

Gendered Labor Market and Labor Force Participation of Women: Case of North Cyprus

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Abstract

The low labor force participation of women in North Cyprus is an interesting and controversial issue. Since the de facto partition of the island as North and South Cyprus, North Cyprus economy has been suffering shortage of labor. However, women who make up half of the population stay or are held out of the labor force. Although the governments came up with policies of overcoming the shortage by inviting labor to migrate from abroad, specifically from Turkey, they never came up with policies to increase women's participation. Increasing participation of women may not bring an ultimate solution to the labor shortage problem due to the small size of the population but it is definite that it would help. In 2010, still around 60 percent of working age women population is out of the labor force. The studies on female labor force participation in North Cyprus suggest gender segregation and gender pay gap, that is to say women's concentration in low-paying occupations as the most important explanation for the continuing low labor force participation of women. Therefore, this paper aims at investigating the presence, extent and the patterns of occupational gender segregation in North Cyprus labor market for the period 2004-2010. To investigate the presence, extent and patterns of occupational segregation the D-Index, is computed for 7 years for 9 broad occupational categories for nationwide and across rural and urban regions. Study employs Household Employment Surveys data.

Preliminary results show that total occupational gender segregation increased by %3.5 over the period (2004-2010). Decomposition calculations of the segregation index show that the main reason of the increase in the level of segregation is the increase in the gender composition of individual occupations. Although the occupational structure of the labor force is more integrated in 2010 compared to 2004, due increasing concentration of women in certain occupations total occupational gender segregation increase.

Results also indicate differences in occupational gender segregation through time and across urban and rural regions. In the urban areas occupational gender segregation indices shows that occupational gender segregation decreased by %8.6 over the period. The individual occupations and the occupational structure of the labor force become more integrated in the urban areas and this decrease the occupational segregation in the urban areas. However, in the rural areas occupational gender segregation indices show that occupational gender segregation increased by %62.8 over the period. In rural areas both, the gender composition of individual occupations and occupational structure of the labor force become more segregated.

Keywords: North Cyprus, occupational gender segregation, Duncan D-index, female labor force participation.

Introduction

The motive of this study is the continued low labor force participation of women in North Cyprus. The low labor force participation of women in North Cyprus is an interesting and

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controversial issue. Since the *de facto* partition of the island as North and South Cyprus¹, North Cyprus economy has been suffering shortage of labor. However, women who make up half of the population stay or are held out of the labor force. Although the governments came up with policies of overcoming the shortage by inviting labor to migrate from abroad, specifically from Turkey, they never came up with policies to increase women's participation. Increasing participation of women may not bring an ultimate solution to the labor shortage problem due to the small size of the population but it is definite that it would help. Besides its possible positive effect on labor shortage problem it would also help to decrease gender equality, not only on the labor market but also the status of women in public and private sphere.

Women's participation to the labor force became visible during the Turkish Cypriot Community's economic and socio-spatial re-structuring process. After 1974, Turkish Cypriots resettled in the North, either by leaving the enclaves that they had been living in the period 1963-74 and going back to their own villages which were now safe or moving into houses and villages abandoned by Greek Cypriots. Citizens who originally were from the South of the island evacuated their homes and moved to the North into houses and villages abandoned by Greek Cypriots. This spatial change has caused the breakdown of production relations and social division of labor, which brought the need for re-formation. Women's massive participation to the labor force falls in this period. Turkish Cypriot Community's perception about women working has partly changed during the restructuring period. With the high demand for labor, the period where very small numbers of women were working has come to an end. Urban women who have no experience in a paid job started working in factories and governmental institutions. Working of women, especially the women who have a certain level of education has become acceptable by the community while the previous perception was negative. However, the social division of labor has not developed in the same pace with this period to take over the house works and traditional responsibilities of women who were newly getting involved in the communal life. Those who had no help from the women in their families or, the ability to pay for help had difficulties in getting involved in the labor market. Then again, women in rural areas who used to work as unpaid family workers or in seasonal jobs, started to take responsibilities in farming, agriculture and managerial roles of family business as job opportunities for men become available in the cities. Even though women working in urban or rural areas were accepted by the community, this was not an unconditional acceptance. Women can work however; they are also expected to fulfill their duties such as taking care of the kids, elderly, and the house. In other words, the acceptance of the community was a conditional one, where women could work as long as they continued to fulfill their traditional responsibilities.

