed in interchangeable roles and can transcend those roles to meet in a space of shared pain and a new present constructed by the 'crossings'. The two displaced women in the poem are now connected in the present, but the 'past' intervenes to remind them that they occupy an ambivalent space:

> I knocked at a door which a woman opened.
> She said in Turkish: Come in. Welcome.
> *Hoggeldiniz Hoggeldiniz.*
> She handed an album of photos of me,
> My husband, our children this house,
> Pre-1974. The blue album. My living room.
>
> I kept these for you, she said
> I thanked her in Greek. *Efcharisto poli.*
> A tiny space the size of a pinhead
> Between each word stung the air, the moment.
> The dream. She offered coffee and sweets.
>
> (Nora Nadjarian, 'Gift in Twain', 2003)[2]

Cypriot hospitality and kindness were mixed with pain and ambivalence. I crossed the first day of the opening, on Wednesday around noon. I stood in the line first but then my excitement was such that I pushed through the waiting lines and walked to the Turkish Cypriot

checkpoint. I had waited for this moment for 29 years, being a conflict-resolution and *rapprochement* activist labelled 'traitor', this was a dream come true moment. It felt like the fall of the Berlin Wall, a defeat of militarism and nationalism. I walked through freely, without showing my passport as instructed. Nobody stopped me. With all the excitement, uneasiness, confusion about who was who, mixing of voices and hugging, nobody could in any case tell who the other was. The police, too, were overwhelmed and could not hold people in line. The UN blue berets were mainly onlookers and smiling, maybe thinking soon they might go home! The buffer zone, the dead zone, became alive and multiethnic, dichotomies became obsolete.

A Turkish Cypriot academic, a friend, also a 'traitor', picked me up on the other side and we drove with a Greek Cypriot friend, Myrka, to the latter's village called Dikomo, now named Dikmen. It felt like a pilgrimage. Bakir, who comes from the south but is displaced in the north, became 'our guide' in what used to be 'our area'. Myrka's family home was not there, it had been pulled down and the land turned into a Turkish military camp. She could not recognize the neighbourhood in which she had grown up and in which she had lived until she was 23 years old. All our conversation centred on her 'reawoken memories', recollections of things done or said 29 years before. I wondered if at times she was making up her stories because the house that would have been able to testify to her 'memories/claims' was no longer there. She was devastated, but held back her tears – only her voice had changed. She was ambivalent about her desire to return and rebuild it all. The central square of the village, she said, was the same, apart from the Atatürk statues, the Turkish flags and some Turkish graffiti. We walked around the village and spoke to displaced Turkish Cypriots – many women spoke the Greek Cypriot dialect and invited us in for coffee. The fact that they spoke Greek made us relate to them immediately and see them not as 'intruders' but as compatriots. I felt uneasy about not having learnt to speak their language too.

So many years had passed, yet the graffiti and slogans on walls of private houses and public spaces had not been washed off. I recognized the graffiti on old churches and walls of semi demolished houses and churches in the Karpass region as the same; the same 'EOKA', 'enosis', 'Digenis' and 'taksim' slogans were still visible,

taking us back to the pre-1974 period when such slogans actively reminded us that antagonistic ethnic nationalisms were still alive in Cyprus. The day was too short to go to my parents' village to revisit my own past and memories, but I did go three days later in a Turkish Cypriot taxi with a young driver who, to my amazement, also spoke *kypriaka* (the Greek Cypriot dialect), which he had learnt from his grandmother. In those days we could not drive to the other side. The names of all the villages in the north had been 'Turkified' – another reminder of military and cultural violence – and many people, including me, wondered whether we were driving in the right direction for the right villages. I felt as if I were having a panic attack. War tries to wipe away certain memories and reconstruct others. Later some maps were produced giving both the pre- and post-1974 names, but in Turkish and English, not in Greek and this was by design. The use of the Greek language would have acknowledged the presence of Greek Cypriots in the area.

I went to my village Ayios Ambrosios – now named 'Esentepe' but to Turkish Cypriots known as 'Ai Kouroush'. As part of my personal reconciliation and healing process, I have been back and forth on numerous occasions to come to terms with saying 'goodbye'. I knew that, in the event of a 'bicommunal, bizonal federal political settlement', the village would be located in the Turkish Cypriot constituent state. I still hope that the property settlement provisions might give me the right to use part of my inherited land, and I would have no problem about living in the 'Turkish Cypriot constituent state'.

I was disappointed and sad to find a Turkish family from Bulgaria living in my parents' house, instead of the Turkish Cypriots I had expected. This made communication twice as difficult. When I knocked at the door and a woman opened it, I was overwhelmed with emotion – anger, embarrassment, frustration, sorrow and a strong urge to throw them out. I, a conflict-resolution peace builder, wanted revenge! It was an urge I thought I would never have. I contained myself and only wept.

The wife, and mother of two daughters, looked afraid and embarrassed, but she invited me in. The house was dark and the windows shut, as if they did not want anybody to know that they were inside. The house, which had originally belonged to my grandmother who

then gave it to my mother, was uncared for and the big rooms had been divided into two parts. The wooden window panes had been replaced with cast iron bars. All the furniture was gone, apart from a very old heavy cupboard (a lot of looting went on in that hot summer of 1974). Our 'hostess' offered us coffee and lemonade made from the lemon trees in our garden.

Those beautiful gardens, as I remembered them, were dried up and there was no smell of the perfumed roses from which my grandmother used to make rose-water, no penetrating smells of jasmine climbing over the fences, no water or fish in the big water tank; the well had dried up. It was a house on which time had left its imprint. My parents had died a year before the openings, heart-broken at having been denied their desire to return. I dedicated this first 'visit' to their memory, remembered family moments when we were all together in that house, which now seemed to me much smaller and I even wondered how so many of us could have fitted into it. I could see my grandmother sitting on the veranda and hear her talking about the afternoon breeze that came in from both the sea and the Pentadactylos mountains and that emitted a unique coolness known only to her village and especially to that particular location. Our relatives and neighbours were not there – a stark reminder of the consequences of war displacement. The neighbourhood was mute.

The Turkish authorities had given my grandfather's coffee shop (*kafenion*) and hotel at the centre of the village, across from the church, now turned into a mosque, to a Turk from Trabzon, Turkey, 23 years ago, and he had turned it into a grocery store. Zeki would give me tasty apricots, which he said had probably been picked from my family's apricot orchards. He accepted no money. I got to know his family and grandchildren, who had been born in my village. I often wondered if I should call them 'co-villagers' (*syn-chorianoi*) or should they be categorized differently? Should they leave if a solution is reached, on the grounds that they illegally occupy Greek Cypriot property? It made me aware of how conflict creates new identities through displacement and migration, and consequently new realities based on new forms of colonialism leading to an uncertain future for everybody. After many crossings, my anger and pain gave way to empathy and new political choices opened up.

Construction of new memories

While revisiting the past through the crossings, I constructed new memories while losing others; it was as if a 'new history from below' were in the making to remind one that 'memory' fluctuates and lacks fixity.

> A day after our Easter in 2003 I crossed to the other side and visited my house in Lapithos. The Turkish Cypriot woman who has been living in my house invited us in and offered us coffee and, not only that, she asked us to stay for lunch. I was emotionally drained. I almost collapsed. Looking at the house I felt so sad: they had not even put a brush of paint on it. It looked so 'aged'. Our orchard was dry, not a drop of water to the trees – they had sold it to some foreign couple to build a villa. How could I bear it? I left feeling sick and weak. I could not stand on my own legs.[3]

I heard the above narration in a doctor's waiting room where the woman speaking, Eleni, from Lapithos had met another refugee from the nearby village of Karavas, who also recalled:

> I too crossed but only once and went to my village. The people in my house were nice and clean but my pain was so big, my heart started beating fast and my daughter had to carry me to the car and I decided not to go again. The village looked different. … I called out my neighbours' names but they were not there.

As I listened to these stories, what struck me was the way the refugee narrative had changed since the crossings began. These refugee women now included the presence of the other who had been living in their homes and in their 'personal space' for over three decades. The 'visits' had a strong physical impact on the bodies of these women – a 'shock' that invoked an unparalleled intensity of feelings and sorrow in that the 'home' perceived as a living organism was not adequately cared for (not a brush of paint on it) and the neighbourhood no longer the same (I called out the names of my neighbours but they were not

there). This was a realization that, in the event of their return to the village, the community and the actual life they had known 35 years before would not be the same. In a way, their crossing had demythologized their desire to return. Their sense of belonging had become fuzzy and complicated and this was more painful.

Despite the pain, however, both women saw the humanity, kindness and hospitality in the Turkish Cypriot women who had stored their own memories on the past owners' ones. Most of the Cypriots from all communities who had crossed the Green Line to visit their homes and properties talked about how warmly they were invited to have coffee and the ritual this entailed. In Cyprus, coffee is served both to welcome a guest and to console a person after a sad event, such as the loss of a loved one. The expression of this mutual humanization constituted part of the grass roots reconciliation process that thousands of Cypriots have experienced through the crossings.

As mentioned above, some Greek Cypriots could not deal with the power of their feelings, the sense of anger, injustice, ambivalence and even hatred, so some sought professional help and support. Women's organizations should have established trauma and healing centres to offer support and help on both sides of the divide. As a Greek Cypriot clinical psychologist told me:

> These last few months (2004) the number of my patients has increased. Many suffer from depression and anger after they have seen their houses and properties in the north. Many cannot deal with the fact that someone else is violating their memories and occupies their past in the rooms of their house. Some have fainted when they saw their house. Others were not able to look at the house and left and came back. I have prescribed a lot of anti-depressant pills. People don't know how to deal with these feelings. It is a new situation for them. I believe we need a well-designed process for trauma healing on this island.

The seriousness of psychological trauma and anxiety is underplayed in discussions about the Cyprus conflict, which focus mostly on the legal, constitutional and economic aspects of the crisis. Not only have several decades of forced separations deepened people's fears and

sense of helplessness, but their pain and suffering have been politicized and instrumentalized in official discourses. People on both sides of the divide have not been given the space they need to mourn, weep, come to terms with their loss and move on. Some refugee women, especially Greek Cypriots, reported that their non-refugee friends found it difficult to relate to them after their crossing experience and felt estranged. Others were critical of them for crossing to the 'occupied lands'.

New generations have been born on the other side and men and women who were single during displacement, got married, had children and, in the span of 35 years, also had grandchildren. Ahmet, the husband of a Turkish Cypriot teacher who spoke to me in *kypriaka*, shared his experience of crossing to the south to see his home town Limassol and his house. They, too, found everything 'changed', but his reaction was pragmatic and clear:

> We visited my house in Limassol. The neighbourhood has changed. My house is a restaurant now. I have lived in Lefkosia for the last 34 years. When I came here (in the north) I was not married. Now I am a grandfather and my children and grandchildren were born on this side. I don't want to go back. Who can give me my 30 years back? No politician can. I want to cooperate with the Greeks but cannot go back to Limassol now.[4]

There are also many Greek Cypriots who, like Ahmet, would, because of family circumstance and new attachments to a different 'home', prefer not to go back. Time was another factor that many displaced people mentioned. These are people who have organized their new homes and moved on with their lives, despite the *den xehno* ideology and politicians' call to keep alive the memory of the occupied lands. For many people in all communities, the compensation option for the property would suffice. Hegemonic discourses, however, did not allow this option to be discussed publicly, though many Greek Cypriot refugees tried in private to exchange properties or sell to each other while some applied to the Turkish Cypriot Property Board, which the Cyprus government did not approve. These visits revealed new needs and understandings of what a 'home' is and how there are

considerations other than emotional attachment to reckon with in a future accommodation.

Surprise, sadness and legitimating the other's pain

Thus, at the beginning, people were strongly motivated to cross over to see their homes, villages, towns, churches and cemeteries. Many drove to the monasteries on a pilgrimage and even miracles were reported of sick people becoming well. Even some Turkish Cypriots took offerings (*tamas*) to Greek Orthodox saints to make their loved ones well. In the early weeks the local press concentrated on human stories that showed the positive impact of such encounters. Some Greek Cypriots worried about how they would be received and were very anxious. A Greek Cypriot 'visitor' to her house after 29 years was pleasantly surprised at how warmly she was welcomed, but also found it painful that she could not have her house back. This is what Maria, a young 22 year-old university student who went with her mother in 2005, told me:

> The people who live in our house are very nice. They kept these photographs of my family and some other valuables like embroideries and they gave them to us [she shows these to me]. I wonder if they knew that one day we shall return. Despite the fact that the family that lives in my parents' house comes from Ayios Nikolaos of Paphos [meaning they are Cypriot] are very clean and kept the house in good condition and the garden, I still felt a lot of pain and cried a lot … and I wondered how they felt when we told them this is our house not yours … because we built it.

There is a need to legitimate the feelings that run through these new experiences that constitute 'her story' in the postwar period, and to evaluate their political and human significance. Maria had not experienced expulsion or the war, but her hegemonic Greek Cypriot socialization based on a number of assumptions about the other was tested when she met the other face to face. She identified with her parents' pain and she cried, but at the same time she appreciated how well the Turkish Cypriots looked after the house and garden. She also

wondered how they felt about living in a house that they knew belonged to others. Feelings unfold at different levels and people experience deep ambivalence in trying to understand them. Being able to see the other, the perpetrator, as a human being with similar feelings to one's own and to develop empathy is indeed an important psychological advancement. Unfortunately, the professional help required to understand the complexity of such dynamics from psychological, sociological and psychodynamic perspectives and to open up processes for healing and coming to terms with loss has not been forthcoming, though it could easily have been the work of intellectuals from all communities had they shared a common concern and vision.

The crossings and the exhumation of bodies from mass graves in recent years have provided the mass media with an incentive to resurrect stories about killings and missing people that reveal the 'badness' and 'barbarity' of both sides.[5] Bones identified through DNA tests were being handed to relatives who could then bury them in family graves in their places of origin. These funerals were often turned into displays of patriotism, with government officials making patriotic eulogies extolling the virtues of bravery and heroism, but leaving no room for the mourning process. There is a need for public acknowledgement of the atrocities, but there is also a need to create a joint space to mourn the dead in a context of solidarity and empathy building.

The crossings have also led to meetings among intellectuals and academics from across the communities, as well as to joint research to produce knowledge that is representative of the realities on both sides.[6] Academics in the north feel that their most urgent priorities are nationalist symbols and the need for reconciliation in recognizing the multiple interpretations of history, whereas those in the south think that it is to recognize the other as equal. A multicommunal association on historical dialogue has been formed, which includes educationists from all communities. These are the new thinking intellectuals who can offer new imaginings for Cyprus as a common homeland (www.hisdial.org).

