Original Article

Tactical Chor(e)ographies: Tactics of Inhibition as a Threat to Public Space in Limassol's Seafront

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Abstract

This article explores the area that spans between the boardwalk and the Limassol Marina to highlight the tensions between two major trends in terms of the constructions of urban spaces worldwide, namely, open public spaces and segre/gated communities. Between them, lies the area of the boardwalk, one of the most successful public spaces in the island in terms of public access, openness, and inclusion. Employing ethnographic methods, this article examines walking in and other uses of these areas. It challenges de Certeau's binary framework by suggesting that power may be more complex than simply two discrete levels, hence tactics are not a monopoly of the "powerless." I argue that those striving to be perceived as powerful and "in control" employ a range of "tactics of inhibition" to limit possible uses of space. "Tactical chor(e)ographies" is proposed as an analytical term that can capture these processes.

Keywords

tactics, public space, inhibitions, semi-public, urban ethnography, informality

Introduction: The Limassol Seafront

Nikiforos Pampakas, the Limassol Marina's marketing manager, stated to the Guardian (Smith, 2018), in a piece aptly titled "Welcome to Limassolgrad: the city getting rich on Russian money": "our aim is to become the Monte Carlo of the Eastern Mediterranean." This "Montecarlization," however, comes with a price. The seafront area of Limassol is witnessing a rapid—if not also rabid—urban development in recent years. Various projects involving tall buildings are currently being implemented, most of them around the waterfront areas. Several "development" projects are currently awaiting permission by the authorities, which is not a simple matter, as the legislative framework poses obstacles. To obtain a permit for a tall building, one has to obtain it as an "exception" or a "deviation" from the building legislations of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC).

Interestingly, in 2000, the "Board for the Study of Deviations" (*Simvoulio Parekkliseon*) was established with the mission to study, evaluate, and submit applications for permissions in derogation from the provisions of the Development Plans. Those who are granted such exceptional building permits are required to provide, as "compensatory benefits," open public spaces, such as

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parking spaces or open plazas. Even though the Olympic Residence and the Limassol Marina typically fulfill these requirements, the usability and openness of the spaces they have provided is questionable. These public spaces seem to be dominated by a set of tactics of *inhibition* (see Kouros, 2021a, 2021b, 2022), as opposed to prohibitions, the aim of which is to "discourage"— otherwise legal—spatial uses and trajectories that do not fall into those desired by the owners.

The research setting is an area of the seaside city of Limassol, bounded by the Olympic Residence (colloquially called "the twin towers"),[1] and the Limassol Marina, which is the largest project of its kind in Cyprus, both "exclusive" as well as *excluding*. The research setting spans 3.5 km along the seaside. In between these two private, gated building projects stretches the area of the promenade (colloquially called "molos") and the beach area. The latter two areas are good models of inclusion in terms of age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and diversity of uses, as I will illustrate later in the article. The area includes three distinct places: The promenade (*molos*), the Old Harbor and the Limassol Marina. The former is a place where various mainstream and marginal activities co-exist, and people of different ethnic backgrounds make use of. It is a linear park, stretching approximately 2 km along the sea. The park has a skatepark, an open-air gym, cafes, a bike lane, playgrounds, a permanent open-air sculpture exhibition and more. Moreover, every Sunday, it is the meeting point of non-European migrants in the RoC, most of which are of South-East and East Asian origin (mainly Philippinos, Sri Lankans, and Vietnamese, see Kouros & Papadakis, 2018) and the majority work as housekeepers and unskilled workers. The area offers itself for their socialization during their day off, providing ample shade, and they often organize formal and informal events in the area, such as picnics and bazaars with local products from their countries of origin. Moreover, the promenade is the place where most of the (admittedly few) homeless people of Limassol spend the night, yet another indicator of its openness for different uses.

The Old Port is the area that the historic port of the city used to occupy. It has been recently transformed to a semi-public space, managed by the Port Authority, which also owns the land and was responsible for the development. The Old Port is over-commercialized and the lack of shaded areas is striking. Even though the Port Authority claims that the project is "a social contribution of the Authority to the citizens of Limassol" and that it upgrades quality of life, the plethora of cafes and restaurants (more than 20) in a relatively small area says otherwise.

Finally, the Limassol Marina was a multi-million construction project, including the construction of a marina, as well as a real estate development of approximately 40,000 m², which would include residential and tourist uses, and would target "upper class clientele" (Limassol Marina Concession Project, n.d.). The Concessionaire has undertaken the development, operation, management, and exploitation of the Marina for 53 years under a Lease Agreement signed with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Cyprus. The Engineering, Procurement and Construction Contract has been assigned to a Joint Venture of Greek and Cypriot firms. In 2014, it opened for the public. It includes 285 residential units, 14 restaurants, coffee shops and bars, 50 commercial units, while it covers 170,000 m² of sea area and 48,000 m² of built area. The Marina comprises of a part that is open to the public and another that involves gated communities, only accessible by residents. The accessible part is also over-commercialized, with more than 15 cafes and restaurants and more than 20 retail stores, rendering the space more similar to an open-air mall than a public space.