Despite all efforts of women's organizations, and growing demand on labor, women's employment and average income stayed far below men's employment and average income. In addition, until now gender equality rarely became an issue either as a public concern or a predominant academic research area. In 2012, still around 60 percent of working age women population is out of the labor force.

Although gender equality rarely became an issue, the limited number of studies on characteristics of female employment (Güven-Lisaniler & Uğural, 2001; Güven-Lisaniler, 2010-2008-2003; Aldemir, 2002; Aldemir, 2004; Bhatti, 2004a, 2004b), determinants of labor force participation decision of women (Güven-Lisaniler & Bhatti, 2005), and gender wage gap (Uğural

et al., 2009; Uğural & Güven-Lisaniler, 2009) shed valuable insight into low labor force participation of women.

The major conclusion drawn from the review of the previous studies is that, the North Cyprus labor market offer different types of jobs for men and women. Jobs those are available for women are the low paying, low productive jobs and the men's jobs are those high status, more productive and high wage jobs. So, this leads to segregation in the labor market. Labor market segregated as 'female' and 'male' occupations. Studies were also emphasizing the role of limited labor mobility between occupations as a cause of occupational gender segregation which is mostly due to social relationships, gender stereotypes, and unfair distribution of unpaid work.

Although the previous studies emphasizing gender based occupational segregation as one of the cause of low labor market status and low labor force participation of women; except Aldemir's (2002) work on vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the public sector, none of them actually measures the presence and extent of gender based occupational segregation. This is mostly due to the difficulty of reaching of data since employment survey data became available after 2004.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the presence, extent and patterns of gender based occupational segregation in North Cyprus labor market and to analyze the trend and sources of changes in the segregation indices through time and across rural and urban regions.

Method and Data

The presence, extent and patterns of occupational segregation are measured by index of segregation (Duncan and Duncan, 1955). The analysis of the changes in the indices will be done by standardizing the dissimilarity index and decomposing the mix and composition effects (Blau and Hendricks, 1979).

Data employed in the study is from Household Employment Survey (2004-2010) which is conducted and published annually by State Planning Organization of North Cyprus since 2004.

There are several methods that can be used as a measure of segregation such as index of dissimilarity (D-Index), the WE index, the sex ratio, standardized sex ratio SR^* , the IP index, marginal matching measure and the Gini coefficient. The most widely used method to measure the occupational segregation by gender is the Duncan index of dissimilarity (Duncan and Duncan, 1955) since it is the most unproblematic measure and it is straightforwardly understood (Blau and Hendricks, 1979; Blackburn, 2011). In this paper we also applied the D-index of segregation developed by Duncan and Duncan (1955) to obtain the data for the presence and extent of gender based occupational segregation in North Cyprus. It is computed for nationwide, and urban and rural regions for the time period covering the years between 2004 and 2010.

The index is computed as:

$$S_t = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i |m_{it} - f_{it}| \quad (1)$$

where m_{it} is the percentage of the male labor force employed in occupation i in year t , while f_{it} denotes the percentage of the female labor force employed in occupation i in year t . The index can take any value between 0 and 1. Value 0 indicates identical distribution of men and women

across occupations. Value 1 indicates complete occupational gender segregation, in other words estimating a value equal to 1 tells us that women employed in completely female occupations and men employed completely in male occupations. As the estimated value gets closer to 0 it indicates that the distribution of women across occupations gets closer to the distribution of men in the same occupation, while a value getting closer to 1 is a sign for increasing occupational gender segregation.

The index value can change over time due to changes in the sex composition of specific occupational categories or due to the changes in the occupational structure of the economy (Fuchs, 1975). To be able to determine the effect of changes in the occupational structure of the labor force or the effects of changes in the sex composition within occupations, the decomposition of the observed changes in the index of segregation is used which is the standardization procedure suggested by Blau and Hendricks (1979). The equation (1) can be rewritten as:

$$S_t = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \left| \frac{q_{it} T_{it}}{\sum_i q_{it} T_{it}} - \frac{p_{it} T_{it}}{\sum_i p_{it} T_{it}} \right| \quad (2)$$

where $p_{it} = F_{it} / T_{it}$ and $q_{it} = (1 - p_{it}) M_{it} / T_{it}$.