As I mentioned, many Greek Cypriots returned with items from their homes that the current owners had kept for all those years. This interest in 'valuable' objects left behind was incorporated into Turkish

Cypriot poetry even before the checkpoint openings. In 2000, Mehmet Yashin prophetically wrote a poem about finding such 'objects' in the house of a Greek Cypriot and wondering if the 'real owner' would ever come back to claim them:

If I could only meet you one day,
I'd be so happy, ever so happy

I'm keeping all your photographs, little girl:
Here is your birthday
Under the mandarin tree, the cake with three candles
you, in the sea with Donald Duck
you, waving from the car – your parents smiling at you
and now you are smiling at me

I'll give these pictures back to you, little girl,
But from time to time
All this weighs heavily on me. I'm anguished
What, if they killed you during that war?

(Mehmet Yashin, 2000)[7]

When the Greek Cypriots left their homes, they ran away to save their lives and did not take their belongings with them, as did the Turkish Cypriots in 1963 and 1967. Photographs are precious objects for Cypriots. Family photographs represent the special moments and celebrations in a person's life. In times of war one is not sure if the people in the photographs are still alive or dead after so many years. Guarding these objects was an act of human connection with the absent owner, revealing once more the humanistic infrastructure that sustained relationships among Cypriots for so many decades against a background of violence, war, mistrust and fear.

Whose Home is it?

When the house was built I cannot know
Its birth date is blurred on the engraved wood above the door
And in a language that is probably incomprehensible.

(Theodosis Nicolaou, 2002, my translation)[8]

The 'crossings' revealed new understandings of belonging in which the same house symbolizing past and recent memories is claimed by two different 'owners' – the one lived there before the other was born there. To this day, land is the most emotional and difficult issue with which to deal because it relates to identity, human rights, family history and justice. Many displaced Cypriots voiced similar sentiments, as in this exchange between two women in the village of Karavas:

> *Katie*: This is my house. I was born and lived here until 1974 when I became a refugee. I was then 23 years' old. I want to return and have my property back.
>
> *Aylin*: This is my house too. I was born here 25 years ago and I want to live here. I am a Cypriot. We have the titles too.

What can be done when both sides claim the same piece of property, each loaded with emotional attachments and each with proof of her right to the same house? Can a 'property board' or legal procedure resolve such complex issues to the satisfaction of both? Could there be joint ownership? Could there be potential alliances between the two women beyond political and military domination? Conflict-resolution scholars tell us that reconciliation does not occur simultaneously, but requires a well-designed process, guidance and mutual acknowledgement of past hurts, imaginative policies and initiated acts of public dialogue. The leadership role is also significant in making public apologies for past atrocities committed against each other. As Elshtain said,[9] we need an ethic of responsibility, which means requiring citizens to be accountable and to recognize what physical and psychological damage a male-driven culture of violence and war can inflict on communities. Had the 'crossings' in Cyprus been politically legitimated and connected to the wider peace process, they could have constituted just such an informal process. Instead, they are left only to the individual citizen who often wonders if 'crossing' is politically correct. The right-wing political parties and refugee organizations resist viewing the checkpoints as a new opportunity for human reconnection.

If we accept that many of the competing interpretations, mis-

perceptions of historical events and ambiguities, and much of the hatred, fear, negative stereotyping and dehumanization are male constructed, learnt and transferred intergenerationally through formal and informal education, then we could, with appropriate interventions, deconstruct the conflict habituated system. One such intervention in the last five years could have been at the six checkpoint crossings along the Green Line. On their own these contacts would not have solved the conflict but they could have helped to create a facilitative human infrastructure. The leadership's interventions should be linked to people's initiatives. I have spoken to many people from both sides, especially women, who have been crossing prior to the referenda of April 2004 and in the post referenda period until 2008. The kinds of stories and feelings that emerge from these encounters point not only to a desire to move forward but also to a need for reconciliation, for empathy building and for help in coming to terms with the past and with loss. There is an expressed fatigue with political leaderships that remain trapped in 'classical negotiating positions'.

Resistance to crossings

The women in the focus group discussions showed a range of responses to the specific issue of crossing and the different reasons why some crossed and others resisted. Because Lenia was not allowed to go freely to all the Maronite villages, especially her own, which had been turned into a Turkish military camp, she decided not to cross:

> My husband is from Kormakitis village and he likes to go there. I don't like it because I cannot go to my village. I come from Ayia Marina and it is forbidden to go there. Personally, I consider it an injustice to drive past my village and not be able to go. I do not support the crossings under such conditions. I don't support anyone going to the north like tourists. The north is Cypriot territory. Why should I go to the Turks?

To this rhetorical question another woman replied, 'in order to give them the message that this land is ours and they won't have it all by themselves'. Lenia felt bitter and was angry at the injustice for not being free to live anywhere she chose. The militarization of her village

and of the whole area upset her and she strongly disapproved of other Cypriots going to the north as 'tourists'. The language was a problem for many people, especially if the Turkish settlers living in their houses spoke neither the Greek Cypriot dialect nor English and felt no attachment to the land. The relationship changed if the Turkish Cypriots spoke *kypriaka*, the Greek Cypriot dialect. Other Maronite women felt uneasy about crossing as tourists, but went because they wanted to show their children the part of Cyprus they had heard about through family stories or through the school subject of 'I Do Not Forget'. Thus, mothers felt obliged to preserve the memory of the north and to transfer it to the next generation. Those who supported coexistence and advocated *rapprochement* were critical of Greek Cypriots who did not distinguish between Turkish Cypriots and Turks:

> Without *rapprochement* we cannot get to know the other. They [Turkish Cypriots] are people like us and we must learn to coexist peacefully. Sometimes I dare say that the reaction I get from the Greek nationalists is worse than the one I experience from the Turks. We need a solution. If the Greeks do not take their children to see their grandparents' places, the children would not want to go back, they would not be interested.

Thus, for practical and historical reasons, some had only positive things to say about the crossings. In fact, some Maronites started to repair their old houses at Kormakitis and would go there at weekends, and the community was starting to be reconstituted. Some said that in this way they were sending a message to Denktash that 'this land is ours and we will not abandon it.'

Through the crossings, some believed, Cypriot communities could get closer to each other and normalize relations; people could do things together – exchange visits, sit in coffee shops, eat together and buy things from one another. A woman who often visited her parents at Kormakitis vividly described the wedding of a Turkish Cypriot couple to which, as in the past, guests came from all communities:

> During the religious holiday on 15 August we went to Kormakitis. There was a Turkish Cypriot wedding in the nearby

> village, the groom was a builder and had helped the Kormakitis inhabitants very much. He invited the entire village, as was the custom. My parents and I went to the wedding. There, at the wedding we found many Greek Cypriots who had come especially for the celebration. For me it was very moving to see many guests from our different communities celebrating and honouring friendship together.

The 'crossings' provided many Cypriots with the opportunity to share in the joys of weddings and sorrows of funerals, as well as to celebrate Christian and Muslim holidays. These interpersonal relationships smoothed out ethnic and religious divisions and reminded people what normal life could be like.

While some Armenian women went to see their homes in northern Nicosia, others refused to go because they felt uncomfortable about having to show their passport, as if they were going to a foreign country. Some chose to wait until a solution had been found, while others still could not deal with the pain.

Some, especially young ones, crossed out of curiosity to see what Turkish Cypriots were like. They went to Nicosia and Kyrenia and met Turkish Cypriots and 'settlers', and some said they found the Turkish Cypriots much friendlier than expected and were surprised to converse with them in *kypriaka* (many older Armenians speak Turkish). 'I went to the Kyrenia port. I had heard about it being the most beautiful sight and I wanted to see it myself. I spoke to many Turkish Cypriots and I felt good,' said Salpy, a young Armenian. She also mentioned that since the crossings some Turkish Cypriots had started to attend her school (the English school), and that she was looking forward to getting to know them better.

Another young Armenian woman said that she personally had not suffered at the hands of the Turks, so went to see the other side for herself. She believed that, although crossings did not constitute a solution, 'we should take advantage of the positive impact the crossings bring because in the future they will bring better results when people feel connected.' Other young Armenians, along with some Maronites, Latins and Greek Cypriots, did not want to cross because they had to show identity documents or because their friends disliked

Turks. Many Greek Cypriots refused to cross after the 2004 referenda when Turkish Cypriots started building houses, holiday apartments and hotels on their land and then selling them on to foreigners.

One Armenian woman who lived in Varosha, crossed twice with her family to show her children the Armenian Church in which her husband had once been a choirboy. They went both to the old Armenian neighbourhood in Nicosia and to Famagusta. She felt angry seeing that the houses, school and church in her neighbourhood had been bombed. All the suburbs around were in ruins and the city looked like a ghost town.

Older Armenian women remembered their friendships with Turkish Cypriots both at the workplace and at the English or American school in Larnaca. Apart from their own language, many Armenians also spoke Turkish, Greek and English. They believed that the crossings helped people from all communities get to know each other better and to rekindle their old friendships. Others disagreed and saw the crossings as a Turkish Cypriot ploy to promote their desire to enter the European Union.

Some women in the Latin and Greek Cypriot communities also felt uneasy about showing their passports and did not consider crossings a solution. Latin Cypriot women who were married to Greek Cypriot refugees would show solidarity with their husband's family. Those who had lived in Kyrenia prior to 1974 chose to go but had mixed feelings. For Jeannine, going to her house in Kyrenia meant coming to terms with the current situation, and she recognized that displacement and loss of all one's material belongings was a shared Cypriot experience:

> We lost everything in Kyrenia in 1974. I have nothing on this side. I went with my daughter and saw my house. A Turkish Cypriot couple from Limassol lives there now. They were very nice to me. I introduced myself as the owner of the house. They offered us coffee. They [had] changed the house, they [had] made it into two and it did not look like my house any more. They had the titles that the house belonged to them so they turned it [into] two houses because they have two daughters. … Now that I have seen the house I felt it doesn't belong to me any more. The Turkish Cypriots cannot live in their house in

> Limassol; it became a factory. I sometimes wonder why the politicians kept telling us for so many years that they would not accept a solution without the return of all refugees to their homes. I was saying to myself, how could this be? We have to see the reality now.

Jeannine narrated the story as if she had known the Turkish Cypriot family before. An underlying intimacy and empathy was created. She added that she would accept compensation for her property and would be going to her city as a visitor. The presence of settlers in the old part of the city disturbed her. Despo went only once and decided not to go again because the Turkish Cypriot couple in her family house did not receive them well and indicated that they did not want them to enter the house. She would settle with monetary compensation.

Some Latin women have an Italian, English or Polish passport in addition to their Cypriot one (double nationality is allowed in Cyprus) though they use the Cypriot one the most. They were lucky, for during and after the invasion they could use their foreign passports to cross to the other side. One woman remembered when, with her husband, they were able to cross soon after the war in 1974 to collect some of their material belongings before the looting of the houses began:

> We went twice to Kyrenia. We were the lucky ones because of the British nationality and our foreign names. The military gave us permission to bring our things. We got the easy things we could carry and my jewellery and the photographs. We put the silver in two boxes, and the furniture and other things. I have been many times back and I enjoy sitting at the harbour, near the castle.

All the Latin women in our focus groups supported the idea of more contact between communities and a few recalled Turkish Cypriot and Armenian classmates with whom they wanted to reconnect. Most of their friends, however, are from the Greek Cypriot community. They had made a new life in the south and many would not like to restart all over again. They would be happy with compensation.

Some Turkish Cypriot women met Greek Cypriot women for the

first time only after the 23 April opening, while others took that opportunity to cross to meet old friends. The parents of some of the participants lived in mixed villages and spoke Greek, but the younger generation had not had the chance to share experiences, so for them it was simply the 'Greek side'. Some others remembered painful incidents with the Greek Cypriots, both in 1963 and 1974, and still felt fearful. Some felt the need to share their past pain and concerns. Shefica, in her fifties, from Paphos could not forget the fear she had experienced 30 years before and this kept her from crossing:

> There were incidents happening before 1974. There were Greek Cypriots coming to arrest our people. For example, our village was close to Polis and we saw Greek Cypriots arresting Turkish Cypriots and gathering them in the school. There were no Greeks in our village. We were hearing the gunshots everywhere, so there was that fear in all of us. That's why we all hated the Greeks. I will cross when I feel safe.

Shefica is still afraid, needs recognition of her pain and anger and sees coexistence as problematic, 'another generation, maybe'. Another Turkish Cypriot mother who also suffered a lot in the 1963 intercommunal violence and became a refugee, not only participated in interethnic encounters but overcame her fears and bitterness; she believes there are good and bad people in each community and transferred the culture of peace to her two sons:

> I have two sons and they kept asking me what the Greek Cypriots were like. One day I took them to Pyla village to show them what they are like. When they saw the Greek Cypriots [they] were amazed to discover that they are ordinary people, just like us! They had a concept of a Greek Cypriot but in real life they did not know what they looked like. Now that the doors are open I am happy, and they don't feel scared to cross. They want to make friends with Greek Cypriot young people.

The plea for contacts was strong, as was the need to increase willingness on both sides to work towards reconciliation and mutual

inclusion. For these women peace meant an end to divisions and to their economic and security problems; finding a solution to the conflict; promoting democracy and equality; equal access to resources; better dialogue between people; and living without soldiers and barbed wire.

The younger generation is less burdened with the past, which, if their education is geared towards a culture of peace, mutual appreciation and acceptance, should allow them to make unprejudiced connections with the other. There were cases of romantic attachments being formed, which was unheard of before the crossings. Young Turkish Cypriots who have not experienced the other as the enemy and met abroad during their studies have a different perspective, a view of the future and a readiness to reach out and continue building new relationships with the other.

> When the doors opened I felt comfortable crossing to the other side. I haven't lived those days of war so I had no bad memories. When I shared my experiences with my mother or older people they don't understand it and keep asking why I wasn't scared of the Greeks. Well, I wasn't.

Other Turkish Cypriot women were self-critical and asked themselves why, for so many years, they had not fought for their freedom and economic independence as a community and stayed dependent on Turkey. But they also felt that the Greek Cypriot policies had not helped, like the economic embargoes that led to their isolation and pushed their leadership towards Ankara. They admitted that, as an oppressed community, they needed to claim their rights and autonomy through dialogue with the other side.

In fact, since the crossings began more than 7000 Turkish Cypriot workers have found employment in the south. One Greek Cypriot businesswoman mentioned that she employed Turkish Cypriot women in her clothes factory and had been motivated to learn the Turkish language. Some of the Turkish Cypriots spoke good *kypriaka*, she said. The stereotype of the badly-educated Turkish Cypriot was now being challenged because, through their contacts, the Greek Cypriots were discovering a different community from the one they had known in

the early 1960s. 'They [Turkish Cypriots] have many well-educated people who are knowledgeable and we [Greek Cypriots] who didn't know this regarded them as inferior to us.'