Walking and Wayfaring, Tactics and Strategies

The title of the article refers both to the research methodology and its results. The article is based on ethnographic research between 2017 and 2019, focusing mostly on walking and observing people walking and "wasting time" in the promenade, the old port, and the marina. Moreover, the methodology involved loitering in the area as an embodied ethnographic experience,

approaching an understanding of the conditions being studied through the immersion of my own mind and body into the world of my informants (see Holmes, 2013). In line with Holmes (2013, p. 39), "my embodied experiences enriched my fieldwork in unexpected ways," offering thickness and vividness to the ethnographic description of everyday life. Moreover, even though theoretically, a (mental) bird's eye view is always possible, even then, Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues, one "could not grasp the unity of the object without the mediation of bodily experience" (p. 203). To have a more comprehensive perspective an embodied subject that "can view successively from various positions" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 203) is required. The city can be seen from above and comprehended as a living map only because it can also be seen from below, from in among the traffic. Merleau-Ponty thus proposed that a distinction—which is also crucial to de Certeau's rethinking of spatiality—be made between "geometric space" and "anthropological space" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93).

Ingold (2010, p. 135) also points out that "like the dancer, the walker is thinking in movement." Ingold's metaphor, likening a walker to a dancer, inspired the title of this article and partly its method. I refer to walking around, "writing in space" as de Certeau (1984) suggests, by users/ social actors as *chorographies*, in the literal Greek sense, meaning that they "write space" with their movement and trajectories. I call *choreographies* the designated uses for each particular space, what the designer had in mind, which can be characterized as strategy level action, dictating the use of space from above, by planners/authorities. Choreographies are planned, allow for certain movement and negotiation of the planned movement, while improvisation and maneuvering are kept at a minimum. Finally, Chor(e)ographies, are the two processes together, including tactical actions by the powerful, because I suggest that power is relative, hence the more powerful (vis-à-vis less powerful in a certain context, for example, private interest vs. walkers) may also use tactics like the less powerful.

Walking has received much attention by theorists of space and the city. According to de Certeau (1984), it is specifically the walking people who bring the city to life. They do not have that god-like "all-seeing power" and are therefore trapped within the "city's grasp." It is these people who write the "urban text" without being able to read it. With thousands of individuals each writing her own story and giving his own interpretation, the city is pieced together like a patchwork quilt of individual viewpoints and opinions. Ingold (2010, p. S126), argues that the objective of "engineering of the ground surface by coating it with a layer of hard and resistant material such as concrete or asphalt, is to convert the ground into a level, homogeneous, pre-existent and inert surface," in order "to make the earth into a stage, platform, or baseboard, or, in a word, into an infrastructure." The field in this case is a place of leisure, a park and most people are walking as wayfarers, rather than as people who are transporting from one point to another. As Ingold (2010) explains, unlike the continual tactical maneuvering of the wayfarer, the passenger's career may be understood as a series of strategic moves from location to location. In de Certeau's (1984) terms, wayfaring is tactical rather than strategic: its paths are "wandering" and "errant" (p. xviii).

De Certeau (1984) focused on the realm of routine, everyday practices—the "arts of doing" in his own words—such as walking, talking, reading, dwelling, and cooking and he argued that they are characterized by an element of creative resistance, what he calls anti-discipline, enacted by ordinary people. He outlines an important critical distinction between *strategies* and *tactics* in a never-ending battle of *repression* and *expression*. According to him, strategies are used by those within organizational power structures, whether small or large, and are deployed against some external entity to institute a set of relations for official or proper ends:

> I call a "strategy" the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an "environment." A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper (propre) and thus

serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it [. . .] Political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model (1984, p. xix)

On the contrary, tactics are employed by those who are subjugated. In his own words (1984, p. xix), a "tactic" is "a calculus which cannot count on a 'proper' (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality." A tactic is opportunistic: it "depends on time-it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing'. Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events to turn them into 'opportunities'" (de Certeau, 1984, p. xix). Tactics are used in more limited ways and seized *momentarily* within spaces, both physical and psychological, produced and governed by more powerful strategic relations. For "proper" above, we could substitute "official," while for "it does not keep," we could substitute "ephemeral," a key emphasis of this article.

Over-Commercialization: The Old Harbor and the Marina

The uses that people make of the promenade are in sharp contrast to those of the Old Harbor and the Marina. In the former, an area characterized by openness, one can observe a vast variety of uses and a great deal of diversity in terms of socioeconomic status as well as age groups and ethnicity. In the Marina, uses are limited, mostly in walking or sitting for drinks or food in the cafes and restaurants. What follows is an examination of those tactics and strategies, as employed by different social actors in this context.

Andros,[2] a former municipal councilor, listed to me a few of the tactics employed in the Old Harbor, which is managed by the Port Authority of Cyprus. They have employed different tactics to "discourage" possible uses: "they have not provided an adequate number of parking spaces with the required infrastructure to discourage fishermen from working in the area." This can be viewed as an indirect form of gentrification, since the Old Port used to be the place where fishermen worked in the past decades. Nowadays, they cannot reach the sea by car, which makes their work difficult, and they are likely to work in other fish harbors in the outskirts of the city. This can be viewed as a strategy, as it is linked to the design of the space, or as what I call here *tactic of inhibition*, in the sense that fishermen are not *prohibited* from using the port for fishing, but are rather *inhibited* or *discouraged* from doing so. Essentially, he notes that the Marina and Old Harbor area have a "*semi-public* character" (*imi-dhemosio kharaktira*). This character is dictated *choreographically*, since it renders the Old Port usable for certain activities without officially prohibiting other uses. Instead, it is precisely the lack of parking spaces close-by that inhibits these uses. In other words, it dictates how to use the space, like a choreography limits a dancer to a pre-defined, strategic sequence of movements, as opposed to improvising, which is kept at minimum.