The D-index for the nationwide, urban and rural regions is computed respectively as follows;

$$S_m = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \left| \frac{q_{im} T_{im}}{\sum_i q_{im} T_{im}} - \frac{p_{im} T_{im}}{\sum_i p_{im} T_{im}} \right| \quad (3a)$$

$$S_{tu} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \left| \frac{q_{itu} T_{itu}}{\sum_i q_{itu} T_{itu}} - \frac{p_{itu} T_{itu}}{\sum_i p_{itu} T_{itu}} \right| \quad (3b)$$

$$S_{tr} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \left| \frac{q_{itr} T_{itr}}{\sum_i q_{itr} T_{itr}} - \frac{p_{itr} T_{itr}}{\sum_i p_{itr} T_{itr}} \right| \quad (3c)$$

Based on equations (3a, 3b, and 3c), the effects of the occupation mix and the occupation composition on the change in the segregation index between two years (2004 and 2010) can be computed, using the following:

$$MIX_{2004-2010t} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \left| \frac{q_{i2004t} T_{i2010t}}{\sum_i q_{i2004t} T_{i2010t}} - \frac{p_{i2004t} T_{i2010t}}{\sum_i p_{i2004t} T_{i2010t}} \right|$$

$$COMP_{2004-2010t} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \left| \frac{q_{i2010t} T_{i2004t}}{\sum_i q_{i2010t} T_{i2004t}} - \frac{p_{i2010t} T_{i2004t}}{\sum_i p_{i2010t} T_{i2004t}} \right|$$

According to the previous equations, the mix effect captures the changes in the segregation index that would have occurred if the sex composition within each occupation were constant throughout time implying that the only source of differences between two years would be due to changes or differences in the size of occupational categories; whereas the composition effect captures the changes in the index that would have occurred if the size of each occupational category were fixed implying that the only source of differences in the indices between two

year would be due to changes or differences in the sex composition within occupations. When a consistent set of weights is used for both the mix and composition effects the two will not necessarily add up to the total difference in the index between two periods. The remaining residual may be interpreted as due to an interaction of the two previous effects.

Background Information on North Cyprus Labor Market by Data

Before investigating the presence, extent and patterns of gender based occupational segregation in North Cyprus we will give some descriptions of labor market using the Household Employment Survey data. According to the recent Household Employment Survey (2010), there are 213,795 people in the working age population in which %47.2 are women. Labour force participation rate was 49.6%; it was 36.3% for women and 61.6% for men all three of which were far below the world averages which was 64.7%, 51.7%, and 77.7% respectively (ILO, 2009: 5). Around 80 percent of the employed people were in the services industry and work as salaried workers. Those, who were employers or working for their own accounts were just above 15%. Unemployment rate was %11.9. Women’s unemployment rate (17.7%) was almost two times of men’s rate (8.9%). Youth unemployment rate (24.7%) was far above of both men’s and women’s rates.

As can be seen from Table 1, labor force participation rates of both women and men in North Cyprus have fallen over the period of 2004-2010. Although labor force participation rates of both women and men have fallen the difference between participation rates of women and men is striking. Women’s participation rates are almost half of the men’s rates. This decline in both male and female labor force attachment can be explained by massive migration of cheap labor and favorable retirement schemes in the public sector. But continued low participation of women is worth to be investigated.

Table 1. Labor Force Participation rates (2004-2010)

Year	Labor Force Participation rates (%)		
	Total	Men	Women
2004	54.2	68.3	39.2
2005	50.3	63.9	35.6
2006	53.2	66.1	39.3
2007	50.2	62.8	36.1
2008	50.1	62.7	36.2
2009	49.9	61.6	36.8
2010	49.6	61.6	36.3
Actual change (2004-2010)	-4.6	-6.7	-3.1
% change (2004-2010)	-8.5	-9.8	-7.4

Source: Household Employment Survey (2004-2010), TRNC State Planning Organisation. Available at <http://www.devplan.org>

Table 2 reveals female representation (as female to male ratios) for occupational groups. Women’s representation varies significantly across the occupational groups. The female representation decreased in aggregate over the period 2004-2010. In 2004 for every 100 employed men there were 49.6 women but in 2010 it declined to 47.7.