Greek Cypriot women recalled similar experiences. One explained how living her childhood and adolescence in a mixed neighbourhood had enriched her belief in multiculturalism and diversity. She hoped this would be the case in the future:

> My father was from a mixed village in the north and I knew Turkish Cypriots since I was a child. He later had a business in the Turkish quarter of Nicosia and at that time there were many Armenians there too. I was surprised by the similarities we shared. … I keep my contacts with my Armenian friends and the Turkish Cypriots. I always tried to keep informed about them across the wall … the Latins are a smaller community; they are not so much distinct from us. I cross frequently to visit friends.

Niki lived abroad most of her life and returned to Cyprus with her family in 2000. She had never met Turkish Cypriots before. In 2004, when she met Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots together, she could not tell them apart. She crossed many times and made new friends on the other side, acknowledging common traits such as hospitality, family styles and food, but she said she was also aware of the militarization and the many war monuments on both sides and wished them away:

> Although I don't like showing my passport when I cross I still do it. I need to understand the Turkish point of view. I went to the Five Mile location where the Turkish troops first landed and when I saw the 'monument for peace' like a phallus pointing to the sky, I was shocked and provoked. The second time I went with relatives near Varosha and I saw the bombed ghost city I almost fainted. I don't understand how people can swim nearby and look at those bombed buildings. I dream one day of an end to militarization and all kinds of oppressions.

Research carried out in 2007 by the United Nations office in Cyprus[10] to investigate Cypriot feelings and views about the 43-year UN presence, and to study the impact of intercommunal relations on improving levels of trust among people from both sides, showed that the large majority believed that day-to-day contact paved the way for a united Cyprus. In other words, most people generally approved of those who reached out to the other through such contacts. However, following the initial excitement, the number of people crossing has decreased. According to the survey, only 10 per cent of Greek Cypriots cross regularly compared with 45 per cent of Turkish Cypriots. About 40 per cent of Greek Cypriots indicated they have not crossed since their first crossing in 2003. Some 50 per cent said that after one or a few initial crossings, they no longer did so.

Among Turkish Cypriots, 30 per cent have never crossed; 25 per cent have crossed once or occasionally; and 45 per cent cross with greater or lesser frequency. Most Turkish and Greek Cypriots said that their impressions of each other had not changed much. Of those whose opinions had changed, including those who came to visit friends, shop or work in the south, they invariably said that they came away with an improved view. Another survey sponsored by the Cyprus office of the International Peace Research Institute, found that 64 per cent of the people interviewed in the post-referenda period appreciated meeting the other, 24 per cent were suspicious and 11.8 per cent were negative. According to that research, people crossed to see their house and property, visit friends, exchange views and ideas, and shop, as well as for tourism and pleasure (large numbers of Greek Cypriot men bet in casinos).[11]

Macro-level politics and events affect people's relationships and what happens at the micro level; also, their reasons for undergoing the crossing change over time. Men who cross the border to gamble at Turkish-owned casinos spend millions of euros each month. Others find certain products cheaper on the other side; last year Greek Cypriots spent two and a half million euros in the north, and Turkish Cypriots spent a million and half in the south. Many women from the south go to the north to buy brand-name clothes and handbags at low prices, or to have their hair cut. Others go over to do research or to give educational talks or presentations. In other words, various factors

motivate people to cross or not to cross. A new television programme in the south (broadcast in both Greek and Turkish) brings people together from both communities to share their views about the past, present and future, as well as to cover current cultural activities in both communities. It would be helpful if they were to include the experiences of the other communities as well. Most of the invited guests are male, which is another reason to sensitize the media to gender issues and conflict. In the north there are radio programmes that promote *rapprochement* and confidence building measures. Such programmes, which promote mutual understanding and dispel misperceptions, need to increase to include voices from all communities.

Concluding thoughts

Opening the crossing points in April 2003 gave citizens, from all communities, new opportunities to interact and enter into the socio-political landscape of the other. Cypriot women responded to this opportunity in a range of different ways. Many women challenged the masculinist understanding of politics, while others, who had internalized party political and nationalist discourses, strongly resisted crossing. Most abandoned their preconceived notions about the other and noticed the opportunities for heterogeneity and new connections. Painful memories resurfaced and new but different relationships with the other were created. All these dynamics at the micro level could have been turned into a politics of reconciliation had the macro-level decision-makers legitimated and connected them to the official agenda of the peace processes. Reconciliation processes need to be instituted at both the macro and micro levels of interactions as these women's crossing experiences have revealed. The media and other dominant discourses no longer accord significance to the crossings, which tend to be seen as yet another feature of the conflict-ridden culture and are viewed as 'soft women's politics'.

These diverse women's experiences of the crossings also revealed the different negotiations in which women engage when dealing with loss, the painful past, the other, the hypocrisy of politicians and the realization that the passing of time alienates communities more deeply. The majority of women saw the opening of the checkpoints along the Green Line as opportunities to reconnect with their homes now used

by others whom they also consider victims of war and also to show the new generation, which has no memory of the North of Cyprus, what it is now like and feel the island as one.

So, while these crossings between the north and south of the island are taking place, other trans-border crossings are happening in Cyprus as migrants seek employment and a better standard of living. In the next chapter I discuss female domestic workers' contribution to the households of professional Cypriot women on both sides of the divide, and the problems and issues they face. Although Cyprus was a sending country until the 1950s, it has now become a receiving country in which capitalism and global cheap labour meet.

Chapter 7

Trans-border Crossings: Cypriot Women's Liberation and the Margins

> Gender does not mean 'women' but the latter must be given special attention since it is their contribution to migration processes that are still largely ignored.
>
> (Anthias and Lazaridis, 2000, p. 5)[1]

Rashini, an ex-teacher, was 42 years old when she came from Sri Lanka to Cyprus in 2002 to work as a housemaid (*oikiaki voithos*) in the house of a doctor, his lawyer wife and two small children. I met Rashini through a neighbour who had asked me if I needed someone to clean my house and when I said I did she sent Rashini, who came to my house once a week. She would talk to me about her husband and three children whom she missed very much. One day she felt very ill and when I offered to take her to the hospital, she burst into tears and told me that she was in the country illegally and had no papers, so would I take her to a private doctor. Some days later she told me why she had lost her job:

> At first all was well though I had to work long hours. I got attached to the children and it was a kind of consolation for me not to think about my daughter and son all the time. Then something terrible happened. 'Sir' started late at night coming to my room, and asking me for sex. I was shocked and of course I refused, but he would not stop. Weeks went by and I decided to talk to madam. She started shouting at me that I was

> telling her lies and that I was imagining things. She not only did not believe me but the next day she threw me out of the house. I was sick for days and then I could not go back to my country. I needed to work and send money, my husband had no job. I told nobody about it out of fear. So I started cleaning houses here and there. A good madam helped me find houses to clean. I stay in a basement with three other Sri Lankans. Every time I see a policeman I get so scared.[2]

After three years of working as an illegal migrant, Rashini left Cyprus because her health was deteriorating and she was taking anti-depressants. She never revealed the name of her employer. This is only one of many stories we hear from female migrants who constitute part of the global restructuring of economies to generate more profit for less cost. As Agathangelou informs us, female migrants leave their country because of several forces, including 'the states that mediate the relations between the global and local markets in order to facilitate the movement of cheap labour; and the desire of the upper middle classes to hire reproductive labour cheaply as well as the structural circumstances within which the female migrant worker finds herself.'[3] Rashini's experience, a woman of colour who in the perception of her employers has no agency, relates to the old model of master–slave relations and class politics in which the propertied and high-class employer owned black women 'servants' and could use them to satisfy any of their desires.

The other important issue was the reaction of the 'madam'. She not only failed to question the low salary Rashini was getting, and the fact that no Cypriot woman would have worked for so little money, but instead accused her of being impudent for assuming that her husband, a reputable doctor, would want to have sex with a coloured servant! In other words, she racialized and sexualized the female domestic worker to protect her own class interests. Despite the existence of legal protections, Rashini did not use them and returned to Sri Lanka in bad health and ashamed to face her husband. Meanwhile, the doctor continued his 'good life' and was able to employ another 'servant' and the 'madam' remained oblivious to what was going on around her. This is an example not only of sexism, classism and racism, but also of

how the capitalist and patriarchal systems pit women against each other.

On Sundays and holidays, migrant workers from different parts of the world fill the major squares and parks of the Republic of Cyprus's main cities. In divided Nicosia, only a few yards away from the barbed-wire fences, these migrants meet their friends, telephone their families at home, shop, cook favourite ethnic dishes, or just simply sit and relax. To most Greek Cypriots, they are barely noticeable, unless a sensational sex scandal brings them to public attention. They have all come from other countries to seek employment that will bring them a better living, while at the same time provide cheap labour to the global economy.

Economic development in the Republic of Cyprus, especially since the 1990s, had fuelled a demand for new labour in services, tourism and the construction industry. After 2004, a construction boom in the north, mainly on Greek Cypriot land, attracted a wave of Turkish migrant workers who filled posts that Turkish Cypriots had abandoned for better paid jobs. The majority of migrant workers in Cyprus are female domestic workers who are often called in the south not by their names but by their country of origin or colour – '*I shrilankeza mou*' (my woman from Sri Lanka), '*I Fillipineza mou*' (my Fillipino woman) or my '*mavroula*' (my black one). Upper and middle-class Greek and Turkish Cypriot women seem to equate 'true femininity' with unbridled control over the labour of women from other peripheral economies.[4]

In this chapter I discuss the working conditions and experiences of female migrant domestic workers on both sides of the divide who work in the homes of middle-class professional women. In the Republic of Cyprus they are classed as '*oikiakoi voithoi*' (domestic help) and come from different cultures and backgrounds, mainly Sri Lanka, the Philippines and India. Since May 2004, when the Republic of Cyprus became a full member of the European Union, there has been an influx of migrant women from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In the Turkish Cypriot community in the north, the migrant women come from Turkey (Anatolia, Hatay and Trabzon), Tajikistan, Bulgaria, Russia and Moldova.

I shall first give a short background to the phenomenon of female migration and its causes before analysing the data gathered from

interviews with female domestic workers from both communities. I argue that economically well-off Cypriot professional women are obliged to employ other women, mainly from low-income countries, to do what they are still expected to do in rigidly defined patriarchal households if they are to pursue their personal interests in family, career, professional development or travel. Even although many Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women are economically independent and constitute a second breadwinner, the sexual division of domestic labour, gender stereotypes and the value system still sustain the patriarchal structures. Thus, Cypriot women's 'liberation' is mediated through the migrant women's engagement in their households. The migrant women become indispensable in making visible that 'liberation', which is not merely about changes but also about gender, class, racial relations and global economies.

The migrant women we interviewed experienced exploitation, abuses, violations of contracts, fear of expulsion, overwork and violence. These women also develop their agency, social networking and assertiveness. I propose a struggle of solidarity based on gender consciousness, and acknowledgement of interdependence, thus transcending class and race differences. 'Madams', domestic workers, local activists and others have to initiate these struggles. The stakes are different for each, but all connect to the desire for an alternative world of 'real liberation' from patriarchal structures, racism, sexism, militarism and capitalist exploitation. Feminisms should engage the conditions under which propertied men and women are able to exploit the work of women of colour from lower-income countries and promote the politics of solidarity at a global level.[5]

The rise in female migration: feminization of migration

The years spanning the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century has been called the 'age of migration', a fact that has attracted the attention of national governments, NGOs, international organizations and scholars. Centres for migration studies have also been established in many universities. A United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and International Organization of Migration (IOM) report of 2006 tells us that women make up half of all migrants. Of the 191 million people living outside their countries of

origin in 2005, 95 million were women. Included in these figures is an estimate of 13.5 million refugees representing 7 per cent of the world's migrant stock.[6] According to UN estimates, Europe had 64 million migrants in 2005, accounting for one-third of all international migrants constituting almost 9 per cent of the total population of Europe. Countries with the largest non-national populations are Germany, France, Spain, the United Kingdom and Italy.[7] In recent years, the highest levels of net migration have occurred in the southern European countries, including the Republic of Cyprus (2.72 per cent in 2005).

With changes in global production and reproduction, gender, and more recently the 'feminization of migration', have become important issues.[8] Migrant women are particularly likely to find employment abroad in factories, domestic service, caring for the elderly and in the sex industry.[9] However, there is still not enough reliable data about women as migrants and, that they are arriving in equal numbers does not necessarily mean that they are receiving equal treatment. They have fewer opportunities than men for legal migration; many become irregular migrants with the concomitant lack of support and exposure to risk; they are more vulnerable than men to violence and exploitation; and their needs for health care, including reproductive health care and other services, are not always likely to be met. They also have fewer opportunities for social integration and political participation, and most receiving states have no gender sensitive migration policies.[10]

Gender has been identified as a critical factor in circular migration. The term 'circular' is used to describe migrant workers who emigrate repeatedly for a few years at a time for employment around the world, yet keep their country of origin as a home base and send remittances back home.[11] In north and south Cyprus migrant women from Sri Lanka, India, the Philippines, Turkey, Bulgaria and Turkmenistan had worked in different places prior to coming to Cyprus.

Global changes are an important factor in the escalation of migration as a social, political and economic phenomenon.[12] They include growing inequalities in wealth between North and South, which impel increasing numbers of people to move in search of better living standards. Political, ecological and demographic pressures may force people to seek refuge outside their countries. The ending of the cold war led to massive population movements to Europe and

elsewhere, as well as to interethnic conflicts in a number of regions. The creation of new free trade areas also leads to movements of labour – whether or not this is intended by the governments concerned.[13] The 'feminization of migration', which cuts across race, class and citizenship, raises new issues for policy-makers, trade unions and NGOs, as well as for those who study women's migration. NGOs such as the European Women's Lobby, which developed in 2001, try to improve the situation of migrant and minority women.[14]

Different theories have been proposed for the study of migration; recently a synthesis was projected in an integrative model that used three levels of analysis – the macro level, which focuses on relations between sending and receiving nation-states; the middle-level, which focuses on the groups and organizations through which individuals and families negotiate migration routes; and the micro-level, which focuses on personal migration choices based on individual stories, social identities and sources of support.[15] New studies have developed that emphasize migrant women as individuals who decide autonomously to migrate and even to take initiatives for their families. New questions have been asked about female migrants.[16]

Some scholars support the view that women who migrate alone in search of employment and break the traditional pattern of accompanying male family members become emancipated and empowered. In addition, they claim that the act of migration can stimulate change in women migrants and in the societies that send and receive them. 'In the process women's migration can become a force for removing existing gender imbalances and inequities, and for changing underlying conditions so that new imbalances and inequities do not arise.'[17] Apart from benefits, however, there are also costs, such as the added responsibility and emotional stress of having to support their families back home. The loss of qualified and professional women in the countries of origin creates a 'brain drain' and the failure of the receiving countries to recognize these talents leads to 'brain waste'. The majority of migrant women fall into the category of 'unskilled women', but they are not necessarily uneducated. One-third of Filipino migrants to Hong Kong and Singapore are said to have college educations, but many are employed as housemaids and care workers.