Another tactic, highlighted by Andros and also observed during the research, is the detour of the bike lane to bypass the old port and the marina, rather than crossing these areas. Indeed, there is a sharp disruption in space as one crosses the boundary between the promenade and the Old Harbor. An array of modern buildings, serving as shops, gelaterias, and fast food restaurants facing the wayfarer who moves from the promenade to the old port, form a kind of boundary, resembling a wall, which clarifies that the wayfarer crosses from one distinct area to another (Image 1). This boundary is inscribed with a plethora of menacing signs so as to ensure that the "new" rules applicable from this point onward will not go unnoticed. These rules exclude the use of bicycles, skateboards, as well as fishing and swimming, activities which are all allowed and commonly practiced in the area of the promenade. The signs also warn the wayfarers for the presence of CCTV and security guards, followed by the inscription (Image 2): "PLEASE ENTER AT YOUR OWN RESPONSIBILITY/PERPETRATORS WILL BE PROSECUTED."

One would expect to encounter such a wording in a different context (e.g., preventing trespassing) than a semi-public space. The space is managed by the Port Authority of Cyprus,

Image 1. The Entrance to the Old Port.

Image 2. The Sign at the Old Port Entrance.

a state organization. "Perpetrators" refers to those biking, skating, fishing, and swimming. This sign, an outright prohibition at first glance, may also be seen as an inhibition, at least on the rhetorical level, based on Austin's idea of "making things with words" (1975). In Austin's terminology, the sign can be seen as a perlocutionary act, alerting the passers-by to the impending danger of punishment if they choose to disregard the rules. The word "perpetrator" is also interesting. It could be attributed to a sloppy translation; however, it is a rather strict term to use for those who skate in the premises of the Old Port. Identical signs are placed in all entrances of the Old Port, reminding passers-by that they are entering a different spatial configuration. In all, the Old Port resembles a private space, mainly because of the signage and the architectural choices.

The "wall" of buildings delineates it and the signage makes clear that this space is managed by the Port Authority, which makes sure to remind those crossing of the new rules. The

authority's logo is also an important element that establishes ownership. As regards the Marina, Andros makes clear that most of its premises are open for public uses, excluding the residential areas and the anchorage. He therefore considers the Marina as a semi-public space. In reality, the Marina is more of a semi-private space, given that the land and water it encloses is being leased to the consortium for 65 years by the state. Another of my interlocutors, Maria, a 43-year-old sales employee in the Marina, had a completely different view than Andros. She appraised the fact that neither cars nor bicycles have access in the Marina as positive, while she also approved the presence of private security guards and CCTV. She noted that this project will nurture generations of "Europeans" and that it promotes multiculturalism. As she eloquently put it, "we are becoming more civilized." Interestingly, she views multiculturalism as a positive development *only* when it involves ethnicities that she perceives as "more civilized," such as northern Europeans and Russians. She also noted that in the promenade there is no *security* (*en iparkhi* security) in the same sense as in the Marina. While in Greek security and safety are both translated as "asfalia," Maria opted to use the English word for security which usually refers to security guard and private security companies—an interesting diction.

She went on by saying that people should not sit in the public spaces of the Marina but rather walk or sit in a café or restaurant in an attempt to justify the apparent lack of benches and natural shade. She elaborated on this further by saying that

> . . . if someone sits at a bench, who is going to clean up the mess? They would drink beers; they would push each other around. This is an ugly sight. The entrepreneurs can't stand watching those people on the benches who . . .

In this excerpt, it is made clear that the "desired" visitors are "entrepreneurs" or middle-class people and it is implied that immigrants are not welcomed, as it is mostly immigrants from Eastern Europe who usually sit on benches in the promenade and consume alcohol.

This implies that certain ethno-social groups are not prohibited but inhibited from using this space. What inhibits them is the over-commercialization of the area, where expensive, upper class cafes and restaurants abound. This is achieved by the very design of the space: The lack of benches and natural shades can also be viewed as an inhibition tactic employed by the Marina owners to avoid unwelcome visitors. This is also corroborated by a post by Alexandros, an activist architect, active in the urban social movements in Limassol that oppose privatization of public spaces and demolition of historical buildings in the city:

> As for the Old Port, the Marina and the "skyscrapers," my position is already noted. Beyond my subjective opposition to the Postmodern Architectural Style of *false historicity* in the Marina, there are objective architectural failures. Objectively, the Marina fails, as *there is no bench to sit down*, for the ones who need it.

The Marina is in fact a place of tactics of inhibition as opposed to prohibitions. The Marina and the Old Harbor area are what Banerjee (2001) calls "pseudo-public" spaces, which are private spaces that attract the public, are developing *at the expense of public spaces* and are designed, controlled, and operated in a way that attempts to strictly control movement and action. Even though the Old Harbor has the characteristics Banerjee attributes to pseudo-public spaces, it is a reversed pseudo-public space, because it is not private but public, albeit only in theory.