The significant decline in female representation among the occupational groups occurred in the clerical sector, skilled agricultural workers, and services, shop and market sales workers

over the whole period 2004-2010. Although women are reasonably represented in professional (for every 100 men there are 96.3 women) and elementary jobs (89.6), given their overall representation, they are under-represented in the rest of the occupations except clerical jobs which they are over represented.

Table 2. Size and sex composition of occupational categories of North Cyprus Economy

Occupational Categories	Share in total %		Female/male ratio	
	2004	2010	2004	2010
Overall	100	100	49.6	47.7
Legislators, senior officials and managers	12	11	28	41.8
Professionals	13	12	79	96.3
Associate Professionals (Technicians)	9	11	42	43.5
Clerks	13	14	196	136.7
Services, shop and market sales workers	11	14	58	41.2
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	7	5	71	27.1
Craft workers	15	15	9	6.9
Plant and machine assemblers	7	7	3	4.9
Elementary Occupations	13	12	66	89.6

Source: Household Employment Survey (2004-2010), TRNC State Planning Organization. Available at <http://www.devplan.org>

Table 3 displays the major occupational categories where men and women were most concentrated in 2004 and 2010. It shows that, women and men are concentrated almost totally in different occupations. The concentration ratios and categories that men and women concentrated in 2004 and 2010 indicating that in 2010 men and women more segregated in terms of number of shared category which it was two in 2004 and decreased to one in 2010. However without computing segregation it is hard to say whether the extent of segregation increase or decrease especially considering changes in the mostly concentrated occupational categories of men and increasing concentration ratio of men in the services, shop and market sales workers jobs and increasing women's concentration in professionals jobs.

On the other hand the high representation of women (56.8%) in categories (1), (3) and (4) which can be easily associated with low paid low productive and low ranked jobs, and also within professional occupations high concentration of women in relatively low paid professional jobs is supporting the findings of the previous studies. Sixty four percent of professional women are in education related professional jobs. Women professionals in relatively high paid; mathematics, physics and engineering, and health related professional jobs, are only 8% and 7% respectively (SPO, 2004-2010).

Table 3. Men and Women's mostly concentrated major occupation categories, 2004-2010

The first 4 mostly concentrated major occupational categories, out of 9 occupational categories			
Women			
Occupational Categories (2004)	% of total female employment	Occupational Categories (2010)	% of total female employment
1. Clerks	25.8	1.Clerks	25.8
2. Professionals	17.4	2. Professionals	19.5
3. Elementary Occupations	15.3	3.Elementary Occupations	17.4

4. Services, shop and market sales workers	12.0	4. Services, shop and market sales workers	11.9
Total	69.5	Total	72.6
The first 4 mostly concentrated major occupational categories out of 9 occupational categories			
Men			
Occupational Categories (2004)	% of total male employment	Occupational Categories (2010)	% of total male employment
1. Craft workers	20.9	1. Craft workers	20.4
2. Legislators, senior officials and managers	13.7	2. Services, shop and market sales workers	14.7
3. Elementary Occupations	11.5	3. Associate Professionals	11.3
4. Professionals	10.9	4. Legislators, senior officials and managers	11.3
Total	57.0	Total	57.7

Source: Household Employment Survey (2004-2010), TRNC State Planning Organization. Available at <http://www.devplan.org>

Estimation of Occupational Gender Segregation in North Cyprus between Years 2004-2010

Although the concentration ratios of men and women in occupational categories give an idea about what occupations men and women mostly engaged but to indicate whether North Cyprus labor market segregated by gender or not segregation index has to be computed.

As mentioned in Methodology part, in the computation of segregation, simple dissimilarity index; D-index of segregation developed by Duncan and Duncan (1955) is used. The dissimilarity index may take a value between 0 and 1. If it takes value 0 it indicates that the distribution of women across occupations is identical to that of men. The proportion of women in each occupation is roughly identical to the proportion of women in the total labor force. If it takes value 1, then there is complete segregation, meaning women are concentrated in certain occupations and men in entirely male occupations.