It seems to me that, in the case of domestic workers, this

'emancipation premise' is, strictly speaking, only a theoretical assumption because, due to the 'feminization of migration', women are being recruited in two areas – as domestic workers in mostly affluent homes and in the sex industry, both subject to exploitation from their employers and from the agencies that recruit (or even kidnap) them. Migrant women often have no choice but to submit to this exploitation as they are obliged to send remittances home to support their family, elderly parents and children. Because patriarchal structures back home do not change and fathers reassert their authority and refuse to nurture children, 'I found that migrant mothers indeed provide care from thousands of miles away, whereas fathers continue to reject the responsibility of nurturing children,'[18] thus sustaining patriarchy. These women's labour is extracted at minimum cost because affluent employers can send labourers home, thus freeing the host country from the burden of having to educate the women's children or provide healthcare when the women grow old.[19]

Socio-economic developments in the European Union have enhanced the social and productive role of women by raising educational standards and professionalizing the labour force, but not enough to allow real liberation and gender equality. Research in Greece, which our findings in the Republic of Cyprus confirm, shows that their 'emancipation' is enabled through employing foreign women, but that this emancipation is lopsided because the patriarchal culture continues to place responsibilities in the 'private sphere' unevenly and solely on women's shoulders without the men learning to share any of the women's traditional duties. Women have been given some entry to the male world, but men have not assumed any household responsibilities.[20] Domestic workers thus find themselves enabling their employers' middle-class desire to 'have it all' – a full-time career, happy and healthy children and spouse, and a well-kept household.[21]

Another concern is with the kind of contribution migrants' remittances might make to development given that the money is often spent on luxury goods, dowries, housing or land rather than on productive investments. In some cases, the increased flow of money has led to inflation in the sending countries, thus disadvantaging non-migrant families. Some scholars argue that since migrants generally come from the middle rather than the poorest groups in the areas of

origin, remittances often exacerbate social inequality and lead to uneven concentrations of land ownership in certain countries.

Labour migrants are often 'not part of surplus population of the unemployed rural and urban poor', but rather 'skilled workers whose departure could have a negative effect on the economy'.[22] The migration of educated people from less developed countries means a temporary downward social mobility with regard to their legal status. For those who accept jobs for which they are over qualified, it also means downward mobility with regard to employment.[23] The exploitation, violence and sexual harassment of domestic workers has little visibility, for it occurs in the home, and domestic workers lack support structures like trade unions from which to get help. Also, women often do not know their rights, partly because the patriarchal systems in which they were raised accorded them low status and taught them to be submissive and to accept traditions that curb women's rights and voices.[24]

Methodology

With the help of Katherine Scully, an American from Yale University, I carried out research on migrant domestic workers in the Republic of Cyprus. We used in-depth semi-structured personal interviews with female migrant domestic workers employed in the homes of Greek Cypriot professional middle-class women. The interviews were conducted in English, mostly singly, but in three instances in small groups of migrant women – two of Sri Lankans and one of Filipinos. On Sundays and holidays these women frequent the local parks in Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca. We interviewed 20 domestic workers from Sri Lanka, 14 from the Philippines and two from India. We selected them randomly and through contacts of their friends. Their ages ranged from 22 to 50. All the women had gone through high school and six of them were college educated. All but one lived in the house in which they were employed. Three of the women from Sri Lanka had their husbands follow them after two years. This breaks the old pattern of wives following their husbands. Most of them were part of the 'circular' migration pattern and had previously worked in Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Lebanon and Kuwait.

We used a similar semi-structured questionnaire for the interviews in the Turkish Cypriot community. Three Turkish Cypriot female

researchers helped me with the interviews in the north. The interviews were translated into English. There were 22 interviewees in total, from various parts of Turkey, Bulgaria, Tajikistan and Kurdistan and their ages ranged from 26 to 45; all were married and living with their families. Unlike in the south, none stayed in the house of her employer. Three were illiterate, ten had not completed elementary school, eight had secondary school education and one had a college education. This is a stark contrast from the female migrants in the south who were all educated, some with college degrees.

In both communities, we studied the procedures they used to come to Cyprus; their working conditions; the treatment they experienced in the family in which they worked; their salary status; awareness of their rights as migrant labourers; solidarity with other workers; agency and networking; and how their life would improve back home. We also asked if they knew about the Cyprus conflict and if their 'madams' showed any interest in their home country.

Contextualization of the research

Over the last decade the social and demographic landscape on each side of the island has been changing. According to Trimikliniotis, foreign labour accounts for 15 per cent of the total working population in the south (about 100,000 migrant workers of which more than 40,000 are illegal). This makes a significant difference to the ethnic make up of the population. Although the initial intention was that they would be 'temporary', they are now a permanent feature of Greek Cypriot economic life. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, there was internal migration when Roma moved from the north to the south of the island. This was viewed as a social threat and many people feared that the 'flood of gypsies into our neighbourhoods' would lead to racism and sexism. In addition, new ethnic groups, such as Greek Pontiacs, Russians, Greeks and others, have settled in the republic.[25] Since the crossing points opened in April 2003, about 7000 Turkish Cypriots workers, mainly in construction, regularly cross to the south to work, and their rights are the same as those of Greek Cypriots.

Migrants entering the republic on a work permit are rarely allowed to stay long enough to acquire citizenship; those who desperately need to so that they can bring their children into the country resort to

marrying elderly Greek Cypriot men; or some single women marry solely to acquire citizenship status. Migrant workers are labelled 'foreign' or 'alien workers' in state and public discourses, the underlying connotation being that they are 'guest workers' and that the Cyprus Republic is only a 'temporary permit' type of country. There is no mention or reference to female migrant workers or understanding of gendered labour market in the Cyprus republic state policies:

> At first glance policies appear 'gender blind' and 'migration blind' lacking the mechanisms for effective policy implementation, which results in an existence of welfare and settlement services for migrants. However, this 'gender blindness' is only the façade: there are labour markets entirely made up by migrant women such as domestic workers and women in the sex industry, whilst there is a gender division of labour in most industries employing migrant workers. Moreover, policies have a gendered effect and we can locate multiple instances of indirect discrimination as defined by the anti-discrimination Acquis Communitaire.[26]

Violations of work-related rights and contractual terms are widely reported, especially among domestic workers who are often overworked and underpaid. There are also complaints of bad treatment and sexual harassment by male employers. There are no programmes to promote tolerance, appreciation and openness towards migrants and no specific integration policies.[27]

In the section below I analyse the findings of the interviews carried out in the Greek Cypriot and in the Turkish Cypriot communities, and then point to differences and similarities. I conclude with general observations and suggestions that link Cypriot women to a struggle for solidarity to challenge not only the patriarchal system and to eliminate sexism and racism but also to create a community of shared interests and goals around which to feel connected.

Racism

The issue of gendering migration has recently attracted research attention in the Republic of Cyprus, but sensitization of the society at

large has not yet occurred.[28] A major finding shows that racism is the primary factor in ordering the lives, opportunities, and experiences of female migrant domestic workers in the south. Because of their colour, the way they dress and being different, many domestic workers experience discrimination, overwork and exclusion. Clarrisa, aged 24 and from the Philippines, who was college educated and who had worked prior to coming to Cyprus in South Korea, told us:

> I think the factory work in Korea was easier than housework in Cyprus. In Korea I worked in the factory for 12 hours and it was easy work. Here I feel I work 24 hours and nobody cares. In the streets I feel racism and I am often approached for sex [she showed us the gestures men use when they try to buy sex from these women]. Being approached for sex is horrible. Yes, we are poor but we do not want that … it is so humiliating.

Sexual harassment is a frequent complaint of many female migrants who said that they did not feel safe walking in side streets on their own.

Age sometimes becomes an issue because a number of Sri Lankan and Filipino women look much younger than they are, so employers often question the validity of their passports and start harassing them to tell the truth about their age. However, as one Sri Lankan widow with two children back home told us, 'if God is inside you, you stay good-looking outside, it is God's gift.' She did not know how to convince her employer that she was telling the truth. Their looks are racialized and sexualized (see: femipol).

Racism has a powerful influence on migrant workers because it is the main obstacle to gaining citizenship or integration into Cypriot society. Integration means, among other things, gaining command of the host society's language; access to education and the labour market; opportunities for upward mobility through education and job performance; equality before the law; religious and cultural freedom; and respect for the laws and traditions of the host country. For the host society it means tolerance and openness; willingness to welcome immigrants; understanding the advantages and challenges of multicultural societies; and access to unbiased information.

According to the non-governmental organization KISA (Centre for the Support of Foreign Workers), the number of female migrant domestic workers in Cyprus has increased because people with employment visas are only allowed to stay in Cyprus for five years. After five years their continued residence and employment became illegal. But in 2005 the migration department changed the five-year ruling to four years because of an EU directive stipulating that anyone in Cyprus for as many as five years could apply for permanent residence; now, anyone in Cyprus for more than five years becomes illegal and has to go. Thus, many who stayed longer were considered illegal and deported.

Exploitation

The exploitation migrant women undergo is also a product of the racist Cypriot understanding of separate 'appropriate' roles, rights and position of foreign women. The vast majority of migrant domestic workers in Cyprus live and work in unfavourable conditions, many of them viewed as the 'slaves' or 'my *mavroula*' (my black one) or '*i filipineza mou*' (I own a Filipino woman). Furthermore, a high percentage of women live and work under conditions that violate normal understandings of human rights and human dignity.[29]

One young Filipino woman regretted coming to Cyprus. Being part of Europe, she had thought she would be treated better than in other places in which she had worked, but soon discovered that EU membership did not necessarily guarantee the practice of European values, laws and principles. Her employer broke the terms of her contract by asking her to clean two big houses instead of one, as agreed, and on the same salary. In the Philippines, she had been a high-school mathematics teacher, but lost her job because of high unemployment. Her work day started at seven in the morning and finished at eight in the evening, with one hour's rest. Her 'madam' complained that she did not clean thoroughly enough because she noticed dust, 'which I cannot prevent as it comes through the open windows', Ester despaired.

According to KISA, the exploitation of migrant domestic workers has many faces, and they are exploited at every step of the way from their home countries to Cyprus, including a requirement to pay for and

undergo expensive 'training' in the skills required to be a domestic worker in Cyprus. They come to Cyprus through official or unofficial agencies, which also demand heavy fees. The women come to Cyprus because they face financial hardship in their home countries, so have accumulated debts even before arriving in the host country. The agencies convince them that they will earn lots of money if they come to Cyprus and will be able to help their families, so they invest in the trip. Some sell their property or take out big loans to pay the agency fees, but when they get there, things are not quite what they seemed. The women suffer abuse and overwork, but remain quiet. Having earned too little to justify their initial investment, many domestic workers are reluctant to return at the end of their four years, so remain illegally under the threat of expulsion to clean houses here and there. The main problem they face, apart from their low salaries, is trying to extend their work permit.

Salary issue

Though perhaps more than they would earn in their home countries, a female domestic worker's salary is a fraction of what a Greek Cypriot would get for equal labour. In some cases, employers refuse to pay the full salary stipulated in the contract. An average salary is now €320 plus social security. Only one of the 36 women we interviewed received €450 and that was because she rented a room with friends, so did not live in. This was a Sri Lankan who had been in Cyprus for two and a half years and worked for a madam with two children aged nine years and eight months respectively. She looked after the children, cooked and cleaned the house until 8 p.m. She had completed her high school education and had been working as a domestic worker since she was 20. She had previously worked in Lebanon and Kuwait. Another woman from Sri Lanka who worked 13 hours a day asked for a raise and the 'madam' not only refused but also accused her of moving too slowly. She sometimes cleans houses on her day off.

There have been many complaints about low salaries and the Cyprus government will have to review its policies. A few of these women occasionally resort to other practices, such as selling sex in their free time, to make more money. If the police find out, they are arrested and deported. Their employers do not question what drives

them into such activities and the society at large condemns them. The local press sensationalizes such behaviour and accuses the perpetrators of undermining the morals of the Greek Cypriot community. Some women are denied a private life, with the employer checking their movements and discouraging them from having a boyfriend in case they get pregnant. Some 'madams' do not supply soap, shampoo or washing powder, so they have to buy them from their salary. They feel upset and angry about that because they want to save as much money as possible.

Living conditions

Living standards vary; since most domestic workers live in their employer's home, albeit in separate quarters, the employer determines what these will be. An employer who fails to provide adequate facilities will not normally face any consequences. Although most meet normal requirements, there have been cases of employers who do not give their housemaids enough to eat, and do not allow them to leave the house or rest. Most of them eat after the family has finished its meal, or they are asked to take their food in their room. Many do not allow them to cook their own ethnic food because it 'smells'. They gather in their friends' houses on Sundays to cook their ethnic dishes together. There are, however, a few 'madams' who ask them to sit at the table with the family and treat them nicely.

Although employment contracts establish a normal seven-hour workday, most employers require between 10 and 13 hours of work a day. As employers face few penalties for violating the terms of the contract, the amount of hours that domestic workers must work is at the employer's discretion. A majority of the domestic workers we interviewed expressed a willingness to work extra hours, but resented not being paid overtime for it. Some domestic workers complained that occasionally they were forced to work seven days a week, and were denied their holidays.

Cherry, a young woman of 23 from the Philippines, worked for a family in which both 'madam and sir' had their own businesses. They had two children, aged four and one, whom she looked after. She works 13 hours in violation of the contract and, when she complained, was told: 'you are not a Cypriot to deserve more.'

> In the morning every day at 7 o'clock I go upstairs and help get the children ready, then feed them. The four-year-old goes to nursery and when the one-year-old sleeps I start to clean the whole house. … I clean very carefully because madam wants everything to shine. She always complains and I feel scared when she becomes very angry and I want to leave, but I had spent so much money coming here, I cannot leave. I came here to earn money. I finish work at eight o'clock at night and I am exhausted. I think I am going crazy. Sometimes, my body hurts so much. … I work 13 hours and she gives me only £150. If I complain she tells me 'you are not a Cypriot to pay you to work only seven hours'. Madam knows this is illegal but she also knows that I am afraid to do anything about it. I am a single mother with one child back home and I send the money I earn home.