Loitering with others, revealed some of the *chorographies* of locals, as well as the choreographies. One afternoon, I joined a group of three elderly men and after I ask them, I joined them in wayfaring along the promenade. As soon as we reached the boundary between the promenade and the Old Harbor, they did a U-turn and went back on walking the other way. This illustrated the inhibiting role of the signs, in the sense that they also felt that this is a limit. In fact, many
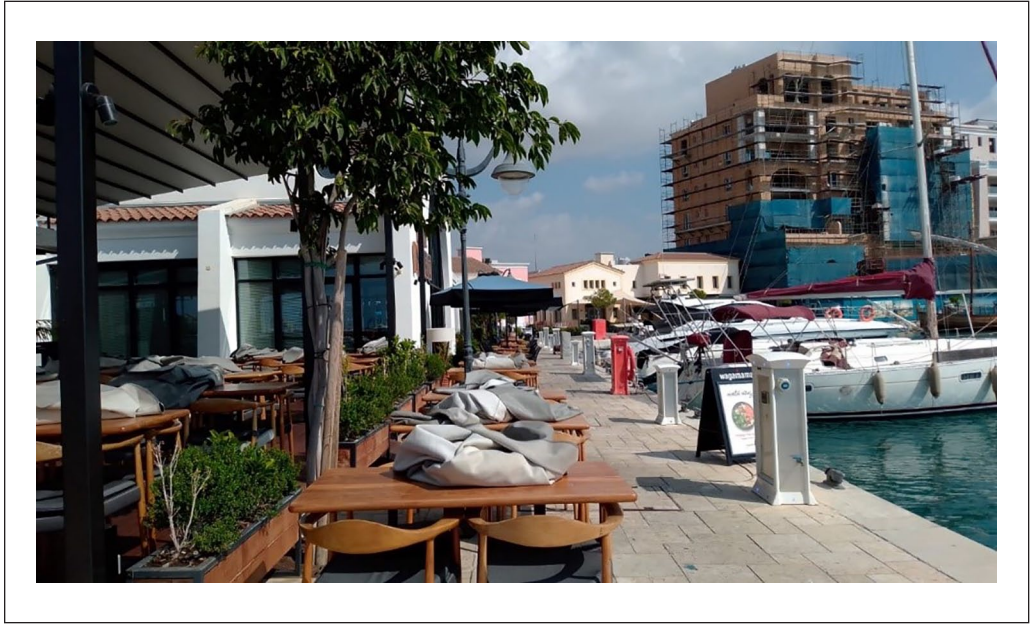
Image 3. Over-commercialization at the Marina.

wayfarers do the same U-turn at the same spot; where the signs and the disruptive buildings I described earlier are located. I asked them why they do not keep on walking at the Old Port or the Marina. They replied that they do not have money on them and that these places are for those who "have" (*en yia tzinous pou kratoun*). Even though they are not forced to sit at a café or a restaurant, they perceive these places as offering uses as limited as that. Low et al. (2005, p. 1), argue that in this new century, the threat to public space lies exactly in the employment of patterns of design and management that exclude some people and reduce social and cultural diversity. This exclusion is often employed deliberately to reduce the number of "undesirables," while in other cases, "it is a by-product of privatization, commercialization, historic preservation, and specific strategies of design and planning." Such practices often result in the reorganization of spaces so that "only one kind of person—often a tourist or middle-class visitor—feels welcomed" (ibid).

This leads to a subsequent reduction of open, urban public spaces "as more and more places are privatized, gated or fenced, closed for renovation, and/or redesigned to *restrict activities*" (Low et al., 2005, p. 1, my italics). Building on this idea, I here focus on *inhibitions* (see also Kouros, 2021), as opposed to prohibitions, which are tactics employed by the more powerful to discourage various tactics of the less so. These inhibitions, usually appear in the form of mobile objects (or the lack of certain objects, like benches or shades) located strategically in space. Such a pattern of design is the over-commercialization of the Marina and the Old Harbor, which discourages certain behaviors and uses (Image 3).

In one of our discussions, Maria also mentioned that the beach located in the Marina is public, as there is a "European law that prohibits privatization of beaches." However, she underlines that "most people do not go there" (excluding those who live in the Marina or own a house there) because they do not have access to parking spaces close to the beach, they are not allowed to bring their own drinks and food. The lack of parking space along with the various signs that stress the fact that the beach is surrounded by residences ("Private Property. Do not Disturb"), and the prohibition of bringing food or drinks are also tactical inhibitions to discourage unwelcome visitors.

Image 4. The Only Possible Entrance Trajectory to the Marina Beach.

The most striking example is the "prohibition" of bringing food and drinks on the beach inside the Marina. It is a common practice for many people in the RoC to bring their own food and drinks to the beach. Maria justified this by saying that the Marina aims at a "*high level* of tourism." She also said that "there is a 40 km long beach [along Limassol], are you going to sit here [in this particular beach]?" Interestingly, there are quite a few examples of this kind of inhibitions that I came across during my research. Indicatively, in a newspaper piece (Nestoros, 2019), titled "the portable cooler movement is back," the author notes:

> The movement that first appeared a few years ago is returning, claiming the indisputable right to take coolers to the Cypriot beaches. The occasion was once again the ban imposed by a businessman in Lady's Mile [local beach] on swimmers to carry coolers to the beach in front of his leisure center. For this purpose, he has posted a sign warning that it is not allowed to transport coolers. However, this is a public beach, which in no way belongs to him.

Back to the Marina, in addition to what Maria told me, I observed that there are also rather obvious inhibitions spread in that small beach. First, the designer of the space surrounding the beach has predefined the sole possible trajectory with the use of pavements and a most effective instrument to guide wayfarers: hedgerows and big flowerpots (Image 4)—movable, *ephemeral* objects and plants that guide the wayfarer through a trajectory, limiting her ability to create her *chorography* and dictating the designer's *choreography* instead. Indeed, there is *only one* possible trajectory one may use to reach the beach. For de Certeau (1984), ephemerality is a characteristic of tactics and not one of strategies. The latter are seen as permanent since they are imposed by authority. However, the ephemerality of inhibitions demonstrates that tactics can, indeed, be imposed from the more powerful as well, in an attempt to impose their own choreography on a space that may be used by anyone in theory. Yet, the powerful, strive to guide the wayfarer to one direction by making use of ephemeral tactics.