The computation results displayed in Table 3 show that, gender segregation in the North Cyprus labor market is high and has remained quite stable over the whole period (2004-2010). Also according to the results obtained occupational segregation for the 9 broad occupational categories has increased over the period analyzed. Only during 2006 was there an improvement in the occupational integration of the sexes. The number of people who needed to relocate jobs to achieve zero segregation would have been 33.9% in 2004, as compared to 35.1% in 2010.

The figures in Table 3 also reveal that there is an improvement in the occupational integration of the sexes in the urban regions and on the contrary occupational segregation by sex for rural regions shows an increase over the whole period. The number of people who needed to relocate jobs to achieve zero segregation in the rural regions was 22.3% in 2004, as compared to 36.3% in 2010. However in the urban regions it was 37.2% in 2004 and decreased to 34% in 2010.

Table 3. Occupational segregation index (2004-2010)

Years	Segregation index		
	Nationwide	Urban	Rural
2004	0.33996	0.37230	0.22345
2005	0.37650	0.36808	0.37966
2006	0.32133	0.32753	0.32079
2007	0.33613	0.30890	0.35976
2008	0.33482	0.32574	0.35181
2009	0.33463	0.32322	0.39285

2010	0.35195	0.34011	0.36386
Actual change	0.01199	-0.03219	0.14041
% change	3.53	-8.65	62.84

Source: Computations based on TRNC Household Employment Survey, 2004-2010.

In 2004 occupational gender segregation in urban regions was much higher than rural regions but in 2010 the gap between indexes of the two regions closed and even the segregation in the rural regions becomes larger. Observed changes in the index through time and across rural and urban regions may result from two sources as, changes in the sex composition of particular occupational categories or, alternatively, changes in the occupational structure of the economy.

In order to better understand the sources of the observed differences in the indices we used Blau and Hendriks decomposition (Blau and Hendriks, 1979, p.199) to decompose changes due to shifts in sex composition within occupations and changes due to shifts in the occupation mix of the economy. Rewriting the dissimilarity or segregation index allows the observed changes to be decomposed into those two sources. To distinguish the effect of changes in the size of occupational categories, in other words the effect of the changes due to shifts in the occupation mix of the economy (Mix Effect) the index of segregation computed by holding sex composition at year 2004 and using the employment distribution of year 2010. To distinguish the effect of the changes due to shifts in sex composition within occupations (Composition Effect); the index of segregation for 2010 computed by standardizing the size of occupations to year 2004.

The mix effect captures the changes in the segregation index that would have occurred if the sex composition within each occupation were constant throughout time or across regions implying that the only source of differences between two years or two regions would be due to changes or differences in the size of occupational categories; whereas the composition effect captures the changes in the index that would have occurred if the size of each occupational category were fixed implying that the only source of differences in the indices between two year or regions would be due to changes or differences in the sex composition within occupations. The two, mix and composition effects will not necessarily add up to the total difference in the index between two periods or two regions. The remaining residual may be interpreted as due to an interaction of the two previous effects. Mix and composition effects computed for nationwide, and urban and rural regions. The results are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Occupational segregation in North Cyprus – Mix and Composition effects (2004-2010)

Standardized Segregation index (2004-2010)							
Years	Region	Occup. Seg. Index	Actual change	Mix effects	Composition effects	Interaction effects	% Change
2004	Nationwide	0.33996	0.01199	-0.00264	0.01655	-0.00192	3.5
2010	Nationwide	0.35195					
2004	Urban regions	0.37230	-0.03219	-0.01919	-0.01333	0.00033	-8.6
2010	Urban regions	0.34011					
2004	Rural regions	0.22345	0.14041	0.00636	0.02692	0.10713	62.8
2010	Rural regions	0.36386					

Source: Computations based on TRNC Household Employment Survey, 2004-2010.

The decomposition for the change in the occupational segregation index computed for nationwide and across urban and rural regions between years 2004 and 2010. The results show that composition effect (net segregation) is the main source of the changes in the segregation indices. Nationwide the source of differences in the indices between two years; 2004 and 2010 is due to shifts in sex composition within occupations. Meaning women and men are more concentrated in certain occupations. If only mix effect were observed occupational segregation would have declined nationwide.