Despite the injustice and bad treatment she received at the hands of her well-to-do madam, Cherry still felt trapped. As Agathangelou explained, the idea of women as servants is based on the assumption that their labour is a 'natural resource'. 'It is perceived as just, as a "natural" extension of femininity, a "natural" extension of race (i.e. the perception that these women are docile etc.), thereby not costing the same as men's labor.'[30] A Sri Lankan interviewee, Shandra, told us that her workload was so heavy that, after many days of scrubbing, her muscles would go into a spasm and freeze, and her hands would cramp into curled fists, forcing her to pry her fingers open each morning. Many find the domestic work in Cyprus heavier and with longer hours than in any other place in which they had worked before. Shandra never ate with the family, always alone in the kitchen. Some of these women sustain injuries from the heavy housework, from having to climb ladders to clean high dirty windows and cellars. Under other circumstances, the 'madams' would call in a cleaning company to do those sorts of jobs and pay extra money.

There are also tensions between different groups of female domestic workers, especially between Sri Lankans and Filipinos. Filipino women avoid Sri Lankans on the grounds that they are 'smelly' and vice versa; when they go to church on Sundays, they make

concerted efforts to keep apart. Such ethnic stereotyping affects female solidarity and stands in the way of them acknowledging that exploitation is a shared racial issue of the neo-liberal project and needs to be addressed jointly.

Emotional and sexual abuse

The domestic workers we interviewed reported a range of relationships with their employers. Some were comfortable with their 'madams', called them 'kind' or 'nice', and said they occasionally gave them gifts. Others, however, reported living in a constant state of fear, with a 'madam' who would unpredictably scream, threaten deportation or physically attack them. One interviewee suffered so much mental abuse that she began to have 'out of body experiences', describing her state as, 'physically I am present, but mentally I am absent'. Another reported experiencing crushing depression each morning when she awoke, moaning 'Oh my god, it's morning, and madam is going to yell at me again.' A third thought she had developed a heart condition, for her employer's threats of deportation had brought on such acute panic attacks that she feared her health was permanently affected. Here, instead of being seen as someone who has made her 'liberation' possible and upon whom she can depend to do all the housework and look after the children while she and her husband are out promoting their careers, the dynamic is between dominator and dominated, or superior and inferior. Some religious Sri Lankans viewed their ordeal as 'a trial from God' and refrained from making complaints. These professional 'madams' use their power over these workers in the same way as men do in the patriarchal system that controls them. Thus, in the end, the madams reproduce the very system that subjugates them too.

In addition to emotional or physical abuse from the 'madams', some domestic workers reported sexual harassment from the male employer. Some had repeated offers of money for sexual favours, while others reported attempted rapes. The embarrassment and social stigma surrounding sexual abuse suggests that the actual incidence of it is probably higher than reported, as in the case of Rashini.

All these forms of exploitation derive from ingrained racism and class prejudice. This, in turn, causes the Cypriot employer to view the

female migrant worker as unequal, or an object he or she owns, thereby allowing the employer, usually without malicious intent, to treat the employee profoundly unequally – expressed in low wages, long hours and the expectation of sexual favours. As a KISA representative explained, in Cyprus it is commonly assumed that 'a domestic worker is a slave they can have in their house. Because [she] is poor, and from a different country, they can do what they want with her.'

Agency and networking

Of course, these women are not only 'victims' of the global economy and of their 'madams'; they find ways of exhibiting agency and asserting their rights; they form networks and set up small makeshift ethnic 'businesses'. Azita from Sri Lanka is aged 48 and well-educated; she used to work for the army in her country. When she first came to Cyprus she worked as a cleaner for a doctor in Paphos in the western part of the island. The family had a large house and she also had to clean the doctor's office. The doctor would often corner her and offer her money to have sex with him. He would explicitly cite her low wages to make his offer more enticing, but she resisted. She told us that she 'used her brain' and put obstacles in his way until his wife returned from work. She could not stand it for long, so spoke to a lawyer and the doctor was charged with sexual harassment and denied permission ever again to employ a female migrant worker. Azita not only knew her rights and how her dignity had been violated, but also challenged the patriarchal and racialized system.

She was later employed in a household in Nicosia where both 'madam' and 'sir' were demanding and verbally abusive. 'The parents beat the children and the children were abusive to me. I could not stand it and left.' The third family with which she now works is 'good, stable and I am happy to work for them. They respect me as a human being.' She told us of many other cases of domestic workers from Sri Lanka being sexually abused, but said that they were too ashamed, fearful or powerless to report it. She felt that her intelligence, maturity and experience had helped her escape the aggression of her two previous employers. She seemed unscathed and described it without any particular emotional attachment. Still, she is not satisfied with her meagre salary. As she was talking to us she divided her £150 salary into

30 days to show us that domestic workers received only £5 (about €8, US$ 12) a day. To complement her salary she runs a little business in the recreation park on Sundays cooking and selling ethnic food.

Domestic workers create their own support and networking systems. For instance, some women who were well-informed and knew their rights would ask for legal advice. Others would set up support groups, share their experiences and help one another. Older Sri Lankan women would support the newcomers and brief them on general Cypriot working conditions and their rights, and where to ask for help.

The Filipino women are more organized than the others and often contact their local honorary consul for help. In an effort to make their presence visible, one Greek Cypriot daily newspaper, *Politis*, publishes a fortnightly special supplement about Filipino life and news in Cyprus. In addition, KISA organizes an annual 'rainbow festival' dedicated to the cultures and presence of migrant workers in Cyprus, thus providing an opportunity for Cypriots to get to know the different 'others' and enjoy multiethnic performances, ethnic cuisine and culture.

The migrant women were surprisingly ignorant about the Cyprus conflict; hardly any of them knew anything about the issues involved or why the UN Peacekeeping Force was there. None of the ones we interviewed had yet crossed to the north. They tend to stay together and create their own closed communities, but despite requests from local NGOs, the Cyprus Republic has yet to provide them with appropriate recreational facilities. The 'madams' rarely asked their employees about the political situation in their countries, such as the conflict in Sri Lanka; Cypriots were, however, mobilized to send aid during the devastating tsunami. Basically, the migrant women are interested only in earning money and the Cypriot middle-class professional women only in their 'liberation' from household duties and childcare.

Let us now look at the experiences of the domestic workers in the Turkish Cypriot community.

The Turkish Cypriot experience

The Turkish Cypriot community, which prior to 1974 constituted 18 per cent of the total Cypriot population, has now been overwhelmed with an influx of many thousands of Turks from Turkey – Turkish

Cypriots talk about the 'settler problem' and about becoming a minority in their own country. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, because the figures are so politicized, the exact number of settlers and migrants as separate categories is not known. I tried to ascertain the number of migrant female domestic workers, but nobody knew if there was a correct breakdown of migrants by category. The migrant female women we interviewed came from Turkey (of Arab and Kurdish origin), Bulgaria and Tajikistan.

Arrival in North Cyprus

The procedures employed to come to north Cyprus differ from those used by female migrants in the south. For a start, they do not use agencies. The majority who came to north Cyprus had followed husbands, brothers or friends who had come before them, which is not the case in the south. Some of the Bulgarian Turks had come via Turkey, but on finding it difficult to secure work there and on hearing that there was a lot of construction business going on in north Cyprus, they came. The majority of them used the 'social network' approach, which is information passed on by friends, relatives or neighbours, like the case of Sebile and her family:

> It was my brother who came first 15 years ago and lives in Lefkosa with his wife and he told me to come and work here. He found me this job. He told me there was this couple that was trying to find a trustful woman who would take care of their children. My brother and hanim [madam] work together. When I arrived hanim got me a 'working licence' and registered me to the responsible authority. I do not know my rights but if I am in trouble I will inform my brother. He knows how to solve problems. They are nice people and treat me very well and sometimes we have coffee together. … I have friends who go to work as domestic workers in other countries and most of them suffered from bad working conditions and returned to Bulgaria. Some suffered from nervous breakdowns. … It is a pity to work like an animal in order to live like human beings. When I think of the stories of my friends I thank God again and again.

Sebile is 39, married and has one child. She is aware of the exploitation and mental abuse many of her friends experience and feels lucky she has a brother who is *au fait* with the system to take care of her problems, for the new patriarchal environment continues to reproduce gendered roles and dependency. Like the Filipino and Sri Lankan domestic workers in the south, Bulgarian Turks seem to stick together, help each other and form their own community. Munever and her family, who came to north Cyprus in 2006, also used connections and networking with friends who knew their way around the system and had, in fact, become citizens:

> Actually, we have Bulgarian Turks who have been living in Cyprus since 1999 and they helped me find a job. They are Bulgarian citizens but they also took the TRNC citizenship. They have been living in this country for eight years and the woman who helped me find a job was a neighbour of my relatives when they were in Bulgaria. At the beginning we stayed at their house and we moved to our house after my husband and I earned the required money. I have no working license; I am an unregistered worker. If the government registers me, it will force me to pay taxes. I don't want this. I cannot give the money which I earn with difficulties to the government … you should not tell anyone, but I am an illegal worker.

Munever is aware of her obligations to the system but is prepared to risk it because her economic need is greater. We interviewed other women who, like her, were illegal, without work permits and living in fear of being arrested. There are different procedures for becoming a citizen of the TRNC, which only Turkey recognizes. It seems that citizenship acquisition is arbitrary as a result of this political anomaly. Fatma, who is 37 years old, an Arab Turk and illiterate, cleans Turkish Cypriot professional women's homes. She told us that:

> We are not citizens. We have been living here since 1993 but could not be citizens. I don't know why. My husband said we had to make application in order to be citizens. We did two years ago and the government officials told us we have to work

> five more years after our official application. I hope when we become citizens the government will pay some money for my disabled children.

She has five children. The oldest is a boy aged 14 and the others are girls, two of whom are severely disabled. Her son looks after the girls when she works. Fatma's illiteracy makes her dependent on others, which is why she wants to educate her children. This is an additional reason for coming to Cyprus:

> I really want to educate my children; I want them to learn reading and writing very well because if you are illiterate you have to suffer like me. … I took my disabled daughter to the hospital, waited there for long hours, but nobody called our name. I went to a nurse and asked her why the doctors did not call my name. She showed me a little board, which she read to me saying, 'please take a number to see the doctor.' Since I could not read the board I did not know what it was saying. I spent too much time at the hospital for nothing, you understand me?

All the interviewees mentioned that they came to north Cyprus for a better life for themselves and their children. The Bulgarian Turkish women, in particular, said that they had suffered a great deal from racism at the hands of the Bulgarian government:

> They put great pressure on us, simply because we were Turkish. They forced us to change our names. They did bad things to us. We were not allowed to speak our language, but I have to say even the days of pressure were better than today. The economic situation was better.

Some migrant women had difficulty adjusting to Turkish Cypriot culture, food, lifestyle and customs. Sebile, for example, said: 'I do not know how to say it but I have not adapted to the Turkish Cypriot way of life. They speak loudly, for example. I think they like to tell naughty jokes, especially jokes about sexual issues, which make me so

embarrassed.' When the hanims had guests, they would call on the domestic workers to help serve the meal and clean the house, but never to cook for them. As Emine explained:

> I never cook for the hanims; our meals are very different from theirs. I think they do not like Arabic meals. Our meals are too hot for them, you know. We use a lot of pepperoni and other spices. Turkish Cypriots are like Europeans. I only go there to clean.

It is interesting to note how the Bulgarian Turks perceive the Turkish Cypriots as 'Europeans', or Westerners, but do not see their own country of origin, Bulgaria, which is now a member of the EU, in the same way. These cultural differences are often interpreted through a racist and stereotypical lens.

In the north, unlike the south, no domestic worker lived in her employer's house. It is not a custom in the north. One explanation for this is that these women come to the north with their families; another is that Turkish Cypriot women do not like having a 'stranger' living in their house. This implies that they and Greek Cypriot women have different understandings of 'home and private space'; and yet another is that of economic expediency. They take care of children, clean houses, or care for elderly people, but 'when Mrs Hanim finishes her job and comes home, we leave'. They believe that their role is to 'liberate' the hanims from housework and childcare so that they can promote their careers, but also they need the money. Thus, as in the south, the patriarchal structures remain intact and professional women are still expected to take care of the household and children.

Salary and working conditions

Unlike the female domestic workers in the south, most of our interviewees in the north seemed content with their salaries and working conditions, and they did not have to send money back home. Since they live with their families, their husbands work too, mostly in the construction industry or road works. Fatihe is 39, illiterate and has three children. She finds that most of the hanims are 'nice people', but she is also aware of her own dignity:

> If they do not like my cleaning, they kindly warn me and ask me to clean better. They don't shout at me like the crazy woman in Konyeli who shouted at me and was obsessed with the hygiene of the kitchen. She made me cry so I left her. I tell you, I can never work for people who forget that I am a human being as they are. I have dignity; it is a matter of honour.

Fatihe developed such a close relationship with one of the hanims who asked her if she wanted more children and when she said that she did not, the hanim who works as a pharmacist talked to her about the pill:

> She gave me some pills some weeks ago and told me those pills prevent pregnancy and I should use them if I do not want any more children. She is a wise woman and helps me whenever I need her. So, I listened to her and started taking these pills. I do not know how to say it, I am a little bit shy … but you know my husband refuses to use any protection, which means these pills will save my life. I am so pleased I kept this as my secret and did not tell my husband.

Because many of these women are illiterate and come from very traditional social backgrounds, they have no information about their reproductive rights and are under the control of men and tradition, thus experiencing downward social mobility. They told us that they felt embarrassed about discussing sex and sexuality because, for them, these subjects are taboo. When they hear Turkish Cypriot women talking about them they feel shy and uncomfortable. Whereas for women in the West the pill was part of the sexual revolution and helped them gain control of their bodies and reproductive rights, for many female Turkish or Bulgarian Turkish migrants, the subject had never been raised. In addition to these cultural differences between Turkish Cypriot women and migrant domestic workers, there are differences in their standards of education, class, race and lifestyle; in other words, these differences represent the gap between tradition and modernity. These are issues that 'madams' in the south would never discuss with their domestic workers because they would not show such intimacy.

They usually work eight hours a day with Sundays and holidays off, but this is 'double work' because when they go home to their families they continue the same labour, which is of course unpaid. The hanims arrange their working hours according to their needs.

> I start work at seven o'clock in the morning and my work finishes at five in the afternoon. I work eight hours per day. I clean three houses per week. I have rest breaks and eat my lunch. I get the minimum wage because I am illegal. Hanim has her own business with her sister.