Ingold's (2010) argument that engineering of the ground surface, makes the earth into an *infrastructure*, holds true in this case, as the opposition between the earth's surface and its surfacing implies the strategic element of choreographing the wayfarers through their wandering. As he (2010, p. S126, my italics) explains, the wayfarer, in following a path, "*negotiates* or *improvises*
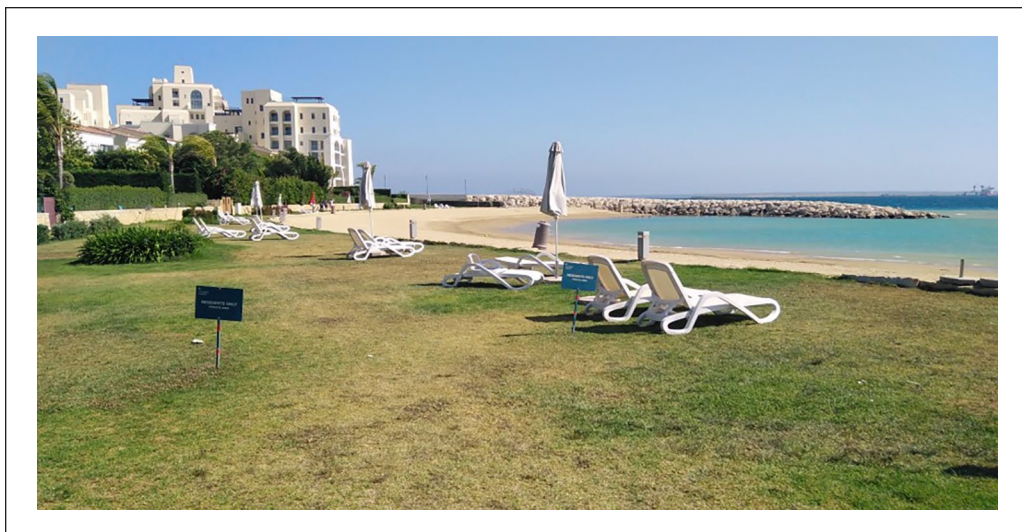
Image 5. "Residents Only" Area at the Beach.

a passage as he goes *along*." Even though Ingold does not discuss this as an *inhibition*, in this case, the engineering of the route is in and of itself a tactic, given that it does not leave any space for improvisation.

Unlike the continual *tactical* maneuvering of the wayfarer, the passenger's trajectory may be understood as a series of *strategic* moves from location to location. "But while the road provides the infrastructural support for transporting persons and their effects from point to point, quotidian life proceeds for the most part along winding paths that infiltrate the ground on either side" (Ingold, 2010, p. S127). The kind of movement observed in a park is tactical and not strategic. Lack of money is not the only reason that the elderly people I came across during my research were not interested to continue their stroll to the Marina. They also told me that it is *boring.* This is because they do not have room for improvisation, or even to see others improvising. In one's own words: "it is all the same. Here, we start from here [pointing towards the main promenade pavement] and we go back from there [pointing towards the inner pavement of the park and the lawn]." This is an indirect recognition that *choreographies* in the Marina are successful in suppressing *chorographies*, that is, the improvised wayfaring that lacks a destination.

Moreover, several signs have been placed in the area surrounding the Marina beach, communicating various messages, such as "no food or drinks allowed," except when bought from the beach bar located there, "please keep quiet" alongside with an array of signs reminding wayfarers that there are private residences nearby, and so on. In addition, a kiosk with a security guard is located close to the entrance of the beach, yet another inhibition tactic. Yet, the most striking inhibition in the public beach is the existence of signs that write "residents only" (Image 5). In fact, during my research, I witnessed an incident where a group of teenagers were "discouraged" from using that area by the security guard (Image 6) and they eventually left. Interestingly, the guard did not impose the "prohibition" as one would expect, but politely and informally, given that this is a legally a public beach.

In general, the common characteristics of all those tactics are that they are mobile/ephemeral and not static/permanent. In other words, they can be moved, if required. They may or may not have been included in the initial strategic plans as presented to the "more powerful," that is, the state, or municipality, for approval. Nevertheless, all these inhibitions were not accepted by the public from the beginning; there were indirect reactions. Maria said that Cypriots were fighting

Image 6. The Security Guard Asking the Teenagers to Leave.

over the bars placed in the entrance of the Marina to regulate circulation by car. They also resisted some other regulations that govern the Marina such as the prohibition of the lack of shirt or t-shirt. It is not unusual for males to be shirtless during the summer in Cyprus, even in public spaces. People, in other words, attempted to negotiate other uses of space that are inhibited.

The Promenade and Akti Olympion

Tactics of inhibition are also observed in the promenade, one of the most inclusive public spaces in Cyprus. It is a place where various mainstream and marginal activities co-exist, and people of different ethnic backgrounds make use of. The area has a skatepark, an open-air gym, cafes, a bike lane, playgrounds, a permanent open-air sculpture exhibition, and more. Moreover, every Sunday, it is the meeting point of non-European migrants in the RoC, most of which are of South-East and East Asian origin (mainly Philippinos, Sri Lankans, and Vietnamese, see Kouros & Papadakis, 2018) and the majority work as housekeepers and unskilled workers. The area of the promenade offers itself for their socialization during their day off, providing welcome shade, and they often organize formal and informal events in the area, such as picnics and bazaars with local products from their countries of origin. (see Image 7).