When comparing occupational segregation indices across urban and rural regions urban regions' labor market is less segregated than the rural regions, even though, segregation index of urban regions compared to rural regions was much higher in 2004. By the way segregation index have increased in rural regions. Secondly in both regions composition effect (net segregation) is the main source of the changes in the segregation indices. The change (decline) in occupational segregation in urban regions is due to shifts in sex composition within occupations. Individual occupations become less segregated, concentration of women and men in certain occupations decreased in urban regions. On the other hand the change (increase) in occupational segregation in rural regions is due to both shifts in sex composition within occupations and due to shifts in the occupation mix of the rural regions labor market. Both individual occupations and labor market become more segregated, concentration of women and men within certain occupations and concentration of men and women among occupational groups increase in urban regions. However the figures reveal that; the main source of increasing occupational segregation in the rural regions is due to interaction effect; interaction of higher segregation within occupations and more segregated labor market.

Concluding Remarks

According to the results obtained; there is occupational gender segregation in North Cyprus labor market over the period (2004-2010). Also it has been sustained and increasing. The segregation differs across rural and urban regions. Occupational gender segregation is higher in rural regions than urban regions labor markets.

The more detailed picture observed through decomposition of changes due to shifts in the sex composition within occupational categories and/or due to shifts in the occupation mix of the economy reveals that; the main source of the increasing segregation is due to the shifts in sex composition within occupations (net segregation). The concentration of men and women in certain occupation is higher in 2010 compared to 2004.

Results of the analysis of the differences across urban and rural regions show that urban regions labor markets become more integrated in terms of both sex composition within occupational categories and occupation mix of the economy. Although composition and mix effects are both the source of decreasing occupational gender segregation in the urban regions, the main source of the change is the composition effect; the shift of the sex composition within occupations which become more integrated.

However in the same period rural regions labor markets become more segregated. Concentration of men and women in certain occupational categories increase and occupation

mix of the economy become more segregated. But the main source of the change of increasing occupational gender segregation in the rural regions is the interaction effect; the effect due to the interaction of more segregated occupations and more segregated occupation mix of the economy.

Occupational segregation has been considered throughout the literature as a fact which hinders female labor force participation both in quantity and in quality (Anker, R. 1998; Anker, R. and Hein, C. 1986; Anker, R., Hein, C. 1985; Blackburn, R. M. 2012; Blau, F. & Hendricks W. E. 1979). In this study, the interest was mainly on the presence, extent, and patterns of occupational segregation in particular, and labor market conditions in general, may have contributed to the low labor force participation of women in North Cyprus. From the descriptive analysis of the female labor force participation and employment in occupational groups over time and taking into account the findings of the previous studies on female employment in North Cyprus, the expectation was that occupational segregation was an explanation for low labor force participation of women.

From the findings of this particular study we can barely conclude that decreasing labor force participation of women and increasing occupational gender segregation; as a labor demand constraints, over the same period may be considered as a factor which jeopardizes female labor force participation both in quantity and in quality in North Cyprus labor market. However, to be more certain we cannot measure the effect of segregation on female labor force participation since the individual level micro-data is not available.

Notes

¹ Intercommunal violence in 1958, 1963-64 and in 1967, turned thousands of Turkish Cypriots into refugees. Greek Cypriot Civil Guard attacks on Turkish Cypriot villagers led to the massive exodus of Turkish Cypriots into enclave zones so that they could be more effectively protected. Under the Treaty of Guarantee, Greece, Turkey and the UK were to serve as protectors of the new Republic and had the right to intervene on the occasion of severe violations of the constitutional order. However, it was not until 1974, when a newly installed military regime in Athens supported a coup against the government of the Republic of Cyprus, that a Guarantor nation intervened. Fearing that the coup would be followed by a declaration of *enosis* and attacks on Turkish Cypriots, Turkey intervened, capturing about 40% of the territory of the island by the time a cease-fire was arranged. *Enosis* had been thwarted, but in order to guarantee the safety of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots caught on the wrong side of the front line, the two sides agreed to population exchanges de facto dividing the island as North and South where Greek Cypriots live in the South and Turkish Cypriots live in the North. As a result of this about 60,000 Turkish Cypriots and 150,000 Greek Cypriots had to abandon their homes.

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