Ayshe, who is 33 years old and has three children, unlike other Bulgarian Turks wants to return to Bulgaria once she and her husband have saved up enough money.

Others, like Fatma, do not want to return to Turkey. Fatma has 14 siblings in Hatay and they sometimes plead with her to come back, but she refuses on the grounds that life there is too difficult, though she finds life in the north very expensive:

> I do not want to return because I will have to work in the fields and fruit gardens there. It is much easier to clean people's houses. I will never go back. If we buy a house in Lefkosa, our life will be much better, so no one would dare to call us. … Houses are too expensive here; we don't have enough money yet. My husband has a car but we don't use it often because fuel is expensive.

Migrant domestic workers find life very expensive in the north – partly as a result of the restructuring of global capitalism and its dependency on the Turkish economy – and yet, compared with the life they led before, they still prefer to stay in Cyprus nurturing their dream of buying a house one day. Some of the women told us that they felt lonely and longed for a sense of group solidarity. They found Turkish Cypriots very individualistic. Emine was not alone in her sentiments when she said:

> Sometimes I feel abandoned and want to cry loudly. … I know there are other women like me but I don't know personally

> anyone in this part of the city I live. Sometimes I pray accidentally to meet an Arab Turkish woman just to hear a single Arabic word from her.

Many of these women, as in the south, do not feel integrated into the local society and experience racism and discrimination. A few of the Bulgarian Turkish women complained of having to work 'like slaves' to make ends meet. Women from Tajikistan found some of the hanims arrogant and complained that they humiliated them or treated them 'like dogs'. Others felt satisfied with their salary compared with what they could earn at home. Some earn 70 Turkish liras (€35) a day cleaning three houses and are paid extra for the ironing. In Bulgaria, they said, a female worker is paid on average YTL 200 per month (€100), and they wondered how they could live on so little money. They do not feel they belong to Cyprus, even though they speak the same language and have the same religion.

Rights and the Cyprus conflict

No one we interviewed knew of their rights or even understood what rights meant. Most of them did not know where the Turkish embassy was in case they needed help. All said that if they faced problems or got into trouble they would go to their husbands or brothers. None of the women spoke about getting organized into an association or support group. Some of the employers would sometimes ask them about their families and offer help or a Ramadan basket. Others showed no interest in them whatsoever. No one mentioned knowing of any NGOs to which they could go to seek support or employment. They usually found work through their social network of friends or neighbours.

The majority of domestic workers in the north, like in the south, did not know anything about the Cyprus conflict and thus were not aware that some of them were living in Greek Cypriot refugees' homes. The Bulgarian Turkish women were the only ones who had heard that 'the Christians and Muslims of Cyprus did not get along and that the Greeks dominated the Turkish Cypriots as did the Bulgarians the Turks'. Some Bulgarians crossed to the south and commented that the Greek part is richer and more developed, but that they would not like

to work for Greek madams because 'they have a different religion and a different language'. Most of them were not interested in politics because 'politicians ruin people's lives'. Sabile did not care because 'I am not a Cypriot, I don't have to think about the Cyprus problem. If I continue to live here I may start to worry but now I don't want to.' The hanims never talked to them about the conflict. It is what they sometimes hear on television and find it 'boring'. It is interesting how the Cyprus conflict is irrelevant to the migrant workers on both sides, yet so vital an everyday issue for the Cypriots, as well as the dominant theme in the Cypriot media to which all other serious social issues, including migration, remain secondary.

Concluding remarks

While Cypriot women from all communities endeavour to 'cross' to get to know the 'other' and to see their former homes or properties, other women cross transnational borders to come to Cyprus – north and south – as part of the global 'age of migration' and capitalist need for cheap labour. Female migrant domestic workers in both parts of Cyprus experience problems and challenges, as do migrant women in many other European countries.[31] It is evident that female migrant workers face many of the same problems as Cypriot women do, which, as I have mentioned in previous chapters, include the impact of the patriarchal system on the choices they make, their exclusion from centres of power and the hegemony of the male culture but to a lesser degree.

Unlike the domestic workers in the south, female domestic workers in north Cyprus neither adopt the same procedures to enter the country nor have any training prior to arriving. They come with their families and, according to my informants, laws and regulations are not observed. Many of the migrants in the north first arrived in the late 1970s more to serve the political goals of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leadership, than as an economic labour project, something that developed much later. As local women acquire higher education and take their place in the workforce, the need to employ other women to take care of their households increases because the structures and gender roles remain intact. The migrant women's cheap labour replaces the state's obligation to provide childcare, welfare for the

elderly and flexible working hours for mothers. They all spoke about improving the life of their children and how economics was the main reason for immigrating.

Issues concerning migrant women in Cyprus and elsewhere are pressing both for the protection of human rights and democracy and because migration bring, in fact has already brought, profound changes to the social fabrics of many societies, including Cyprus.

Migrants need to be informed about their rights and to know what legal and structural resources are available to help them. According to KISA, most readily admit that they do not know their rights and instead rely on their employers or agencies to tell them. The same applies to domestic workers in the north, who rely on their husbands or male relatives. Similarly, very few Cypriot women from all communities have any inkling of what rights and privileges derive from Cyprus being in the EU. In the Republic of Cyprus, informative pamphlets were available in English, and these have now been translated into the migrants' languages, but there is nothing similar in the north. Many migrants in both the south and north thought that if they filed a complaint their employers would be able to get them deported. In fact, the fear of deportation, especially if found without work permits, is strong among domestic workers on both sides of the divide. Cypriots must acknowledge that migrant workers perform tasks that Cypriots no longer want to do, thus benefiting both sides of Cyprus.

From the analysis of our data, it is apparent that the argument that migration can be empowering for migrant women does not seem to hold true because the majority, both elsewhere and in Cyprus, remain vulnerable and racialized.[32] Empowerment should mean knowledge of their rights as human beings and as workers in the global economy. Training and seminars need to be organized for their empowerment.

By freeing Greek and Turkish Cypriot professional women from their household duties, female migrant domestic workers allow them time and psychological space to pursue their careers and personal advancement. Domestic workers have been bringing up the new generation of children, mainly in the Republic of Cyprus, and these children sometimes treat them as 'servants or slaves'. Unless they are made aware of what they are doing, there is a high probability that they will reproduce their gendered and racialized behaviour in adult life.

This is also a result of the very slow progress being made by Greek and Turkish Cypriot males to take on their share of responsibilities in the domestic sphere.

The sad thing about all this is the unequal and exploitative treatment many migrant women receive at the hands of their 'madams', who depend so much for their 'liberation' on the very women they marginalize. Many of these professional women adopt racist attitudes towards their domestic workers whom they regard as inferior, on the margins of society and are there only to service their needs. They do not seem seriously to realize that without these women they would have been unable to promote their professional careers, travel and develop their autonomy, while at the same time enjoying a clean home and well-cared-for children. Both hanims and female domestic workers need to recognize that patriarchy and global capitalism are the real obstacles to their 'liberation' and that they should struggle to cease being the victims of such conditions, be they in the public or private spheres of male-dominated Cyprus. The women of Cyprus need to join hands to build a new world based on the feminist values of dignity and human equality. This can happen when women across the divide develop a gender, class and race consciousness and relate their local circumstances to regional and global realities and thus treat female domestic or other workers in the way they deserve as human beings, and within a feminist agenda of social justice and equality.

Conclusion: The Challenges and Beyond

> Equality and difference are not incompatible; they only become so if equality is understood to mean sameness. The opposite of equality is not difference, but inequality.
>
> (Lister, 1997)[1]

In this concluding section I try to summarize differences and similarities among the various communities of women presented in this book. Are there any generalizations we can draw from the Cypriot experience that may be applicable to other societies undergoing conflict? Our findings revealed that both Cypriot and migrant women working in Cyprus experience the multiple effects of the global restructuring of economies that have come about as a result of ethnic conflicts, militarization and nationalism. These effects are felt at the domestic, personal, interpersonal, multicommunal and transborder levels.

All of us who work consciously as women, not only in academic teaching and research but also as activists, are aware of how relatively silent and invisible women are – in history, political science, sociology, psychology, economics and the sciences – not only in Cyprus but throughout Europe and the world. A huge restitution project needs to be undertaken, even now, so long after those women reformers, thinkers and campaigners first called for it in the nineteenth century and again in the feminist revival of the 1960s, the 1970s and 1980s. In Cyprus, a number of university and activist women have begun to show what Cynthia Enloe calls 'feminist curiosity' and are looking at women's experiences at a range of different levels. We are beginning to form a life-like picture of how Cypriot women from all communities, as well as migrants working in Cyprus as domestic 'servants' and in the sex industry, are starting to make their voices heard in the domestic

sphere, the economy and in the political structures of the society at large.

In an attempt to capture the diversity of women's views, understandings, values and priorities on both private and public matters, in this book I have tried to reveal the other Cypruses to which women belong. Among the topics covered are individual autonomy and self-development, marriage, family, education, religion, identity, the 'other', political participation, gender discrimination, violence against women, the European Union, the crossings along the Green Line, and the treatment of domestic workers in both the north and south of the island.

In this book I challenge the notion of bicommunalism in the Cypriot context in that it infers that one group on 'one side' is confronting another group on the 'other side' and that one identity excludes the other. When a society is in conflict there is a tendency to homogenize the positions of each side, which results in a failure to acknowledge the complexity of the situation and its levels of differentiation. As a result, the misperceptions, stereotypes and misunderstandings between the warring factions are reinforced and prolonged. We found that where heterogeneity is acknowledged, it becomes possible to build a multicultural society characterized by respect for differences and multicommunality. In such an open democratic space in which everybody's human rights are respected, the coming together as equals, not only of men and women but also of other ethnicities, races and social classes, would challenge the hegemonic, male-centred conception and practice of politics, which historically excluded women, homosexuals, marginalized groups, various minorities and people with special needs.

In the analysis of the data I have shown that modernity has, to some extent, shaken traditional patriarchies, but male dominance still prevails in political structures, the economy and the family, as well as in domestic and sexual relations. A male dominant gender order is in place and, in much the same way as it controlled the war-making process, is adapting quite well to controlling the peace-making one. The national problem sharpened gender and ethnic roles and prevented Cypriot women launching their own independent struggle for women's rights and liberation from patriarchy and subordination.

Women's experiences are different from men's and should be included in all matters dealing with finding a political solution to the conflict in Cyprus, democracy, a just society and eliminating oppressive gender hierarchies and binaries.

The use of a 'transformative methodology' linked to social change, in which both the process and the products are equally significant, both created a 'community of researchers' from civil society and helped us to confront our own ignorance of the other communities we wanted to study. Using an interactive process, dialogue and renegotiation, we sought out the 'hidden' politics and socio-cultural characteristics of each ethnic community before starting the actual research project. Thus we, the members of the five project partners, became the first subject of our enquiry before we launched the bigger project. We experienced our own truism, namely that each researcher brings her own politics and 'positionality' to the research. The collaborative crafting of the different questions in the quantitative part brought out the underlying subtexts in each question, or social and moral taboos, that still direct Cypriot women's lives in the private and public realms. Here I must stress, however, that quantitative methods have limitations and a danger of over-generalizing, especially in terms of statistical validity. Thus, the use of focus groups and interviews served to triangulate results from the different methods used in the book.

No research ever starts from scratch. Knowledge and theories have always come before and they are there to guide our choices. I was able to draw on a wealth of existing feminist theories about gender in relation to nationalism, patriarchy, militarism, conflict and social divisions, and about sexism in relation to racism, difference and differentiation. As I indicated, I adopted what I call 'holistic feminism', meaning that I am aware that different types of feminism start from different assumptions, yet I believe that each feminist perspective provides us with concepts and frameworks that can prove useful when trying to understand women's subordination, gender inequality and international conflicts – in fact all social intersections such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, age and sexuality, which help us to avoid essentialization.

Another neglected aspect of a conflict-ridden culture is intra-communal differentiation. We found this to be strong in all communities, with notable differences in terms of ethnicity, class, age,

ideology, education and contacts with the 'other'. For example, young Armenian women are socialized to marry within their community and they feel it their responsibility and duty to comply in order to maintain the community cohesion. Some Maronite women from urban areas were reluctant to send their children to a newly-founded Maronite elementary school because they thought that lower class children from rural areas would attend it and feared that this might lower the standard of education. Many Maronite and Armenian women spoke strongly about the discrimination and prejudice they experienced, both as individuals and as communities, in the education system and in the attitudes of Greek Cypriot teachers. Both the Maronite and Armenian women spoke about religious discrimination on the part of the Greek Orthodox Church. Young Turkish Cypriot women spoke of their mothers' disapproval of their lifestyle choices that involved challenging socially prescribed norms. Young professional Greek Cypriot women experienced undignified attempts by their female supervisors to assert their power over them. These constitute some of the challenges many women hoped might change when Cyprus (as a republic) became a member of the European Union.

As I mentioned before, Cypriot women from five communities found themselves placed in a transitional context in which modernity and traditionalism intermixed in both the private and public realms of their lives. This can explain the many contradictions, confusions, dilemmas and ambivalences women expressed over the different issues about which they were interviewed. Women's education on gender issues and sensitization to the prevalence of the male-dominant culture in Cyprus we found to be exceedingly low. Some of these contradictions have been obvious with regard to personal choices. For instance, a high percentage of women from all communities, including university-educated ones, still marry by arrangement. Although economic interests and family social status are normally understood to be the main considerations in arranged marriages, it is noteworthy that none of the Armenian or Turkish Cypriots and very few in the other communities admitted that such factors played a part in their arranged marriage. The Greek Cypriot, Maronite and Armenian women almost invariably claimed that they had married for 'love', though this was not so in the case of Turkish Cypriots.

Changes have nevertheless occurred. An unmarried woman is perceived as being more acceptable today than previously. Staying single carries less social stigma than it once did, though in the Maronite community 43.2 per cent still look upon an unmarried woman as a failure. This links up with the self-definition responses in which the majority from all communities chose the 'I am me' rather than 'I am the wife/daughter/sister/mother of someone else', which breaks down gender and social subordination. By contrast, most women in the focus-group discussions were reluctant to speak about themselves, their desires and achievements, but always spoke in relation to others, like children, family or community.

Another sign of modernity concerned divorce, in which most of the younger women from all communities (the fewest being among the Maronites) said they would choose it if their relationship were not working out, which was not the practice in the past when divorce was taboo and still is in the older generation. A high percentage of women, however, refused to discuss the quality of their relationship in the quantitative part of the research, though not in our focus-group discussions, which revealed a high level of domestic violence in the Greek Cypriot community. All viewed heterosexuality as the norm and no one connected it to patriarchy and dominant forms of masculinity and femininity, which undermines other forms of sexuality. At an abstract level, there was an expressed desire for self liberation, like approving of premarital sex or choosing to stay unmarried, but conservatism reigned on the issue of abortion. We observed contradictory responses on this issue among Greek and Maronite women who said they were not churchgoers or believers, but supported the church's position on abortion and premarital sex. Turkish Cypriots and, surprisingly, Armenian women, especially the younger ones, were more open to considering abortion as an option.