Locals and immigrants usually spend time at this area for various reasons, including working out, biking, jogging, visiting the playgrounds with their kids, frequenting the cafes in the area, and taking walks along the seaside, or just hanging out gazing at passers-by or the sea. Moreover, the promenade is the place where most of the (admittedly few) homeless people of Limassol spend the night, yet another indicator of its openness for different uses.
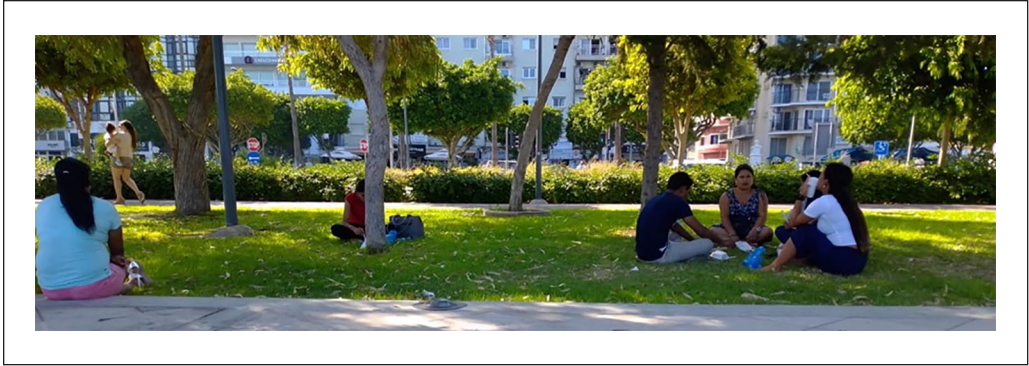
Image 7. Variety of Use(r)s in the Promenade.

Image 8. Bird's Eye View of the Molos Area.
Source. Google maps

Image 9. Bird's Eye View of the Marina.

A striking strategic difference between the promenade and Old Harbor/Marina areas is related to their dictated trajectories. The promenade area offers many alternative routes and trajectories by design, not only in terms of infrastructure and paved routes but also because most of the area is covered by lawn, therefore offering a variety of possible *chorographies* to users and wayfarers. On the contrary, the Old Harbor and the marina offer two possible, linear, *choreographic* trajectories in most places and even just one in some others (Images 8 and 9).

Privatization and commercialization, however, is also a trend threatening the openness of the promenade and Akti Olympion. This commercialization is made possible with the tolerance of the regulatory authorities. More specifically, there are certain tactics employed by the café owners and people who manage the beach-beds and kiosks in the promenade and in Akti Olympion. Across the entire area, there are six cafes that serve beverages and fast food. The cafes are owned by the municipality and, through a bidding process, their management is awarded to the highest bidder. Due to competition, the highest bids are rather high, therefore expensive for the successful bidders to maintain. In response, the latter expand the cafes by adding more tables and mobile

Image 10. Initial Plans of the "Red Cafe" in the Molos Area.

constructs, such as glass windows, fences, or hedgerows to claim and take advantage of as much (public) space as possible (Images 10 and 11).

This, however, is public space and the municipal authorities seem to tolerate this to "keep out of trouble" or, as eloquently put by one of my interlocutors, Nikos, "as long as they are receiving the leasing money, why bother arguing with them?" In this case, we can observe tactics employed from both sides. On one hand, the owners of the cafes expand into the public space and appropriate parts of it and on the other, the "powerful," the municipality, contrary to their strategy, which would be to keep the park space as initially designed, "play fool" (*pezoun pello*) or do not bother to impose their own strategy and rules. Antreas, an interlocutor and municipal employee, told me that "you can't fine them (*en imporis na tous grapsis*). They pay a lot of money in municipal taxes and rent already." This is an example of how de Certeau's framework can be challenged. One would expect that the powerful would employ their strategy and prohibit the café owners from appropriating what was initially designed as public space.

During my research in the cafés, several interlocutors spoke of bribery; however, these accounts should be considered as assumptions. Given that bribery is perceived as common practice in Cyprus, my interlocutors often assume the obvious that street-level bureaucrats receive money to ignore the illegal appropriation of public space by the café owners. On the other hand, there were some interlocutors, like Nikos, another employee of the municipality, who provided a different explanation. According to him, a street-level bureaucrat prefers to act like she never noticed rather than being caught in a labyrinth of bureaucracy, which will most likely have no significant outcome. Moreover, she demonstrates cultural intimacy (Herzfeld, 2016): on one hand, she understands that the costs of running a business are too high, and on the other, she deliberately ignores some illegalities, which results in apathy.

In addition, this ensures that extra work for civil servants is avoided, as impunity is the norm on both sides—café owners and bureaucrats who ignore illegalities alike. Kokos, a member of the Board of Directors of PASYKA (Pancyprian Association of Owners of Recreation Centers) adds to this view by underlining that