Among the communities different views on a number of other issues became visible, especially on subjects that are still considered taboo despite the global AIDS campaign. For instance, attitudes towards the use of contraceptives varied significantly according to age and ethnic background. Whereas more than 60 per cent of Greek Cypriot women of all ages reported using some form of contraception, only 50 per cent of Maronite and Armenian women and only 40 per

cent of Turkish Cypriot women did. However, within the 18–28 age bracket, or generation of women born after the 1974 ethnic division, the difference between contraceptive users rose to 74.4 per cent among the Greek Cypriots and fell to only 34.1 per cent among Turkish Cypriots in the same age bracket. In other words, young females in the Greek Cypriot community ignored the Greek Orthodox Church's prohibition on premarital sex and the use of contraceptives. Can we take this is an indication of a sexual 'revolution' in which they claim the right to their bodies and that they are sexually more active at a younger age than their Turkish Cypriot counterparts? This needs to be investigated further.

Another major theme to emerge was gender, ethnic and race discrimination within and between communities. Gender stereotypes often assume that women are all alike when, in fact, there are individual and group differences between and among them. Denise Reley views the category 'women' as a fluctuating identity that 'is historically and discursively constructed, always in relation to other categories which themselves change'.[2] The concern is how to construct feminist political mobilization that would take on board all the differences,[3] which, of course, exist alongside the similarities. While the conflict is having an impact on all communities, women's struggles project different priorities. For Greek and Turkish Cypriot women gender discrimination was more evident and intense at home, whereas Maronite, Latin and Armenian women experienced it in addition and more intensely than the other two groups at the workplace and in the community; Maronites, Armenians and migrant domestic workers, however, were the most exposed to racism. Both the Greek Cypriot women and the domestic workers mentioned the impact and degradation of sex stereotyping; they found the 'cheap' images of women that are promoted through the mass media, school textbooks and the broader social environment demeaning, and felt they undermined women's values. Maronite women encountered more discrimination in their social interactions with the dominant group, perhaps because of the struggle in which they were engaged to preserve their cultural and social survival. These phenomena constitute different sites of hierarchies and power asymmetries.

Greek and Turkish Cypriot women spoke openly about domestic

violence, which they attributed to power inequalities and notions of masculinity enabling men to view women as sex objects. Some women in abusive relationships with their husbands mentioned feeling humiliated and lacking communication. In such dysfunctional relationships the women felt alienated; some left the house or applied for divorce. Others, however, spoke of staying in the relationship because of family and social pressures. Others spoke about their husband's infidelity and extramarital affairs as a frequent personal and social problem. Greek Cypriot women said that even when they confronted their husbands with evidence of their infidelity, they not only denied it but would insult and belittle them as well. The women were thus left feeling worthless, demeaned and even guilty, as if it were their fault that their husbands had strayed. This might explain the increase in women's physical and psychological health problems, characterized by symptoms such as sleeplessness, migraines, stomach upsets, dizziness and depression. Domestic workers in the south spoke of sexual harassment and psychological violence by both 'madams' and 'sirs'. A father's power over his daughter was talked about more in the group of Turkish Cypriot women who saw it as an offshoot of the economic dependency of young women and of the hegemonic role of the father.

The female migrant domestic workers spoke about exploitation and dependency, as well about being too afraid to claim their right to file charges against employers who violated their contracts. A few, however, did find the courage to take them on and use their agency to network and challenge their abuse by their employers.

We noted a number of contradictions, as for example when a high percentage of women seemed to believe that patriarchy and equality could coexist in Cyprus. Surprisingly, it was the older (thus less well-educated) women who believed that a patriarchal system existed in Cyprus. Does this mean that women with less education are more oppressed? Or are they revealing a lack of familiarity with concepts like patriarchy and gender inequality? We observed that a worrying number of women feel no wish to participate more actively in political, environmental, trade union, community or local government organizations, where they could become visible and apply social pressure to ameliorate sexual and ethnic inequalities. Does this tendency reinforce the separation between private and public spaces?

A surprising finding referred to 'collective identity'. On both sides of the partition each generation has been socialized into viewing the other as the 'enemy'; each side represses its share of responsibility in creating the conflict and selectively focuses on its own grievances, loss and pain. Although a characteristic of each side was to place special emphasis on its 'Greekness' or 'Turkishness', the majority of women in all communities did acknowledge their 'Cypriot' identity. We correlated this finding with ideology, for we had a hunch that those on the left would be more likely to espouse their 'Cypriot' identity, but on the contrary found that the majority of those identifying as 'Cypriot' did not espouse any particular ideology. Among the Turkish Cypriot women there was a small percentage who, despite being born in Turkey but brought up in Cyprus, felt Cypriot. A very low percentage felt simply 'Greek' or 'Turkish'. This shared Cypriot identity could be utilized politically. The Maronites and Armenians, however, were concerned about their communities losing their cultural distinctiveness and assigned responsibility to the dominant hegemonic group and their own leadership.

Cypriot women's voting behaviour was another surprising finding. Very few women from all communities, especially among the young, thought that a political party's 'sensitivity to women's issues' would make any difference to their voting behaviour. On the contrary, they regarded other considerations like the 'best leader', having the 'best position on the Cyprus conflict' and 'party ideology' as more significant for them. This flies in the face of the women's expressed desire to participate in decision-making, to promote women's issues and concerns and to eliminate the stereotype that politics is a 'man's place'. Much responsibility falls on women's organizations and education to challenge this traditionally-held belief.

Cypriot women's understanding of the values of 'peace' and 'love' was broadened in that more characteristics were attributed to these values than merely the negative definition of peace as 'the absence of war', and of love as either religious or romantic. The fact that women associated peace with social, cultural and political aspects of life, and love with tolerance, trust and understanding could be utilized towards creating a culture of peace and inclusion.

Women's political and historical awareness of the causes of the

Cyprus conflict varied according to each community's experiences of it. We cross-tabulated this question with the refugee and non-refugee categories and, as expected, their understandings varied. A high percentage of women from across all communities, in more or less equal numbers, believed that Britain's colonial 'divide and rule' policy had contributed greatly to fanning the conflict. Turkish Cypriot women were more willing than their Greek Cypriot counterparts to acknowledge that the nationalism of their own community had played a role in creating the conflict. Likewise, although both communities felt that their leaders had made serious mistakes, Turkish Cypriots felt this to a greater extent. This factor may account for the high percentage of women who would vote for a woman president.

Turkish Cypriots were highly critical of the role the Greek Orthodox Church had played in the conflict, whereas women from other communities did not share that view to the same extent. An optimistic result of that finding was that women from right across the communities did not believe that religious and cultural differences were significant in the conflict, thus refuting Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' theory. The Turkish Cypriot experience of economic asymmetry, hardship and exclusion from the outside world through non-recognition of the TRNC, explains why they considered economic inequalities a big factor in the perpetuation of the conflict. Both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women thought that the 'other's intransigence' was a contributing factor as they believed their community had made more compromises for peace. Maronite and Armenian women shared these views to a lesser degree.

The historical experiences of motherlands varied. The Turkish Cypriot women believed that Turkey was less to blame for causing the conflict, which is hardly surprising given that Turkey was seen as their 'rescuer' in 1974 and in view of the dependency that was created, though voices of discontent are being raised today. The Greek Cypriots believed that their 'motherland', Greece, had played a role in the conflict because it instigated the *coup d'état* on 15 July 1974 that gave Turkey the opportunity to invade.

High percentages of women in all communities believed that a lack of communication and contacts between the different groups on the island contributed to the perpetuation of the conflict. This view

underlined the women's support for *rapprochement* and multicommunal contacts through which to build mutual understanding and trust, elements that would contribute to future coexistence and a relational culture. The role of education in promoting and reproducing the national narrative as defined by the dominant groups was repeatedly stressed. The majority of women from the minority communities were acutely aware of how the exclusion of their particular histories and cultures from the school textbooks promoted prejudice and exclusion, and they demanded to see a change in this respect.

The women expressed their desire for a solution to the Cyprus problem as soon as possible, for they believed that peaceful political conditions would foster the development of participatory democracy, pluralism, minority rights and gender equality, as well as challenge the patriarchal and militaristic order. The national problem, women felt, had stifled discussion on social issues, including women's issues. A high percentage, however, declared that they did not know what solution was preferable, which suggests a lack of political socialization and public information. Interestingly, the federation and confederation options received very little support in all communities despite the public debates on the Annan Plan at that time.

Some Latin women felt that Greek Cypriot politicians were being unrealistic when they assured displaced people that no solution would be acceptable unless all refugees were able to return to their homes and properties. When the Green Line was opened in 2003 and many displaced people visited their former homes only to find that Turkish Cypriots or Turks had been living in them for the past 30 years, they felt cheated and lost hope. Most of the women thought that the accession of Cyprus to the EU would bring positive benefits to women and to their more active participation in public life. For this to happen, however, they needed more and better information. The demand for seminars, public education and simplified documents explaining European policies was widely shared. They also believed the media had an important role to play in the dissemination of information.

By and large, despite some scepticism and resistance, the interviewees viewed the dynamics that the crossings to the other side had created as a positive development. The crossings revealed the existence of many bonds of friendships that had survived nationalist politics and

decades of separation. Three tendencies were observed: first, some women from the Greek and Armenian communities resisted showing their passports at the checkpoints on the grounds that it made it appear as if they were legitimating the illegal TRNC. Second, some were uncomfortable about showing their passports, but nonetheless crossed because they wanted to show their children their families' birthplaces and properties and believed that by crossing they sent a political message that the land was not solely Turkish. And third, there were those who very enthusiastic and welcomed the opening as an opportunity to make contact with the 'other' and to contribute to their future coexistence. Moreover, they were happy to find old friends and make new ones. However, very little critical public discussion took place over how to turn these bonds of friendship and neighbourliness into political action.[4]

While Cypriot women had to deal with the psychological and political experience of crossing to the other side, the migrant women, because of globalization and capitalism's need for cheap labour, had to cross international borders to come and work in the homes of professional Cypriot women on both sides of the divide. Cyprus is today a receiving country of migrants. Many professional women adopt a racist attitude towards their domestic workers and fail to recognize that, without their services, they would be unable to pursue their careers; in other words, they do not sufficiently appreciate just how much contribution these migrant women make to their 'liberation'. Both madams and migrant women need to become more aware of how patriarchal and capitalist structures place obstacles in the way of their true 'liberation'; they should refrain from becoming victims of such dynamics, be they at the macro or micro level of male-dominated Cyprus. Migrant female domestic workers in the north had fewer complaints about overwork and exploitation than in the south, mainly because they come to the north with their families and do not sign contracts. A new debate on women's issues in Cyprus needs to include gender oppression, exploitation, discrimination, xenophobia, sexism, class prejudice and racism, for these issues to a greater or lesser extent touch everybody. The women of Cyprus should join hands and establish an inclusive feminist movement that would pave the way for a new world devoid of any form of violence and based on dignity,

connectedness and human equality. Cypriot women and migrant women should recognize their shared interests and common struggles at local and global levels and build networks across borders and cultures.

A feminist and conflict resolution understanding of conflict societies can reveal, as it did in the case of Cyprus, covert oppressions and inequalities as well as heterogeneity among women and open democratic spaces for joint struggles across ethnic divides, class, race and ethnicity.

Recommendations

An important conclusion of this study is the recognition of a need for changes in public consciousness with regard to women's issues. What has emerged clearly from the analyses of Cypriot women's lives from all communities, as well as of female migrant women's lives, is an absence of public debate on such issues, which I regard as equally as important as the international efforts being made to resolve the political conflict. Women need to take more advantage of the international and national documents that are available on promoting their rights for social change. A number of new non-governmental organizations and women's groups have opened up that promise to make systematic efforts to raise public consciousness through the introduction of new programmes on gender studies at the universities. The state, its institutions, NGOs and the media need to work together to bring about social change. The contribution of each sector is specific and different, yet linkages among them are essential.

The role of the NGOs

Cypriot women wanted to get to know each other and here the role of NGOs is significant. NGOs can independently sponsor and organize educational and social gatherings, informal meetings, cultural events, and seminars on topics that interest women of different ages from all communities. NGOs could also organize annual festivals at which women artists and creative minds discuss and present their work. All these activities can help gradually to eliminate many of the misperceptions, ignorance and negative stereotypes that still prevail in all communities. Sources of funding could be the state, international

NGOs, the Council of Europe, the European Union, universities and private sources. NGOs, together with academic institutions, could jointly build research projects to produce new knowledge and information, as well as monitor women's needs and participation in politics and community life. The data these studies provide can be used in executive and legislative policy making and reinforce the civil society role.

The media

The media can be viewed as a change agent and be used positively to promote women's empowerment and contribution to all aspects of life. Journalists must be made aware of how to present stories in a non-sexist, non-racist way; they need to pay attention to the language they use, which is often gendered, and to avoid images of women that are degrading or sex specific. New television and radio programmes produced and managed by both men and women could present and analyse women's issues as these relate to economics, conflict, human rights, human security and development. Too often these issues are separated and gendered. For example, we never see women discussing defence or security issues on Cypriot television and looking at them from a feminist angle. Feminist perspectives will broaden the debate and enrich the political agenda, thus benefiting the whole society.

The state and its institutions

Formal education is seen as the most significant factor in sustaining conflict, promoting the invisibility of the other, and perpetuating the prevailing lack of gender awareness. The plea for changes in the education system, seen as too hierarchical and rigid, and in the curriculum, especially in the content of history, geography and literature textbooks, was unanimous. Women criticized and teaching methods that failed to promote multicommunal coexistence and the values of gender equality, tolerance, respect for difference and appreciation of one's own and the other's culture. New books that rectify these anomalies should be issued to all students throughout their educational careers, with courses on feminism, women's movements, gender, migration and xenophobia introduced at all levels.

The church was faulted for its lack of religious understanding and

tolerance of other faiths and denominations. A dialogue among heads of churches in all communities could help address some of the discrimination many women experience, as well as its proper role in reconciliation and healing.

Establishment of a women's multi-communal centre

Finally, our research in all communities showed that women's discovery of each other's history, rich culture, shared concerns and social practices, as well as a strong desire to connect, provide the right conditions for establishing a Cypriot women's multi-communal centre to include all women who live on the island irrespective of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, citizenship or age. This, in turn, will promote a new women's culture outside mainstream political party agendas, which means creating a new site for political and social action for women that could enrich the public discourse and would highlight as legitimate important shared women's issues as well as their differences across communities.

Such a centre, in collaboration with local universities from, it is hoped, a united federal Cyprus, could sponsor research and publications on women's lives and contributions to private and public struggles in Cyprus, as well as on their literary and artistic achievements. These publications could then be used for teaching at all levels of education, as they did in many Scandinavian countries. This would highlight the richness of multicommunal and multicultural life on the island, thus getting away from rigid bicommunality, bipolarities or binaries. This centre could also play a crucial role during election times in promoting, empowering and supporting women for public office across political ideologies and ethnicities. The centre could link to regional and global women's organizations because issues of gender equality, non-violence, representative democracy, pluralism, social justice, peace and demilitarization concern us all. All feminists – men and women – need to take up this discussion, for contemporary feminisms have their roots in social movements. Feminisms are a politics of protest directed at transforming unequal power relationships between men and women and between women and women and between men and men. This constitutes the new challenge not only for all Cypriots but also for all people who live in divided societies.

Appendix

The Maronites in Cyprus

The presence of the Maronite community in Cyprus dates as far back as the eighth century AD.[1] The community originated in Mount Lebanon and took its name from St Maron who lived as a hermit in Syria from AD 386 to 410. They are Catholics and practise their own religion in separate churches where they still use the Aramaic language for the liturgy. They have their own customs and culture. A few elderly Maronites still speak an Arabic dialect, a sign of their origins, but they all speak Greek and follow the Greek education system. With the independence of the island in 1960, under the terms of the Cyprus constitution, they, along with the Armenians and Latins, chose to affiliate with the Greek Cypriot community. In the constitution these communities were defined as 'religious groups', not minorities, though today the European Union does not accept the designation 'religious group'. The 2001 European Council and the consultative board on the convention for the protection of national minorities, considers the three religious groups in Cyprus to be minority groups. Under the terms of the proposed 'Annan Plan', this decision was adopted as a comprehensive solution in 2004 and they were granted a vote in the parliament (which they do not now have). Thus, the constitution of a United Republic of Cyprus referred to two communities – Greek and Turkish – and three 'minorities' – Latins, Maronites and Armenians.[2] An elected member of the House of Parliament, who is consulted on matters relating to education, religion and other needs of the community, has represented all three communities since 1960. None of them has a vote in the parliament.

The Maronites total about 6000 people. In the twelfth century there were about 50,000 of them and they lived in 12 different villages. Over the centuries their number diminished as a result of persecutions. It had been a close-knit community, and until 1974 the Maronites lived in

the northwestern part of the island in four villages – Kormakitis, Assomatos, Karpashia and Ayia Marina. They owned a considerable amount of land, which provided their main livelihood. Few lived in towns or other parts of the island. After the 1974 Turkish military invasion of the island and the Turkish occupation of their four villages, they were displaced. Now only a few hundred live in the Kormakitis area. The majority of displaced Maronites live in Nicosia and Limassol. For many coming from the rural area adaptation to a city life was not easy.

The educational standard of young Maronites is today high, with many university graduates in all fields. Many have posts in the public sector and the number of those who manage to set up their own private businesses is growing all the time. The main problem the community faces today is that of maintaining their identity, religion and customs. There are many mixed marriages to Greek Cypriot women and men, which means gradual assimilation. In the absence of their own villages, churches and schools, the community is required to make considerable effort to keep its cohesion. Maronites feel that, with the political conflict unresolved and their villages lost, their community may be doomed to extinction. Because of their dispersal, the Maronites are being rapidly assimilated and absorbed into the Greek community. Some 70 per cent of marriages today are mixed, mainly with the Greek Cypriot community, and many of the children born of these marriages do not become Maronites. Only recently have they acquired their own elementary school in the south, but many attend Greek Cypriot secondary schools. In the referendum they voted 'yes' as an expression of their desire to return to their homes. There are some people in the community who, in the event of a solution, would prefer autonomous status to be given to their four villages. Since 2004 the Maronite community has mobilized and demanded the right to regain its places of worship in their ancestral villages for Sunday mass.[3]

The Armenian community

The Armenian community has been on the island since the sixth century. In the twelfth century it established the Armenian Apostolic Christian Church. Centuries later, towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, the arrival of refugees from

Asia Minor, from places like Kilikia, Adana and Tarsus, gave the community a new boost. They mainly settled in the Turkish area of northern Nicosia known as the Armenian quarter. Long before British rule (1878), the Armenians had earned recognition as a community. Not only did the community recognize the Armenian metropolis as the supreme leadership of the Armenian community on Cyprus, or ethnarchy (*Askain Ishchanoutioun*), but others did too. With the independence of Cyprus in 1960, as I mentioned earlier, the Armenians voted by a large majority to belong to the Greek Cypriot community. Their representative (who has always been male) is the link between the community and the Republic of Cyprus government.

While the great majority of Armenians on Cyprus belong to the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Christian Church, there are some Evangelists and Catholics among them. And, although the Cyprus constitution defined Armenians as a religious community, they undoubtedly form an ethnic unit, for they have their own language with a separate alphabet, as well as culture and tradition that goes back thousands of years. As a nation they have a history of wanderings and have experienced wars, conquests and defeats. The Armenians in Turkey were the victims of the first genocide of the twentieth century.

Until 1960, when Armenian schools in Cyprus passed into the jurisdiction of an Armenian school committee appointed by the Council of Ministers and Ministry of Education, Armenian education was under the control of the church. The interest the late president of the Cyprus Republic, Archbishop Makarios, showed in the Armenian community resulted in the donation of a large piece of land at Acropolis district in Nicosia where, in 1972, a modern primary school was built. It was named 'Narek' in honour of Saint Krikor Narekatsi and today there are three Narek primary schools under one administration. In total, they have approximately 200 pupils and are publically financed. Their curriculum includes the syllabus of the Greek Cypriot Ministry of Education as well as specific elements of Armenian education, including the history of the Armenian nation. They publish their own newspapers and broadcast a daily radio programme.

In 1963, after the outbreak of intercommunal violence and breakdown of the Cyprus constitution, the community in the northern part of Nicosia lost its Apostolic Church of Sourp Asdvadzadzin,

which remained under Turkish Cypriot control. The community also lost its own metropolis, its primary school and its flourishing businesses. The Armenians fled from the Armenian quarter of Nicosia in 1963–64 for security reasons and settled in the Greek part of the city in the south, but some went to Larnaca and Limassol. Others migrated to Soviet Armenia or to Great Britain.[4] In the 1974 Turkish invasion they then lost the monastery of Makaravank-Sourp Maga in the Pentadactylos mountains and Ganchvar Sourp Asdvadzadzin monastery (Panayia in Ammoxostos) in Famagusta.

In 1981, a new metropolitan temple in traditional Armenian architectural style, Panayia Theotokos, was constructed with the assistance of several contributors; in 1984, on the same site, the Armenian metropolis was built. Thus, religion and the church, contribute to the social cohesion and maintenance of traditions and culture. Armenians speak Greek and many over 50 years of age speak Turkish and use Armenian and Turkish cuisine. Many had Turkish Cypriot friends with whom they reconnected after the 2003 crossings to the north. According to the Armenian representative, the majority of Armenians voted in favour of the Annan Plan in the hope of recovering their lost properties. It is estimated that 3500 Armenians live in Cyprus today.

The Latin community

Due to its geopolitical position, Cyprus, a bridge between East and West, has since ancient times been used as a stopping off place by European traders. A large number of these traders chose Cyprus as their permanent place of residence. The presence of the Latins (or Roman Catholics) on the island can be traced to the twelfth-century Crusades. Their official presence is marked by the landing on the island of Richard the Lionheart in 1191 on his way to Jerusalem. It was followed by the Frankish nobles who ruled Cyprus until 1489 – that is more than three centuries – followed by the Venetians, another Latin group who ruled until 1571 when the Ottomans conquered the island.

When the Ottomans arrived, the Latin community almost disappeared. Some chose to return to their place of origin, while others, especially large landowners who wanted to avoid being deprived of their properties, chose to assimilate with the Greeks, to whom the Ottomans were more conciliatory. Yet others converted to Islam as a

means both of surviving and retaining their properties. Thus, we note a decreasing Latin community in the period between 1571 and 1800. Around 1800, however, due to the gradual weakening of the Ottoman Empire, European consuls started to arrive on the island and they were mainly Roman Catholics. Merchants, businessmen and others from every Catholic corner of Europe then followed to form the first nucleus of a renewed Latin community. After Cyprus became a British colony, we note a resurgence of Latins in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, due to the rise of ethnic nationalism in the 1950s, many abandoned Cyprus and went back to their places of origin.

The 1991 census showed that only 290 Latins were registered as citizens of the republic. A search the Latin clergy then initiated began to locate the Latins around the island and identified those who came to Cyprus after marrying Greek Cypriots while studying abroad. These people, though they attended the Catholic Church, failed to register either because they did not know that Latin in the Cyprus constitution meant Roman Catholic or because they did not consider it important. After this census was completed the number of Latins had risen to 700. Today about 7000 call themselves Roman Catholics and live in Paphos and Nicosia. Many are retired but there are also young families with children who will form the future nucleus of Latins in Cyprus.

The contribution of the Latin community to Cyprus includes medieval monuments such as the Bellapais Abbey in the north, the Saint Sophia church in Nicosia, which was converted into a mosque during the Ottoman conquest in 1572, St Nicolas church in the walled city of Famagusta, also converted into a mosque, the medieval walls in Nicosia and Famagusta, the Kolossi castle, and the Limassol and Kyrenia castles (all built for military purposes). The distinct Cypriot dialect borrowed many Latin words, such as words for door, road, fork, chair, the monetary gift in the New Year, and many more. Among members of the Latin community are many well-known artists, musicians and educators. The most ancient school in Cyprus, which still continues to function, is the Terra Santa College in Nicosia, which Catholic nuns established in 1646 but which now accepts students from all faiths and nationalities. The Latin minority is presently planning to approach the Cyprus government about changing its name to 'Roman-Catholic Latin minority'. According to the Latin

representative, Benino Mantovani, the main problem for the Latin community today is the absence of financial resources with which to maintain their churches and pay their priests.[5] Most Cypriot Latins speak Greek and Italian or French.

The Greek Cypriot community

Greek-Cypriots form the largest community in Cyprus. The arrival of people on the island goes back to the early Neolithic age (7000–5300 BC). The settlement of Mycenaeans on the island was significant for converting the indigenous people into Greek Cypriots. At first they came as merchants, attracted by the main produce of Cyprus, copper. Cyprus was an important location for mining and processing the mineral. Mycenaeans were people of the sea, so they came to Cyprus on board their ships. Their settlement began in 1400 BC. Excavations showed that Mycenaeans settled in various locations near the coastline and in the interior of the island.

Not only did the Greeks bring their merchandise to Cyprus, but they also brought their toponymies (names of places), institutions and ways of worship. Following their settlement, ties with Greece became more powerful. Cyprus became a vital trade centre, a link between East and West. This brought wealth and prosperity to its people, as seen from the archaeological excavations at Engomi and Kition.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century BC another wave of Greeks came to Cyprus. This event coincided with the myth that heroes of the Trojan War had come there. Before the end of the twelfth century BC Cyprus welcomed Mycenaean emigrants once again as a result of troublesome times in Greece. The descent of Dorians to Greece and the islands in 1100 BC also resulted in the settlement in Cyprus of refugees from Crete.

With the colonization of Cyprus by the Mycenaeans, the Greek element dominated. The Greek language, customs and religion spread among the Cypriots and gave the island its characteristically Greek character. The previous inhabitants of the island were gradually assimilated and their language forgotten. This change took place in a peaceful way since the Mycenaeans came to Cyprus as merchants and immigrants and not as conquerors.

Cypriots managed to keep and preserve this ethnic and cultural

character, even though they were constantly under occupation by foreign conquerors and the periods of freedom they experienced were very short. At the beginning of the first century AD, Christianity was brought to the island by the apostles Pavlos and Varnavas and this added to the characteristics of the Cypriot people. Prior to adopting Christianity Cyprus was the centre of the worship of Aphrodite. Cypriots experienced numerous imported cultural influences from the people who passed through the island as conquerors (Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, Byzantines, Franks, Venetians, Ottomans, British and Turks). However they managed to integrate various foreign elements without losing their own characteristics. Tradition has been kept alive until today as well as the ancient Cypriot Greek dialect.

The Turkish Cypriot community

One of the fiercest struggles over Cyprus took place between the Venetians and the Ottoman Turks in 1570–71 when the Turkish sultan, Selim II, sent his navy to occupy the island. All the other islands in the Mediterranean, and the whole of the Middle East, including Egypt and North Africa, became part of the Ottoman Empire. Using Cyprus as a base, the Venetians had been intercepting Turkish vessels bound for other parts of the Ottoman Empire, thereby creating tension for the Turks who in 1570–71 landed in Limassol and after fierce fights, especially in Nicosia and Famagusta, costing more than 50,000 lives, Cyprus became part of the Ottoman Empire.

After this day, mostly farmer families but also artisans and tribal families have been moved to Cyprus from parts of Anatolia. These Turks came from Konya, Karaman, Mersin, Yozgat, Alanya, Antalya, Beyşehir, Aksaray, Niğde, Aydın, Kayseri and Samsun. It was estimated that by the seventeenth century more than 30,000 people had been moved from Turkey to Cyprus.

During the three centuries of Ottoman rule of the island there were many circumstances in which peaceful coexistence prevailed at the grass-root level as well as joint class struggles against exploitation and heavy taxation.

The Turkish influence on the administration, public works (waterworks and irrigation) as well as *evkaf* and education can clearly be seen on the island to this day. The Turkish Cypriot community was

gradually formed and by the twentieth century constituted close to 20 per cent of the total population. In 1980 the Turkish Cypriot community was 18 per cent of the total population.

In order not to give up too much after the defeat of the Russians, the island was offered to the British in 1878. Although the government of the island was transferred to the British, ownership was considered to have remained with the Ottoman Empire.

In 1914, the British completely took over the island, while in 1923 Turkey accepted the transfer of the island to the British with the Lausanne Treaty. And in 1925 the island was declared a British Crown Colony and the first ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the island was appointed.

The Institution of the Turkish Minority in Cyprus (KATAK) was formed in 1943 and in 1944 Dr Kutchuk established the Cyprus National Turkish People's Party; on 5 November 1957 the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) was formed. Thereafter Greek and Turkish Cypriot nationalisms grew to such an extent that the communities became divided, with each pursuing a different vision for Cyprus.

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Appendix

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