> When the deckchairs are spread out [on the beach] and the one behind [meaning the recreation center owner with no beach access] comes and says well, am I the stupid loser among the buddies (*o
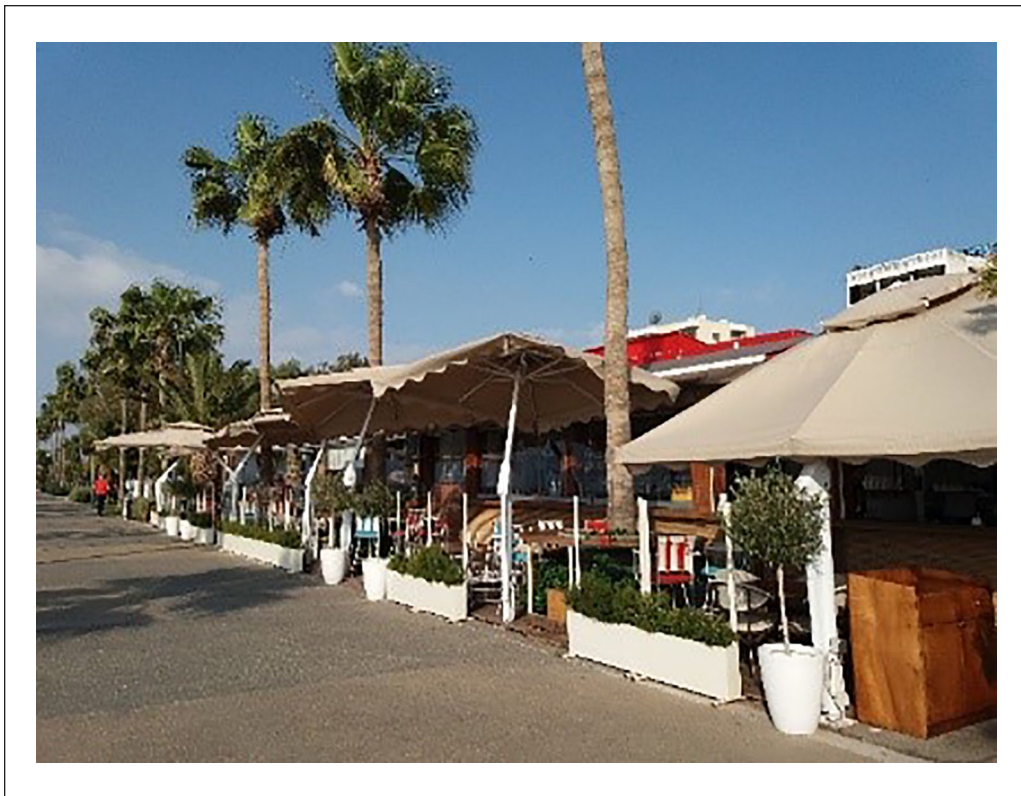
Image 11. Current View of the "Red Cafe" in the Molos Area.

malakas tis pareas)? How will I work if this is a restaurant by the sea? I was forced to go and I was cut off by the beach front. . . Why shouldn't there be restaurants on the beach and suddenly the Municipality comes and because it is theirs, they rent it *for a lot of money*. . . [This is why] they won't tell him anything.

The "Olympic" and Other Towers

Even though at the time I was doing my research the only deviation or exception from Planning regulations in the area of molos in Limassol was the "Olympic Residence," lately the issue of deviations has escalated dramatically and more than 20 permits have been issued for deviations in the beachfront of Limassol. In response, new protests have emerged in the area. Since I did not have the opportunity to delve deeper into this issue ethnographically, I will settle for presenting mostly my findings and insights of the "Olympic Residence." As Alexandros eloquently notes:

The coverage rate seems to exceed 95% in this project (the Olympic Residence). The square is private and located on the second floor. A very aggressive perimeter wall has been set up in the neighborhood [. . .] They even reached the Oympic pedestrian street, so that the apartments can reach the sand directly, what is the benefit to society? Did the compensatory benefits work negatively for the neighborhood in this case?

The Olympic Residence did indeed offer a square as "compensatory benefit," located however in front of the complex, and essentially benefiting the residents of the complex. In fact,

Image 12. The Olympic Residence Plaza.

it is presented as a "facility" of the complex on the project's website. In practice, during my fieldwork, I rarely observed anyone using the square apart from shoppers and patrons in the cafes. In fact, the "square" does not resemble a square at all; it is basically an open-air mall (Image 12). Last but not least, a sign in the public beach, facing directly the street and stairs of the bridge that connects the Olympic Residence with the beach catches the passers-by attention. The sign contains a generic message ("Please keep the beach clean") that justifies its existence, but its aim appears to be completely different. In a much larger font, it reads: "Ecological beach / Olympic Residence," subtly yet effectively implying that the beach is part of the Residence (Image 13).

In a more general spirit, A.K, in a Facebook post, criticizes the municipality's strategy regarding the lack of public spaces and over-commercialization:

> What is the mission of the Municipality? To construct buildings and compete with professional developers, hoteliers and shopkeepers? Since when has the Municipality of Limassol become a developer, why is it trying to practice professions to which it does not belong and why does it think that it will succeed as an entrepreneur? [. . .] The mission of the Municipality of Limassol, like all Municipalities, is very different and focuses on the proper functioning of the city, its urban planning, its decency and the quality of life of citizens. These include cleanliness, public greenery, public transport, street order, noise pollution, marine cleanliness, waste reduction and management, culture and more. [. . .] What is missing from Limassol and other cities due to poor urban planning are open public spaces (squares) and public green spaces [. . .]

Kakoullis describes a neo-liberal city, where the municipality serves the interests of corporations and facilitates capitalist accumulation. In fact, neoliberalism is defined as a "political project to re-establish the conditions for capitalist accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites" (Harvey, 2005, p. 19). Cities are understood as central to neoliberalization processes, as noted by Pinson and Morel Journel (2016, p. 139): "Cities are basically crucial cradles of neoliberalization, provide fundamental material bases for this process, but also for its contestation." In this case, even though some of the places I have described are public in legal terms, they function as private, by posing various intimidation and inhibition tactics to limit the repertoires of possible uses by wayfarers.

Image 13. The Olympic Residence "Ecological Beach".

The "end of public space" as a result of processes such as privatization, private or public "securitization" and commercialization is a popular theme in the literature related to space. These processes are also associated with conditions of exclusion of various social groups, through regimes of control and power (Harvey, 2012; Melucci & Avritzer, 2000; Mitchell, 2003). Furthermore, a diverse range of actors, operating through the market, the state and local authorities, are sometimes considered as actors of exclusion (Atkinson, 2002; Mitchell, 1995).

Public space in general is linked to democratic ideals and provides open access to the public realm (Mitchell, 1995; Thompson, 2002) for those excluded from mainstream political procedures. Moreover, it is a place in which different identities, lifestyles (Ruddick, 1996) as well as diverse social phenomena (Listerborn, 2005) become obvious and may, thus, promote awareness and tolerance. However, over the last decades, these very traits of public space seem to be following a declining path, a pattern that is common all over the world. According to Harvey (1989), since the establishment of managerial and entrepreneurial modes of urban governance, public space has adopted tendencies of exclusion. This is what Kakoullis describes in the excerpt above. Even though he refers to a public dispute that concerned the plans of the municipality to rent a big plot of land it owns for a development instead of a park or a public space, it reflects what Harvey describes as exclusion. I have demonstrated this sufficiently with the example of the Limassol Marina, as well as the "compensatory benefits" of the Olympic Residence.

Conclusion

In this article, I have suggested how de Certeau's clear cut distinction between tactics and strategies, while productive and useful, can also be reductive and even misleading in some cases. In the context of the Marina, I have shown that the owners are more powerful than the users/walkers, but are (or were) also less powerful vis-à-vis the authorities, since they were obliged to provide public spaces to acquire a permit. Subsequently, the owners designed those spaces to dictate the possible routes used by pedestrians who are, eventually, limited to certain uses and trajectories. They achieved that through a range of *tactics of inhibition* (see also Kouros, 2021) which contribute to making the spaces unfriendly for certain social groups (e.g., by not providing cover

from the sun, benches, etc.), that I called *choreographies* (see also Kouros, 2022). Therefore, even though they claim that they provided public spaces, in practice they did not. In other words, even though these inhibitions can be regarded as strategies toward the users of the Marina, since they involved planning, they cannot by any means be considered as such toward the public authorities. Their mobile and ephemeral character implies that they did not *need* to appear in the design plans. However, even though mobile, they can be perceived as what Ingold (2010) calls "surfacing," an attempt to transform earth into a platform, one that limits *chorographies*, namely, possible uses and trajectories.

According to de Certeau's approach (1984), the powerful attempt to define the repertoires of different uses of space, while the nonpowerful are employing tactics to play on and with this terrain as designed and defined by strategic manipulations. However, it should be noted that even though de Certeau's distinction between tactics and strategies is easily applicable when there are two categories (powerful, powerless)—which also implies only one central source of authority, such as the government or the municipality—in this case, it could be argued that because the Marina owners cannot explicitly prohibit, they use covert tactics to discourage certain uses of space. This stems from the fact that the Marina includes public spaces, such as pathways, squares and even a public beach, which should be freely accessible to anyone, at least in legal terms.

For de Certeau (1984), tactics never rely on the existence of a place for power or identity. They "never produce proper places but are always using and manipulating these places" (Cresswell, 1997, p. 363). As I have shown, this is not only a "weapon of the weak," since the strong may manipulate and use existing places in a tactical manner as well. The diametrical opposition between strategy and tactics in de Certeau's work has led to an understanding whereas the latter is solely attributed to the "weak" and the former is understood as a monopoly of the "powerful." Tactical subjects are therefore portrayed as resisting and subverting institutional power (Kyriakides, 2018). In addition, according to Napolitano and Pratten (2007, p. 8) this distinction between tactics and strategies poses "too rigid an opposition between the official (proper) and the everyday (the popular), for failing to recognise relationships of complicity and processes of consensus, and for providing only a partial cartography of the spaces between compliance and resistance."

The article moves beyond the imposition of prohibitions to the creation of *inhibitions* over what is allowed. Such inhibitions can cause people feelings of uncertainty and intimidation, as a result of an exaggerated number of CCTV cameras, various signs inhibiting various uses, road bars, security guard posts, and so on. All these features inscribe space, constantly reminding wayfarers that they are being watched and that they should behave in a certain manner. The true success of the Marina and Old Harbor as pseudo-public spaces lies precisely where the success of the promenade as a public space does. In dictating, unlike the promenade, uses and trajectories that make the space usable only by the desired audience, namely, middle or upper-class locals or tourists. They reduce the number of "undesirables," which leads to a subsequent reduction of open, urban public spaces. As Alinsky (1989) notes, the first rule of power tactics is that "power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have" (p. 131). As long as wayfarers in the Marina believe it is not legal to practice certain activities and passers-by believe that the "square" of the Olympic Residence is private, it does not matter whether it actually is. The *inhibition tactics* are successful, in that they have "convinced" actors of their legitimacy.

Author's Note

Acknowledgments

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

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Notes

1. De Certeau suggests there are two main "practices" we use to locate ourselves in everyday life: (a) the attribution place names (1984, p. 103) and (b) the telling of stories about those places (1984, p. 121). "In the spaces brutally lit by an alien reason, proper names carve out pockets of hidden and familiar meanings. They 'make sense'; in other words, they are the impetus of movements, like vocations and calls that turn or divert an itinerary by giving it a meaning (or a direction) that was previously unforeseen. These names create a nowhere in places; they change them into passages" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 104). These practices convert the pure spatiality into place. Interestingly, the Olympic Residence is commonly known as "Twin Towers" by locals, a negative term almost suggesting monstrosities.
2. All names of interlocutors are pseudonyms, unless when names and surnames are used.

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